



# Memorandum

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**TO:** Members of Council  
**FROM:** Deputy City Clerk Dana Earle  
**DATE:** Friday, January 7, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** **Additional Information 2**  
**Committee of the Whole – January 10, 2022**

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## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### New Business

1. Memorandum from City Manager Norm Gale dated January 7, 2022 containing a recommendation relative to the above noted.

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**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** Krista Power, City Clerk  
**FROM:** Norm Gale, City Manager  
**DATE:** January 7, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** Pandemic Update  
New Business - Committee of the Whole Session – January 10, 2022

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The Coronavirus Disease COVID-19 pandemic was declared on March 11, 2020. The pandemic has wreaked havoc around the world and the world will be profoundly changed once it ends. The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay has also been impacted by the continuous decision making, adaptation and change that has occurred. This is now having a negative effect on both the Corporation and the people who work here. Public health measures deployed in our workplaces and supply chain issues have, in some cases, created a lag on productivity.

At this time, we are working on new contingencies - Omicron is different - and we are preparing for the highest levels of staffing shortages in the workplace that we have ever seen. This requires leadership, administrative effort, and difficult decision-making. Accordingly, we must prioritize our efforts and focus on what matters most. We must also ensure, as best we can, business continuity in both the short-term, essential services, and for the long-term. To the best of our knowledge, the short-term is six to eight weeks as Omicron infects most of the population. The change in work priorities will be aligned in this short term period and further adjusted as necessity indicates.

The pandemic is no longer a temporary circumstance as it approaches **the third year**; concurrently, City staff at all levels are experiencing pandemic related fatigue. That this applies to all sectors of the economy and society does not render this fact moot for us... it is real and we must adapt. Current workloads for staff are unsustainable and we must take an adaptive approach in ensuring the long term health and well-being of the people who work here.

The priority of Administration is and must be to focus on maintaining critical and essential service. These services include emergency (paramedics and fire & rescue), water, transit, long-term care and others as well as the administrative and leadership supports to them. Other immediate priorities include:

- budget 2022,
- 2021 year end financial statements,

- the 2022 Municipal Election, and
- key Council strategic priorities like Fort William Downtown Revitalization, enforcement restructuring, the new Zoning By-law, and the prospective multi-use indoor turf facility.

The Corporation's leaders must also ensure financial accountability and fulfill several statutory, legislative, and regulatory functions and obligations. We need to empower our people to focus on the delivery of core essential work while deferring or eliminating any peripheral work. We need to create time and space to fulfill the above priorities along with protecting the people who work here and the people who use the services we provide, planning for the worst contingencies, and ensuring business continuity for essential services.

At the time of writing this memorandum, there are 41 items on City Council's outstanding list due back to council in 2022. This encompasses a significant amount of work which while important is not legislated or essential. It is requested that the report back date of each of these items be adjusted by up to 2 months.

Committees of Council are supported by administration. Staff act as resources, administrative support and provide subject matter expertise. Staff resources for each committee can vary from 2-10 members of administration. This poses a challenge as we anticipate staff shortages. The recommendation below will assist in prioritizing the work that relates to continuity of services, projects and relevant infrastructure. Flexibility in scheduling meetings and supporting this work is important.

Further, we need City Council to prioritize requested motions to council for consideration and ensure that the highest level priorities are completed first. Members of Council bring many great ideas for programs, services, restructuring and policy work to administration, such requests, however, need to be scaled back where possible. Maintaining safety and essential service must continue to be our focus in order to be successful in the coming months.

Accordingly, I present the following recommendation for consideration by Council:

WITH RESPECT to the memorandum from City Manager, Norm Gale dated Friday, January 7, 2022 relative to administration's legal obligation to prioritize maintaining critical and essential service and all legislative compliance requirements, we recommend that Administration be directed to make the following adjustments in an effort to respond to the increasing challenges presented to The City of Thunder Bay by the COVID-19 pandemic including but not limited to:

- Deferral of items on the Outstanding List for all Departments by up to two (2) months
- Prioritization of the work of Advisory Committees of Council as it relates to legislative responsibility, deadlines associated with funding and where staff resources are available to support this work

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.