

**THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF PINEY**

**“Pandemic Operations Policy”**

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**Subject: Pandemic Operations Policy**

**Effective Date: March 11, 2020**

**Replaces Policy: New**

**Resolution No.: 81                      Resolution Date: March 10, 2020**

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**A. DEFINITION :**

**Pandemic Definition:** A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease;

**WHO:** World Health Organization;

**WHO Phase 5 Pandemic:** Human-to-human transmission is taking place in at least two countries in one WHO region. At phase 5, most countries are not affected (yet) but a pandemic is considered imminent. This phase is the signal that governments and health officials must be ready to implement their pandemic mitigation plans;

**WHO Pandemic Phase 6:** A global pandemic is underway. Illness is widespread and governments and health officials are actively working to curtail the spread of the disease, and help their populations deal with it using preventive and stop-gap measures;

**B. PURPOSE :**

In order to provide continued municipal services, the RM must ensure the health and safety of its employees. Ratepayers and emergency services rely on these continued services being provided to support those suffering from illness during a pandemic. As such, the RM shall take heightened measures to prevent the spread of a pandemic pathogen.

**C. POLICY:**

**Employee:**

All vacation leave is subject to cancellation by Council once the point of a global pandemic has been reached. The RM may implement heightened safety measures determined by Council in the protection of its employees and in an effort to provide continued services.

Employees who have a laboratory confirmed case of a pandemic pathogen shall be entitled to 10 days paid sick leave, this benefit is created to allow for self-quarantine and prevent the continued spread of the disease. A doctor's note is required to qualify for this benefit.

Employees shall refrain from attending any seminars, conventions, workshops or events in which large numbers of participants attend and meet in confined areas. During a pandemic, greater reliance should be placed on internal educations, webinars and teleconferences to limit the potential for further spread of the pathogen. All employees have a shared responsibility in providing business continuity and ensuring that the RM provides core function to the ratepayers.

**Meetings:**

All Council meetings and public hearings shall continue to conform to the Manitoba Municipal Act. The occurrence of regular or committee of the whole meetings may be reduced in an effort to protect from the spread of the pandemic or due to lack of quorum.

Public meetings such as Coffee with Council, information open houses and other non-regulatory public meetings shall be canceled until the rate of infection of the pandemic has decreased. Variance, conditional uses and public hearings shall be held in a location large enough to house the anticipated number of attendees in a manner as to not create cramped conditions between those attending.

Council representatives should refrain from attending any seminars, conventions, workshops or events in which large numbers of participants attend and meet in confined areas. During a pandemic, greater reliance should be placed on internal education, webinars and teleconferences to limit the potential for further spread of the pathogen. Council and staff need to be aware that they may also need to attend to evolving roles and responsibilities in the delivery of business continuity to the ratepayers of the municipality.

**Public Notices:**

The RM of Piney shall share public information bulletins prepared by Manitoba Health or Health Canada regarding pandemic information on e-newsletters, social media and the RM website. Only information prepared and developed by the two sources outlined may be circulated by the municipality.

**Emergency Funding:**

The RM is cognitive of the financial burden that emergency preparedness places on annual financial plan. The CAO is authorized to expend funds within spending limits outlined in the annual financial plan, but in addition, for the efforts to prepare for a pandemic, the CAO may initiate limited measures and their related expenses in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 annually. The CAO is to report the nature and extent of the measure taken in prevention to Council at the next regular meeting.

Should additional funds be necessary in the prevention or response to a pandemic, those funds will be drawn from the Protective Service Operating Reserve until depleted, at which time the remaining funds shall be withdrawn from surpluses.

**Business Continuity:**

RM supports and encourages employees to cross train on core municipal function and responsibilities. Every reasonable effort will be undertaken to maintain and continue services to ratepayers.

Should a pandemic impact RM employees and the delivery of services, the following measure shall be considered in an effort to maintain services, these include:

- Limited public office hours;
- Establishment of a call forwarding function, whereby allowing employees to work from home and answer RM calls;
- Placing contractors on paid standby on rotational basis to ensure availability for essential municipal services;
- Delaying the tax due date, based on the severity of the pandemic;
- Ensure essential supplies are stocked and inventory is maintained, this provides the greatest ability to continue to provide un-interrupted essential services;
- Implement measures that encourage pre-payment of taxes, credit card payments, cheque payments and postdated payments;
- Cancel all Canada Post parcel pickups from the RM Office;

This list is not intended to be comprehensive, only to serve as a list of potential measures used to protect employees and continue to provide basic services.

The implementation of these measures is at the call of Council, in the absence of quorum; the Head of Council has the authority to call these measures into effect until such time as Council is available to formalize the direction of the RM.

**D. CONCLUSION:**

Business continuity planning (BCP) is fundamental in creating a system of prevention and recovery from potential threats to the municipality and its residents. This policy forms a plan to ensure that personnel and services are protected and are able to function and recover quickly in the event of a pandemic.