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2007 CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 7, 2007, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The administrative operations be closed from Tuesday, December 25, 2007 to Tuesday, January 1, 2008 inclusive, with administrative operations reopening on Wednesday, January 2, 2008.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to advise Committee and Council of the plan to close administrative operations during the period Thursday, December 27, 2007 to Monday, December 31, 2007.

3. BACKGROUND

Last year we successfully implemented a planned closing of the general administrative offices between Christmas and New Year's Day. The plan arose out of negotiations with our respective Unions in 2002 combined with the use of the corporate float holiday and use of employee banked vacation/lieu time. The impact on staff was extremely positive and in the last five (5) years the Employer has received acknowledgement of gratitude from many employees as well as from our Unions.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Over the Christmas holiday season there are three (3) statutory holidays and three (3) days available to be scheduled as work days – December 27, December 28, and 31. Our current collective agreements allow for a designated “corporate float day” in lieu of Remembrance Day, which could be observed during the 2007 Christmas Closure period. The “Corporate Float Day” would logically be observed on Thursday, December 27. New Year's Day falls on a Tuesday this year, and the recommendation is to observe the holiday on that day. Normal administrative operations would resume on Wednesday, January 2, 2008. (See Table 1)

Table 1 (Existing Situation)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23	24	25 <i>Statutory Holiday</i>	26 <i>Statutory Holiday</i>	27 <i>Corporate Float</i>	28	29
30	31	January 1 <i>Statutory Holiday</i>	2			

As illustrated in the above Table above there are two days remaining (Friday, December 28 and Monday, December 31) which need addressing. The following outlines the Region's options:

4.1 Option 1: Open Administrative Offices for December 28 & 31

Local area municipalities were surveyed (see Attachment) in June and asked what their expected practice would be for the Christmas period. Responses indicated seven (7) would be closed from December 24 to January 1, inclusive; one (1) would remain open on December 24 and one (1) would remain open on December 31 but both would be closed the remainder of the period.

Electing this Option would mean that the Region would be the only office that would be open on both of these dates.

**4.2 Option 2: Close Offices for Christmas Holiday Season:
December 27 is designated the Corporate Float Day
Staff to Use One (1) Vacation Day or Lieu Time for December 28
Additional Day in Lieu of Early Closures
(December 24 & December 31)**

Closing the Region, with the exception of 24/7 operations for the Christmas holiday season would be in keeping with past practice and with all of our local area municipalities. Although not a formal designated holiday, many of these organizations, including ourselves have observed early closures on Christmas Eve and New Years' Eve. Combining these two ½ days and giving an additional day in lieu is an option. Several (three) of our comparator organizations indicated they had plans to that effect.

4.3 Option 3: Close Offices for Christmas Holiday Season: Staff to Use Two (2) Vacation Days or Lieu for December 28 & 31

Closing the Region, with the exception of 24/7 operations for the Christmas holiday season would be in keeping with past practice and most of our local area municipalities. Staff would be asked to use vacation or lieu time for the remaining two days. Several (six) of our local municipalities indicated they had plans to that effect.

It is recommended that York Region adopt Option 2 on the basis of fairness to all staff and ease of administration. Many staff have not enjoyed the informal practice of early closing on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve days due to the nature of their work. The combined ½ days model would require crediting 24/7 operations with a similar day and this will add some administrative complexities which we can cope with.

We have consulted with CUPE and ONA on this matter and they both support this option.

It is recognized that a number of our Regional services are essential and require staffing on a 24/7 basis. As in past years, 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 followed. In addition to essential services such as EMS, LTC, Transit and various Transportation & Works services, Court Services cannot close according to legislation.

We would propose to advertise in the local media and on our website of the closure of our administrative operations from Tuesday, December 25, 2007 to Tuesday, January 1, 2008, with administrative operations reopening on Wednesday, January 2, 2008.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no additional cost as the Christmas closure will incorporate statutory days, a corporate float day, and an employee's vacation/lieu time.

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 holiday period improves staff morale to the corporation while ensuring essential services are delivered to the residents of the York Region.

Report No. 7 of the Finance and Administration Committee
Regional Council Meeting of September 27, 2007

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the September 6, 2007 Committee meeting.)