

Donna Campbell

From: Donna Campbell
Sent: March 17, 2020 7:43 PM
Cc: Katrina Furlanetto
Subject: Urgent and Important E-Poll re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) internal procedures *** Reply Required by noon on Thursday, March 19, 2020 ***
Attachments: IR-029-20 - Emergency Contingency Leave - COVID-19 Response.pdf
Importance: High

Dear Cataraqi Conservation Board Members,

Senior Management Team met both yesterday morning and again this morning to discuss internal procedures to support Cataraqi Conservation staff during these everchanging conditions related to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Katrina, General Manger, met with Alan Revill, Chair, to review some options as he feels we should do everything we can to minimize the amount of stress and uncertainly in their lives.

The Chair strongly supports the recommendation in the attached Report, IR-029-20, Emergency Contingency Leave – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, which is provided for your consideration. Pending board approval, the proposed Emergency Contingency Leave is recommended for implementation immediately.

Please respond via return e-mail with your vote (yes or no) regarding the proposed recommendation.

That Report IR-029-20, Emergency Contingency Leave – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, Be Received; and,

That the Cataraqi Conservation Full Authority Board Approve the implementation of five (5) Emergency Contingency Leave days, as described in this report, with approval from the General Manager, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

A reply by **noon on Thursday, March 19, 2020** is required.

Based on Section 4.1 of the Cataraqi Conservation By-Law No. 1 (Administration By-Law), Revision 1, Polls of members may be undertaken for items of business considered to be urgent or an emergency and where it is considered impractical to convene a special meeting. Such polls may be conducted via conferencing methods (e.g. teleconference) or individual notices (e.g. electronic survey methods).

Should you have any questions about the proposed please direct them to me as soon as possible so clarification/additional information can be provided before the poll deadline.

Thanks,
Donna Campbell
Assistant, Chair & General Manager



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Date: March 19, 2020
To: Full Authority Board
From: Katrina Furlanetto, M.Env.Sc
General Manager

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item for Board Consideration

2.0 Topic

Emergency Contingency Leave – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

3.0 Recommendations

That Report IR-029-20, Emergency Contingency Leave – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, **Be Received;** and,

That the Cataraqi Conservation Full Authority Board **Approve** the implementation of five (5) Emergency Contingency Leave days, as described in this report, with approval from the General Manager, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

4.0 Purpose

This report outlines the recent recommendations by public health officials for mitigating and responding to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and recommends emergency leave options to be put in place commencing immediately for all employees to ease uncertainty regarding paid leave and provide support during everchanging conditions.

5.0 Background

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory virus. The World Health Organization declared a global pandemic emergency March 11, 2020 due to the rapid spread and impact. The current national and global conditions are unprecedented, and everyone is working diligently to determine best mitigation and response practices to ensure communities and employees are safe.

It's been an incredibly dynamic and ever-changing atmosphere with updates provided hourly from media outlets, health professionals, provincial and federal agencies. Public health agencies have been advising to employ social distancing. This is all in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus.

In addition, anyone who has travelled internationally, has been in contact with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19 and/or is displaying symptoms is recommended by public health officials to self-isolate for a period of 14-days. Should employees show any symptoms or come to work ill, Cataraqi Conservation will send them home and require self-isolation practice.

The Province of Ontario has recently declared that all public and private schools be shut down for two additional weeks following March Break. This includes day care facilities and impacts several employees within Cataraqi Conservation.

Cataraqi Conservation has made several efforts to employ social distancing including closing the Outdoor Center and Administration Building to the public, limiting in-person meetings, and cancelling public events and programs.

Due to these unforeseen closures and rapid spread of the virus, the Senior Management Team has been monitoring and reviewing the recommended actions and have discussed internal protocol to support employees during these emergency conditions.

On March 16, 2020, Premier Doug Ford announced the Ontario government will be tabling legislation to amend the Employment Standards Act. These amendments will provide job and income security to employees should the employer shut down the office, the employee is on medical leave, self-isolation, or quarantine due to COVID-19, or the employee needs to provide care due to school or day-care closure.

In response to this and reviewing the current Personnel Policy, not all Cataraqi Conservation employees have the same options available to them.

Currently, should an employee need to take time off due to pandemic-related illness or closures, they must take short-term disability leave, vacation / time-in-lieu, or unpaid leave. Working remotely is an available arrangement but is not accessible to all positions within the organization due to technology and job requirement limitations.

As an employer it is our obligation to support all employees in maintaining job and income security during the COVID-19 pandemic and we are committed to working with everyone to find a solution over the coming weeks. To do this, individual arrangements will be discussed and implementation of five days for Emergency Contingency Leave is recommended.

6.0 Strategic Plan

This report supports Goal F in the Strategic Plan, Cataraqui 2020.

To operate an efficient and financially sound organization that provides excellent service to the community; promotes best environmental practices; and that offers a healthy, positive and nurturing workplace environment for staff, members and volunteers.

- Maintain a positive image in the community.
- Make customer service a top priority in all work areas.
- Maximize the efficient use of time and resources to avoid waste.
- Demonstrate leadership in environmental design as well as energy and materials conservation.
- Foster the health, safety, morale and career development of our staff.
- Maintain up-to-date corporate policies.
- Maintain internal capacity in support services such as accounting, communications, document management, geomatics and information technology.
- Manage capital assets in a long-term, sustainable way.

7.0 Input from Other Sources

The General Manager has reviewed internal procedures, policies and protocols and has discussed best practices and possible mitigation measures with the following leadership staff:

- Manager, Watershed Planning & Engineering
- Manager, Conservation Lands
- Supervisor, Finance
- Supervisor, Communication & Education
- Supervisor, Development Review

The General Manager also organized an emergency status update call with the Eastern Ontario Conservation Authorities General Managers to discuss internal policies and practices including sick leave options, event cancellations, office and program closures, and sharing essential services if required. Representatives included the following:

- Crowe Valley Conservation Authority
- Ganaraska Conservation
- Lower Trent Conservation
- Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
- Otonabee Conservation
- Quinte Conservation
- Raison Region Conservation Authority
- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
- South Nation Conservation

For those conservation authorities without sick leave policies, additional emergency leave from five up to ten days have also been recommended during this pandemic period to ensure consistent time off options for all employees. The remainder rely on their current sick and personal leave policies.

The Chair, Full Authority Board was also consulted on the interim emergency recommendations to support staff.

8.0 Analysis

A Pandemic Flu Policy was put in place in 2009 to outline how the organization will prepare, mitigate, and respond to emergency conditions. In addition, an interim business continuity plan was approved outlining the essential services and positions required during office closures. The policy is however silent on how employees will be compensated for required time off during a pandemic.

Cataraqui Conservation's Personnel Policy currently includes sick leave as part of short-term disability for all regular employees for a period of up to 15 weeks.

Not all employee positions have the technology or requirements to work remotely and many do not have enough tenure for short-term disability for full salary coverage to support a minimum of 14-days off for illness due to COVID-19 or child care responsibilities. Therefore, to ensure a consistent and supportive approach for all staff, five Employee Contingency Leave days are recommended, in addition to current sick leave policies, to be available for all employees should they need to use it.

All regular staff positions within Cataraqui Conservation will be eligible for Employee Contingency Leave. Regular part-time staff will be prorated based on their average number of hours worked over the previous four weeks.

Below outlines the procedure for three possible scenarios: (1) quarantine, self-isolation or sick leave, (2) school or day-care closures, and (3) Cataraqui Conservation office shut down.

Option 1. Quarantine, Self-Isolation or Sick Leave Procedure

All employees that may need to quarantine, self-isolate or find themselves or their immediate family ill will be required to stay home.

- (a) The employee can request the use of Employee Contingency Leave to be approved by the General Manager.
- (b) Should the employee or family member show symptoms of any illness or should an employee have returned from international travel, they will be required to self-isolate for 14-days prior to returning to work. During this time, the following options will be used in this order:
 - i. Five days of Emergency Contingency Leave
 - ii. Additional days of Short-term Disability Leave for allotted weeks as noted in the Personnel Policy.
 - iii. If any further days are needed, Long-term Disability Leave will be required.

Option 2. School or Day-Care Closures

- (a) An employee can request the use of Employee Contingency Leave to be approved by the General Manager.
- (b) Should an employee be required to stay home the following options will be considered in this order:
 - i. Five days of Emergency Contingency Leave
 - ii. Remainder of required time off will be time-in-lieu / vacation days
 - iii. Any additional days can be taken from 2021 vacation days or authorized unpaid leave

Option 3. Cataraqui Conservation Office Shut Down

All regular employees will be paid and only essential services will be maintained for business continuity. All employees will be asked to stay home, and only essential services will be running.

The recommended emergency leave days are an interim approach for implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senior Management Team will debrief and reflect on implemented practices and update internal policies for approval by the Board for future pandemic events.

9.0 Financial Implications

For employees who are authorized to take the Emergency Contingency Leave, they will derive a benefit based on their current salary or hourly wage plus benefits for up to five days.

10.0 Conclusion

In order to ensure employees are fairly supported for unforeseen closures and self-isolation, and to ensure they take the necessary time they need when ill, the General Manager recommends that commencing immediately all staff receive the option of five Emergency Contingency Leave days during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Approved for circulation,

(Original signed by)

Katrina Furlanetto, M.Env.Sc
General Manager
Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority