

Memorandum

Office of the City Clerk
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TO: Members of Council
FROM: Ms. D. Earle, Deputy City Clerk
DATE: Friday, May 8, 2020
SUBJECT: **New Business**
Committee of the Whole – May 11, 2020

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

New Business

1. Memorandum from Mr. D. Vincent, Manager – Licensing & Enforcement, dated May 8, 2020 relative to Impact of Waiving Fees at Both City Owned Parkades.
2. Briefing Note – Crisis Centre for Thunder Bay relative to Memorandum from Mayor B. Mauro, dated May 6, 2020 with respect to Communication relative to Mental Health and Addictions.

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**Licensing & Enforcement Division,
Development and Emergency Services
Department**

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111 Syndicate Avenue South
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 5K4*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of City Council

FROM: Doug Vincent, Manager, Licensing & Enforcement Division

DATE: May 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Impact of Waiving Fees at Both City Owned Parkades

At its meeting on May 4, 2020, Council directed that the Parking Authority Board report back with its recommendation, relative to removing fees charged for parking in the parkades and reinstating when the fees are once again charged for on street parking meters.

The Licensing & Enforcement Division provides administrative support to the Parking Authority and the Manager of the division attends all Board meetings to assist and advise on parking matters, including the two recent Emergency Board meetings, which had the following outcomes:

March 20, 2020 - Meeting to Consider Urgent Relief COVID-19 Business operational changes:

- The Board approved a temporary fee waiver at on-street meters to assist businesses adjust to a take-out/delivery only- service model.
- Two-hour parking restrictions are to be maintained to support the intended relief to assist businesses (and not provided alternative free parking, moving paying users from lots or parkades).
- The Board accepted that some revenue would be lost but that decided that this was the correct and fair approach to support both the business and the public users given the unprecedented circumstances.

April 29, 2020 - Meeting to Consider waiving fees in Parkades:

- The Board discussed several approaches to providing parking fee reductions including the full waiver of fees (i.e. open gates).
- The Board concluded that any parkade fee reduction should apply to both parkades.
- Significant revenue loss would result from eliminating parkade fees even based on the current lower than usual user volumes. (\$25k/month for both parkades)
- Many other impacts and additional security costs evaluated. (\$10k/month)

- It was felt that this financial subsidy would not align with those in financial need and would increase pressure to increase future parking costs for all users.
- The Board's unanimous decision was to monitor the situation but for now to maintain status quo.

The following information was considered by the Board in reaching its decision on April 29th:

Revenues: The Board operates on a self-sustaining basis, without tax support, and strives to complete objectives within its Council-approved budget. Where annual revenues exceed the expenses, the Board accumulates the surplus in a reserve fund. This fund currently stands at approximately \$370,000. In years when expenses exceed revenues the reserve fund supplements the Parking Authority's budget.

The Board has been operating at a slight surplus over the last few years. Operational expenses, including parkade maintenance, remain relatively constant. The parkade maintenance program, which ensures maximum lifespan and user safety, are paramount and costs approximately \$1 million per year for both structures. Revenues generated in these parkades only recovers about sixty percent (60%) of those maintenance expenditures. The off-setting revenues are made largely by user fees (on-street, lots) and associated parking infraction fines.

Recent COVID-19 impacts are projected to be costing the Parking Authority \$200, 000/month.

Additional Impacts/Costs: To facilitate free parking at the parkades, the mechanical gate arms would need to be left open. Unfettered access would significantly increase concerns about safety for both people and property. These concerns could be addressed with additional security but this would have considerable cost implications.

Fairness Principle: The Board embraces the goal of being fair and transparent to those who use parking and whose payments support the cost of parking. The temporary relief at on-street meters was considered by the Board as a focused and strategic approach to aid businesses and the public in a fair and equitable manner. In the view of the Parking Authority Board, "free" parking in the parkades would simply shift the burden of paying for cost of parking in a way that is not fair or equitable. Concern was also expressed that this could add pressure to increase the cost of parking in the future for all users.

Public Misconception - Parkade Account Payment: The Parking Authority continues to operate with limited staff and is available at its regular phone number to respond to customer service inquiries. The Parking Authority is still processing payments. Payments can be made at drop-boxes; they can be mailed in; and they can be made by credit card over the phone. Customers can also meet with staff in person by appointment. All of this information is posted on the City's website.

Briefing Note – Crisis Centre for Thunder Bay

ISSUE: NEED FOR A CRISIS CENTRE

There is a widely-recognized community need for a low-threshold, low-barrier integrated addictions and mental health crisis center in the city of Thunder Bay to support people across the lifespan. There is currently no designated place in the city of Thunder Bay, with the exception of the emergency department (ED) and withdrawal management, for a person experiencing a crisis to walk-in to, or be taken to after hours, for immediate crisis support. This has been recognized as a service system priority by the Thunder Bay District Mental Health & Addictions Network, which represents upwards of 20 mental health and addictions organizations in the Northwest region.

- The newly announced [Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health & Addiction System](#) has the potential to transform mental health and addictions care for Ontarians. However, immediate investments in the expansion of front-line services must be a priority, particularly at a time when hospitals are strained, and the community-based mental health and addictions sector does not have sufficient capacity to meet local needs.
- The [Hallway Healthcare: A System Under Strain](#) report highlights that too many patients go to hospitals for mental health and addictions conditions that could be better-treated in the community.
- The recent [value-for-money audit of addiction treatment programs](#) by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario made 13 recommendations to the Ministry of Health, including: Reducing repeat ED visits for substance-use conditions by further analysis to determine what addiction services need to be expanded; Implement a need-based funding model for existing and new programs to better meet client needs for timely access and appropriate services; and, Work with addiction treatment providers, police and paramedic services to develop protocols to taking individuals directly to services versus EDs as appropriate in order to provide more effective addiction treatment
- Creating an integrated mental health and addictions crisis centre in the city of Thunder Bay will close a widely recognized system gap and build on current community infrastructure and resources. It will add capacity to existing community-based mental health and addictions services by ensuring people have access to the most appropriate level of care when and where they need it.
- To adequately meet current community need, a 24-hour integrated mental health and addictions crisis centre with walk-in capacity will require **20 lower-threshold withdrawal management beds** and an **additional 20 crisis beds**.
 - This estimate is based on local data and current withdrawal management capacity in communities of similar population size. The recommended enhancements will build on current community resources, which include 22 medically supported withdrawal management beds (SJCG) and 5 safe beds (CMHA Thunder Bay).
- A crisis centre could align with the province's newly launched [9-1-1 models of care](#) so that paramedics have an option to transport to an alternate destination other than the ED or Medical Withdrawal Management for people experiencing a crisis that do not require the level of support from those services.

CURRENT STATE - The following **local statistics** support the need for an integrated addictions and mental health crisis centre in the city of Thunder Bay:

- In 2018, the local Thunder Bay Police Service responded to **51,400 calls** for service. Only 17% were related to criminal code offences (source: [TBPS Annual Report](#)).
- There were **4,305 calls** to the Thunder Bay Police Service related to mental health and alcohol use in 2018. The number of mental health calls has gradually increased each year (1,548 in 2017; 1,288 in 2016) (source: [TBPS Annual Report](#)).
- CMHA Crisis Response fields approximately **3,500 calls per quarter** (source: CMHA).
- In the last year, there were nearly **6,828 visits** to the ED for mental health/substance related issues in the city of Thunder Bay. On average, there were **8 mental health visits per day** and **11 substance use visits per day** to the ED (source: TBRHSC).
- The rate of **30-day repeat** for **mental health-related visits is 20%** and **substance use-related visits is 45%** (source: TBRHSC).
- The NWLHIN has one of the highest percentages of people discharged from hospital to home who visit the ED within 30 days after discharge (**19.9%** compared to **13.2%** provincial average) (source: [Health Quality Ontario](#)).
- It is estimated that of those taken to the ED during the first 3 months of the Joint-Mobile Crisis Response Project, **1 out of 4** could be diverted to a crisis center if one existed in the community (source: CMHA Thunder Bay).
- In 2018/2019, Balmoral Centre admitted **2,164 individuals** into the residential withdrawal management program, and was unable to accommodate an additional **2,555 individuals** who had requested service within the same period due to capacity issues (source: SJCG).
- In 2018/2019, **511 individuals** admitted into the residential withdrawal management program could have been appropriately cared for in a non-medical withdrawal management service, if this option existed in the community (source: SJCG).

Senior leadership in Thunder Bay have been actively engaged in a series of discussions about what a crisis centre that supports people across their lifespan could look like in the city and how it could interface with other critical services along the service continuum (e.g. supportive housing). Over 120 service providers and users were recently engaged in discussing what enhanced crisis services could look like (source: [Enhanced Crisis Services Report](#)).

Increasing the number of non-medical withdrawal management and crisis beds in the community is responsive to current mental health and addiction needs in Thunder Bay, and will enhance community mental health and addictions capacity. This briefing note reflects current needs in the city of Thunder Bay, and does not capture the vast mental health and addictions needs beyond the city, in the district of Thunder Bay.

For more information, please contact: The Co-Chairs of the Thunder Bay District Mental Health and Addictions Network. - Nancy Chamberlain (nancy.chamberlain@tbaycounselling.com)
 - Diane Walker (dwalker@childrencentre.ca)