



## MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2020020**

**DATE: 18 March 2020**

**RE: Mayor David Kogon issues statement on COVID-19 pandemic**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The following is a statement from Amherst Mayor David Kogon:**

Like the rest of the world, the Town of Amherst is now facing the reality that the COVID-19 virus will reach us eventually. There will be significant illness in our community. That is a certainty.

On behalf of council, I want to assure you the Town of Amherst is taking this threat very seriously.

We have closed all our facilities to the public and any of our staff who can work remotely are doing so. We are focused on providing the essential services of fire and police protection as well as water and sewer services, and the basic supports those services need to operate.

I want to assure you we are working collaboratively with all levels of government on behalf of you, our residents and businesses.

Earlier today, I participated in a conference call with representatives of the County of Cumberland, the Town of Oxford, our area MLA's, our Member of Parliament and our regional emergency management organization to ensure the lines of communication are open, that regional issues are understood and, as neighbours, we are ready to support each other.

With town hall closed to the public, we have cancelled all meetings of committee and council for the month of March. We have also decided not to add interest on any outstanding accounts for the month of March.

For the time being, we are staffing our main reception telephone line at 902-667-3352.



Requests for service will be addressed on a priority and capacity basis.

With the situation changing almost by the hour, and certainly daily, we will be continually re-evaluating these measures, so they are subject to change.

Very soon, we will establish a page on our website where residents will be able to go for the most up-to-date information regarding the impact on our services. Residents should also monitor our Facebook and Twitter accounts for updates.

We recognize the situation will have significant impact on our business community. On behalf of the three municipal units in our region, information for businesses and employers will be co-ordinated by the Cumberland Business Connector. This effort will be supported by our business development staff.

As Mayor, I want to emphasize the situation is serious, but now is not the time to panic. It is the time for a firm personal and community resolve to adhere to the rules of personal hygiene, social distancing and self-isolation after international travel. This is critical if we are to slow the spread of the disease so that it can be managed within the capacity of our health-care system.

Those who are most at risk of severe, life-threatening infection must be protected by all in the community. This includes older citizens or those with pre-existing lung disease or with underactive immune systems like people on anti-cancer treatment.

More than 80 per cent of infections in the rest of the population will be mild, so, again, there is no need to panic.

As a doctor, more than as your mayor, I urge you all to protect yourselves and your fellow Amherstonians by following the prevention recommendations.

If you have returned to Canada from away, it is MANDATORY that you self-quarantine for 14 days.

Let's be caring. Safely check on family, neighbours and friends, ensure they are well, have the resources they require and are receiving accurate public information.

Please continue to wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Stay home if you or someone in your home is sick. Cough or sneeze into your elbow sleeve.

Keeping everyone safe and healthy, providing essential services and maintaining emergency response preparedness are the primary objectives of the Town of Amherst.

The measures we and others have taken WILL impact our customers. We regret any inconvenience and ask for your support and understanding through this challenging, unique circumstance.



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