



## **HIGHLIGHTS of April 20, 2020 City of Campbell River Council Meeting**

### ***Mayor's opening remarks***

Mayor Andy Adams advised that this special meeting of Council was to review the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the City's financial situation.

Discussion focused on options to address anticipated reduced revenue and cashflow delays as well as potential relief measures that Council may consider for the community. Council will discuss more options for community relief along with cost-saving opportunities and the status of capital projects at the April 27 and May 11 Council meetings.

*"As part of this review, we must keep in mind the different roles of different levels of government to ensure that Council's decisions complement financial decisions by the federal government and the Province of British Columbia,"* said Mayor Andy Adams.

Council continues to advocate with the Province for additional business support, to expand property tax deferral opportunities and increase the homeowner grant to people who have lost income due to the pandemic, and has sent urgent requests for extended financial assistance to support the 96 Campbell River residents who were displaced from their homes, due to the April 8 apartment fire.

*"With such heightened concern in our community,"* the Mayor advised, *"there's something to look forward to at the conclusion of this special meeting. We're going to share a video released last week by three local youth. It has an important message for everyone about how to keep Campbell River strong and healthy."*

To introduce the video, the Mayor said: *"This inspiring video is about the importance of physical distancing. In particular, the video reminds young people to temporarily forgo hanging out with friends for the greater good. We applaud their leadership and expert use of technology to spread a message of civic responsibility in the face of this pandemic."*

The Mayor noted the video, called *Together We Are One*, is an important reminder for everyone to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

*"And, it's extremely well done,"* he added. *"Hats off to Grady Robertson, Noah Vaton and Ian Boyd, who recently created a production company called Far North Visuals."*

A link to the video, along with news release summarizing the outcomes of the meeting are available at [www.campbellriver.ca/COVID-19](http://www.campbellriver.ca/COVID-19). The news releases provide detailed updates on the financial review, initial community relief measures and Council's decision to provide funding to ensure food and accommodation until the end of April to assist people affected by the apartment fire.



## **Summary of Council's financial review discussion**

***(more details in April 22 news release)***

To ensure local government services continue to be provided to the community, Council endorsed using funding from the stabilization reserve to offset revenue losses. This fund was established as part of the City's 10-Year Financial Stability and Resiliency Plan.

"The Province has emphasized that local government services are essential for community wellbeing, and we're carefully examining the long-term impact of pulling funding from other reserve funds, as well as options for cost savings through reduced training, and, potentially, reduced services, including cancelling or deferring capital projects," says Deborah Sargent. "The Province has also offered an opportunity to borrow funding interest-free with a five-year payback, if necessary."

As initial community relief measures, Council confirmed that Campbell River property owners will see water and sewer fees rolled back to 2019 rates (for a savings of approximately \$24 for each household). Metered customers will see reductions based on consumption level.

To complement a range of provincial resources available to businesses, Council approved offering the City's commercial tenants, primarily aviation businesses, the option to delay lease payments without penalty until the end of the year.

Also, a number of penalties have been adjusted:

- Property tax late-payment penalties will be waived until Oct. 1.
- No returned payment (for insufficient funds) penalty until the end of 2020
- No late-payment penalty for metered water and sewer billings until the end of 2020 (does not apply to bulk water supply)

The property tax increase that was planned for 2020 would amount to \$79 for the average home in Campbell River. Council intends to review that at a future meeting.

The City has until May 14 to submit this year's finalized budget to the Province.