



## NEWS RELEASE

**DATE:** March 19, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** MUNICIPAL OFFICES CLOSE AND RELIEF FUNDING ANNOUNCED  
**STATUS:** PUBLIC - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER** – Amid service delivery strategies and closure schedules, Municipal Council announced on Thursday that they will earmark relief funding to help area residents, non-profit organizations and businesses affected by COVID-19.

“These are trying times for all of our communities and households. The situation continues to evolve and change as we receive new information and directives from the Province of Nova Scotia about COVID-19,” says Warden Allen Webber. “Many of our residents and businesses are deeply impacted by closures and reduced services. On behalf of Council, we are asking for your patience and continued understanding.”

The structure of funding programs will develop further in the coming days and is expected to cover any gaps in federal and provincial funding through supports for residents, commercial customers, and non-profits organizations.

Immediate steps taken by Council at their meeting were:

- to delay distribution of the interim tax bill for one month;
- to extend the deadline for Low Income Tax Exemption Policy applications until June 30, 2020.
- to double the budgeted amount for low income tax exemption for fiscal year 20/21 with increases to both income thresholds and rebate amounts;
- to establish a one-time emergency grant to non-profit organizations with facilities that are negatively impacted by COVID-19 up to \$1000/month to a maximum of \$5000 per organization;

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- to increase Council Grants to \$50,000; and
- to explore opportunities to alleviate financial stress for the small-business sector.

Program details will be shared as they develop. Other support measures could be identified as this situation unfolds and will be rolled out using the Municipality's website at [www.chester.ca/covid-19](http://www.chester.ca/covid-19) and social media accounts.

Municipal Offices will close effective March 20, 2020 and will remain closed for the time being. Any meetings that occur (Council/Committee of the Whole) are closed to public. Some staff have been authorized to work from home so that many services, such as filing permit applications, can continue. Customers can contact staff and departments they have always contacted using regular telephone numbers and email addresses. Services, such as waste collection and wastewater treatment will continue. The Public Drop-off at Kaizer Meadow Landfill will close on Saturdays effective March 28, but open Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with limited staffing.

All municipal facilities are closed, including parks, playgrounds, the Green Gym and Skate Park. The trail is still open to users.

Warden Webber continues, "Knowing our communities, I have great confidence that we can weather this storm. By protecting ourselves and others by practicing self-isolation, social-distancing, and impeccable hygiene as directed by the Province, let's minimize the risk as much as we can. Please continue to be thoughtful and supportive of one another. We are all in this together and are trying to find the best way to protect the health and wellness of our families, friends, and neighbours."

For a list of resources or information about COVID-19, visit [www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus](http://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus). For local information and resources, visit [www.chester.ca/covid-19](http://www.chester.ca/covid-19) or "Lean On Me – Making Municipal Connections", a municipal-administered Facebook group connecting those in need with those willing to help, which will be up and running shortly.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Allen Webber, Warden

Desk 902-275-4145

Cell 902-275-8373

[awebber@chester.ca](mailto:awebber@chester.ca)

Dan McDougall, CAO

Desk 902-275-4111

Cell 902-277-0631

[dmcdougall@chester.ca](mailto:dmcdougall@chester.ca)