

July 20, 2020

Dear municipalities in Simcoe County, the District of Muskoka, the Cities of Barrie and Orillia, and of the four First Nations located in Simcoe Muskoka:

I am writing in follow up to my letter dated June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with respect to questions pertaining to municipal council meetings being held in person with members of the public attending.

On Monday, July 13, 2020, the Province of Ontario announced Phase 2, Stage 3 of the [Re-Opening Ontario Plan](#). With the initiation of Stage 3, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) provides the following communications with regards to your respective public council and other public government meetings that you may have scheduled following the initiation of Stage 3 on Friday, July 17, 2020.

In accordance with [Ontario Regulation 364/20 \(Rules for Areas in Stage 3\)](#), indoor gatherings are permitted to a maximum of 50 persons. Further, persons attending an organized public event shall comply with public health guidance on physical distancing. Accordingly, for the purposes of municipal council and public meetings associated with municipal matters, the following applies:

- Municipal council and public meetings associated with municipal matters are permitted to a maximum of 50 persons.
- Physical distancing between individuals is required to take place in ensuring a distance of 2 metres or greater
- In the event that space for the gathering does not permit 50 persons with physical distancing in place, the maximum number of persons permitted should align with the spacing associated so that each person is distanced at least 2 metres from one another.
- Aisles and walkways should be designated as one way where possible
- As per the instructions provided on July 7, 2020 (revised [July 15, 2020](#)), face coverings must be worn inside businesses and/or organization at all times in publically accessible spaces. Exceptions are provided under the instructions. [FAQs](#) are continually revised, including a recent addition regarding public speaking

In keeping with the above, in person council meetings would be allowed within the requirements specified. However given these limitations, in keeping with the June 30, 2020 communication, SMDHU suggests continuing alternative means of meeting and of seeking public input, where possible, for the duration of the pandemic as an ongoing preventative measure. Such alternative means include [electronic council meetings](#) with public access which is in alignment with [Bill 187](#) which allows for quorum to be counted if municipal council members are participating virtually with all other council meeting requirements remaining. In discussions with the Association of Municipalities in Ontario (AMO), they have advised that they have worked with the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) and the Municipal Information Systems Association (MISA) on virtual meeting guidelines to fulfill all the Municipal Act requirements during virtual meetings including committee meetings which can be found [here](#).

❑ **Barrie:**  
15 Sperling Drive  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 6K9  
705-721-7520  
FAX: 705-721-1495

❑ **Collingwood:**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy.  
Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 4J5  
705-445-0804  
FAX: 705-445-6498

❑ **Cookstown:**  
2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
L0L 1L0  
705-458-1103  
FAX: 705-458-0105

❑ **Gravenhurst:**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
Gravenhurst, ON  
P1P 1Z3  
705-684-9090  
FAX: 705-684-9887

❑ **Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
Huntsville, ON  
P1H 1K1  
705-789-8813  
FAX: 705-789-7245

❑ **Midland:**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
Midland, ON  
L4R 1X8  
705-526-9324  
FAX: 705-526-1513

❑ **Orillia:**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
Orillia, ON  
L3V 4S8  
705-325-9565  
FAX: 705-325-2091

SMDHU remains committed to providing web updates on the provincial Emergency Orders and information for the public and our municipalities with regards to public gatherings. Further information pertaining to COVID-19 can be found at the following page: <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19>.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

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