



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 24, 2020

Smiths Falls Town Council takes action to help provide financial relief to businesses and residents impacted by COVID-19

Smiths Falls – On Monday, March 23, Smiths Falls Town Council met for a Committee of the Whole and a regular council meeting. During these meetings, a number of items were discussed and agreed upon, including several measures aimed at providing financial relief to businesses and residents dealing with the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Council passed a by-law to waive penalties for late payments to the Town, including property tax bills, and utility bills, effective today until further notice.

“Council understands the difficulties being caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic and we want to do what we can to relieve some of the financial stress people are experiencing,” said Shawn Pankow, Mayor of Smiths Falls. “Council’s decision last night to waive all interest and penalties on unpaid water bills and property taxes going forward will enable people having financial difficulty during this crisis to defer the payments until a later date.”

In addition, Town Council agreed to provide an emergency exemption to the parking by-law to allow residents to park free of charge for up to two hours at any metered spaces and at the municipally owned lot at the corner of Market Street and William Street. This will go into effect today until further notice.

Council also agreed to amend the procedural by-law to allow for e-participation at Council and Committee of the Whole meetings during declared emergencies. This discussion was prompted by a recent decision by the province that allows for members

of council who participate electronically to be counted for the purpose of quorum. Staff will research the next steps to allow for e-participation in the future.

Although Town facilities remain closed to the public, Town staff are available and will continue to interact with the public by phone and/or email. [A staff directory is available on our website.](#)

For additional information on COVID-19, please contact the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853 or visit their website at healthunit.org/coronavirus.

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For further information, please contact:

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