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2004 CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, September 28, 2004, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The report be endorsed by Regional Council.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to advise Committee and Council of the plan to close administrative operations during the period December 25, 2004 to January 3, 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

Last year we successfully implemented a planned closing to the general administration offices between Christmas and New Years. The plan arose out of negotiations with our respective unions in 2002 combined with the use of float holidays and/or use of employee banked vacation/lieu time, as well as a generous offer by Regional Council to provide one additional vacation day for staff. The impact on staff was extremely positive and in the last two years the employer received acknowledgement of gratitude from many employees as well as from our unions.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Commencing Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25 through to New Years Day, Saturday, January 1, 2005 there are three (3) statutory holidays and three (3) days available to be scheduled as work days – December 29, December 30, and 31. Our current collective agreements allow for a “corporate float day” in lieu of Remembrance Day, which was observed on Friday, July 2, 2004.

Our custom until 2002 had not been to close early at a half day on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve as many employers do, both in the public and private sector. Our research (Appendix “A”) shows that on average other municipalities provide for Christmas closures of approximately one (1) day in total without charge to the employee. It was felt that this practice was an accepted norm and that equivalent time off ought to be given to Regional employees as is given to local municipal staff.

Instead of closing early on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve, it was felt that combining this to a day of vacation without charge to credits would be reasonable and that the day off would ideally be Thursday, December 30, 2004.

As well, with New Year's day falling on a Saturday this year, it is evident that it would not be practical to delay the reopening of administrative operations for one day and that Committee consider allowing the administrative operations to remain closed on Friday, December 31, 2004 and recognized as the day for the statutory holiday of January 1, 2005. For Wednesday, December 29th employees would be charged against an employee's 2004 personal float day and/or vacation/lieu bank. The net result would be a closure of administrative operations from the close of business on December 24, 2004 to normal opening on Monday, January 3, 2005 as set out Appendix "B" attached.

It is recognized that a number of our Regional services are essential and require staffing on a 24/7 basis. As with the past year, essential services will be expected to continue uninterrupted for our residents. Details will be provided to all line managers from Human Resource Services to ensure that Regional HR policy, employment legislation and collective agreements are preserved.

In addition to essential services such as EMS, LTC, Transit and various Transportation & Works services, Court Services cannot close according to legislation.

Last year we retained some staff at the Administration Building and at the South Services Centre and experienced less than 12 visitors. We would propose to advertise in the local media and on our website of the closure of our administrative operations from Friday, December 24, 2004 to normal opening on Monday, January 3, 2005.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of providing an additional day off to staff is offset by grouping holidays in a known unproductive time of the year and by increasing staff morale.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

There is no local municipal impact. The proposed closure is consistent with practices in other municipalities.

7. CONCLUSION

The closure during the Christmas period improves staff morale at minimal cost to the corporation while ensuring essential services are delivered to the residents of the York Region.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the Agenda for the November 4, 2004 Committee meeting.)