

March 18, 2020 – Press Conference with Mayor Savage, CAO Jacques Dubé and Assistant Chief Erica Fleck

Remarks from Mayor Savage

Good day everybody,

We are here for the third day in a row to provide any information that we can about how the city is reacting to the COVID-19 crisis.

It is our intent to provide all the information that we possibly can and be as open as we can with all of the citizens and employees of the municipality.

This is a dynamic situation, as everyone knows. We have all been listening to the Prime Minister and Finance Minister this morning and the Province will have their update at 3:00 p.m.

I want everybody to know that the decisions we are making are based on public health principles and in concert with other orders of government and our partners.

With me today, is CAO Jacques Dubé and Assistant Chief and head of EMO, Erica Fleck, as well as other staff leaders.

As you likely know, we have a morning meeting at 8:30 a.m. with directors and leaders within HRM as well as Deputy Mayor Blackburn and myself.

I would like to acknowledge this this is a difficult time and I want to thank our staff and all the citizens of the municipality who are dealing with this situation in a generous and responsible manner.

Over the next couple of days, we will be looking at options for Council meetings that abide by legislation and by common sense.

I want to thank my Council colleagues, all of whom are showing leadership in their communities and helping their citizens most in need.

I also want people to know that we are working closely not only with the other orders of government, but with other mayors and administrations across the country and I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, especially our own Bill Karsten who is the President of FCM.

So, I will ask Jacques Dubé to give an operational update and we will also hear from Erica Fleck and take questions if there are any.

We will continue to have these updates as often as possible in order to share the information that we have.

Remarks from CAO Jacques Dubé

I want to once again start by thanking our residents and employees for your ongoing contributions to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Your efforts are serving to help your colleagues, families, friends and the broader community so that we can get through this together, as soon as possible.

Following ongoing risk assessments, the municipality continues to adjust delivery for some of our services.

To be clear, there are no reductions in public safety service levels.

All essential services of the municipality – including 311, fire and police – are operational and adhering to the most updated guidance and precautions from health officials.

Following yesterday's provincial decision to close all Access Nova Scotia offices, the municipality has closed all of our in-person Customer Service Centres.

Our services will continue online, so please visit our website for any services you've previously visited a centre to access.

With the closure of all Customer Service Centres, an online service to receive construction permit applications is under development and will be operational early next week.

I also want to mention an update on The Youth Live Enviro Depot at 947 Mitchell Street. This will be closed starting tomorrow, until further notice.

I want to remind everyone that we will continue to post all updates to Halifax.ca/coronavirus and on all of our social media channels.

Thank you once again for helping with the community effort to reduce the spread COVID-19.

Here's Assistant Chief Erica Fleck for a brief update on municipal Emergency Management.

Remarks from Assistant Chief Erica Fleck

We continue to work closely with provincial and federal departments to ensure that any change in protocols or updated information, is passed quickly to all partners to ensure consistency of policies.

Our Emergency Operations Centre will continue to operate to ensure that our planning cycles are continuing and adjusting as needed, to provide the best service that we can to our employees and citizens.

Our Senior leadership team meets daily to ensure that we are all reviewing our risks and adapting accordingly.

I also continue to rely on information from my counterparts across Canada and the World to learn from them and share advice on issues that we are all facing.

We want to ensure that all citizens stay safe, but also urge you to check on your neighbours.