



CITY OF PRINCE ALBERT

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2022, 5:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PRAYER**
- 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 4. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
- 5. REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION & COMMITTEES**
 - 5.1 Covid-19 Update: Public Health Order Changes (RPT 22-76)
- 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

RPT 22-76

TITLE: Covid-19 Update: Public Health Order Changes

DATE: February 10, 2022

TO: City Council-Special

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Safety policy for Mandatory proof of Covid-19 Vaccination or negative Covid - 19 Test applicable to City employees and the public be removed when the Government of Saskatchewan rescinds the Public Health Order for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test;
2. That the Mandatory proof of Covid-19 Vaccination or negative Covid-19 Test applicable to members of the public accessing civic facilities be removed when the Government of Saskatchewan rescinds the Public Health Order for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test; and
3. That the mandatory use of non-medical face masks for all indoor and outdoor city owned facilities, including Public Transit, be removed when the Government of Saskatchewan rescinds the Public Health Order for Mandatory Isolation Face Covering.

TOPIC & PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to review current Covid-19 protocols implemented by City Council following the Government of Saskatchewan's message that the Public Health Orders will soon be lifted.

BACKGROUND:

Since March of 2020, the Province of Saskatchewan has been in a world-wide Covid-19 pandemic. The public threat of serious illness, hospitalization, protracted and debilitating symptoms and death have lead to the implementation of public safety protocols. Owners of private and public property, employers, and governments at all levels have been driven to enforcing measures aimed at mitigating the risk and harms that have arisen from the pandemic over time, by regulating and restricting the manner in which the public gather and interact in public and work settings.

Through 2020 to date, the Government of Saskatchewan has implemented mandatory health care directives and restrictions from time to time, in varying forms, in response to Covid-19 public safety concerns as the pandemic has evolved and after the emergence of variant strains of the virus posing different levels of contagion and severity of personal health implication.

These directives and restrictions curtailed and governed public interactions in public and private spaces, with a view to reducing risk of contagion and serious consequences of exposure to the virus. The directives included requirements of personal masking, social distancing, and virus infection/exposure isolation. Eventually, as developed vaccines were approved for use, restrictions for unvaccinated individuals were implemented by a mechanism of vaccination “passport”. Persons choosing to remain unvaccinated (without medical or religious reasons) were limited in their access to events, stores and public venues unless they could prove they were not infected by providing expensive clinical testing results.

In October 2021, in response to the Delta variant, the Government of Saskatchewan implemented Provincial OHS Regulations to encourage broader vaccination throughout the Province, and with the intention of supporting employers who elected to introduce greater protection into their workplace through safe workplace policies requiring employees to present for work either vaccinated or by production of regular negative Covid-19 test results.

In order to best meet legislated obligations of both the City and of City employees to provide and cooperate toward safe workplaces, City Council implemented a number of policies for Civic facilities.

The relevant Resolutions of Council are outlined below and are attached to this Report:

1. **Council’s Resolution re masking in public facilities:**
Council Resolution No. 0343 – September 7, 2021
RE: Mandatory use of Non-medical Face Masks implemented at all civic indoor and outdoor facilities and transit buses. (Attached).
2. **Council’s Resolutions re vaccines and testing requirements for access to City facilities:**
 - (a) Council Resolution No. 0372 (see #2.a.) – October 12, 2021
RE: Requirement for Public’s Access to City Facilities: Mandatory Proof of Covid-19 Vaccination/Negative Covid-19 Test.
 - (b) Council Resolution No. 0394 – October 18, 2021 – Covid-19 Regulations applied to 12 Year Old Children’s Proof of Vaccination for Continuing Access to Civic Facilities (after vaccines became available for persons 12 – 18 years).
 - (c) Council Resolution No. 0467 – November 29, 2021 – Covid-19 Guidelines for City Facilities – Covid-19 Regulations applied to 12 year old children’s proof of vaccination for continuing access to civic facilities (after vaccines became available for persons 12 – 18 years).

3. Council's Resolution regarding the Covid-19 Safe Workplace Policy:

(a) Council Resolution No. 0372 – October 12, 2021 [see #1(a) –(g)].

RE: Approval of Mandatory Proof of Covid-19 Vaccination/Negative Covid-19 pertaining to City Employees). (Resolution attached, along with Safety Administrative Policy – COVID-19 Workplace Safety implemented pursuant to Council's Resolution).

This week the Premier announced that the Government of Saskatchewan's Covid-19 health guidelines and its safe workplace vaccination Regulations will be substantially withdrawn effective February 14, 2022. Government of Saskatchewan vaccination and Covid-negative test verification requirements will be eliminated, as will Government of Saskatchewan workplace policies (except for the SHA). Changes to public masking requirements will be deferred until the end of February.

PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:

Since March 2020, when the first reported case of COVID-19 emerged in Saskatchewan, the City has implemented various measures to prioritize the health and safety of residents and employees while continuing to provide civic services.

In doing so, the City has had to adapt quickly to find innovative ways to deliver core services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Operations have been adjusted with consideration to the public health directions from the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Health Authority local medical health officers to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace and community. As much as possible, the City of Prince Albert has relied upon and aligned itself with the Government of Saskatchewan's direction regarding appropriate health measures.

With the Government of Saskatchewan's message that the Public Health Orders will soon be lifted, the City must determine what steps to take to ensure the safety of its staff and the public who are accessing City services.

Proof of Negative Test Requirements

In preparation for the removal of this Public Health Order, Administration is recommending that City Council give consideration to repealing the Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements for City of Prince Albert Facilities including the Covid-19 Safe Workplace policy which requires City employees present proof of Covid-19 vaccination or proof of negative covid-19 test.

The Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements obligated residents and employees accessing City facilities to disclose personal health information. The City can employ many measures to manage the COVID-19 transmission risk in City-owned facilities that does not require disclosure of personal health information. Measures that may remain in place include enhanced cleaning, physical distancing, the requirement not to enter City owned facilities if an individual has symptoms of COVID-19 and, potentially, masking.

The pandemic has evolved through stages in varying degrees of shape and public threat. Prior to vaccine development, the original strain of the Covid-19 virus spread unabated, over-ran ICU capacity in hospitals, and caused deaths in both healthy and vulnerable sectors of society. The recent emergence of the generally less severe Omicron strain as the now predominant Covid-19 virus has once again changed and therefore requires consideration of a readjustment of the protocols the City of Prince Albert has in place.

Face Covering Requirement:

Since March 2020, there have been several changes to face covering requirements in indoor public locations. These requirements have been adjusted throughout the different waves of the pandemic. The Government of Saskatchewan has announced that mandatory face coverings will be rescinded by the end of February. In the absence of face covering orders, City Council has chosen in the past to implement mandatory masking in City facilities and when accessing City services when COVID-19 transmission is high.

When the face covering requirements of the Public Health Order are rescinded City Council may continue the requirement, as approved at its September 7, 2021 City Council Meeting, that all persons accessing all City facilities and public transit wear a face mask. Continuing masking requirements does add a layer of protection in civic facilities which will reassure some residents and employees who have concerns about the transmission of COVID-19 in our community.

For ease of transition and certainty, it may also be considered that the masking requirement follow the requirements prescribed in Public Health Order Mandatory Isolation and Face Coverings. In this case, the City would continue focusing on educating and informing rather than enforcing the use of face masks within City owned facilities and services. In the current situation, tensions are expected to increase should the province lift their Public Health Order and the City continue with a mask requirement. The City should be prepared for opposition to the continuation of masking in City owned facilities and services and the potential for increased non-compliance, conflict and altercations regarding masking between residents using City services.

If City Council decides to continue with masking at City facilities and on City Transit, it is expected it would be a temporary measure while the community once again adjusts to the changing pandemic landscape. It is suggested that if approved, the requirement be revisited on a monthly basis to confirm if it remains a necessary measure of protection. At the writing of this report, a high viral load of Covid-19 has been detected in Prince Albert's waste water. Maintaining masking until waste water data shows a consistent downward trend may be an appropriate trigger to consider removing the mask requirement.

COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:

Internal discussions have occurred with Community Services staff who are largely impacted by the change in the public requirements for proof of vaccination and negative Covid-19 test. Administration has also been in touch with union executives and the OHS Committee regarding the potential changes to protocols for both the workplace and the public.

A media release will be prepared and sent out immediately following the Council meeting to communicate any updated directives on Covid-19 protocols. Updates to the City's website and social media will also be prepared and communication shared with employees along with applicable updated posters for facilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or Negative Test Requirements for City of Prince Albert facilities was checked by Commissionaires. With the removal of the requirements, there will no longer be a cost for this service. This service cost \$7,383/week.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

There are no other options, policy, privacy, strategic plan or official community plan implications.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The following elements of the strategic plan are relevant to this discussion:
Accountable and Transparent: We will make decisions based on clear and proactive criteria and we will provide information that is relevant, accessible, timely and accurate

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

PRESENTATION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

21-09-07 MOT Dionne-Implementation of Covid-19 Restrictions RES CC
21-10-12 RPT 21-461 CORR 21-91 CORR 21-92 RES CC SP
21-10-18 MOT Dionne-Covid-19 Regulations for 12 Year Old Children RES CC
21-11-29 MOT Kilmer-Covid-19 Guidelines for City Facilities RES CC

Written by: Kiley Bear, Director of Corporate Services

Approved by: City Manager

17.4 Motion – Mayor G. Dionne – Implementation of Covid-19 Restrictions

Councillor B. Edwards assumed the Chair.

0342. **Moved by:** Mayor G. Dionne
Seconded by: Councillor D. Cody

That pursuant to the provisions of the City's Procedure Bylaw No. 26 of 2014, that the Notice Provisions be waived to permit consideration of Mayor G. Dionne's Motion regarding Implementation of Covid-19 Restrictions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

0343. **Moved by:** Mayor G. Dionne
Seconded by: Councillor D. Cody

1. That mandatory use of Non-medical Face Masks be implemented at all indoor and outdoor City owned facilities, including City Transit, effective September 10, 2021;
2. That participants in all sports and aquatic activities at all City owned facilities both indoor and outdoor are exempt from wearing face masks while competing/practicing that portion of their sport/activity; and,
3. That Administration, in consultation with the Medical Health Officer for Prince Albert, prepare a Plan regarding the following for consideration at an upcoming meeting:
 - a. to implement Mandatory Proof of a Negative Covid-19 Test for all City employees, unless they can prove they have been double vaccinated and are two (2) weeks past their last vaccination; and,
 - b. to implement Mandatory Proof of a Negative Covid-19 Test for the public accessing indoor City facilities, unless they can prove they have been double vaccinated two (2) weeks prior to access.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mayor G. Dionne resumed the Chair.

5.2 Mandatory Proof of Covid-19 Vaccination/Negative Covid-19 Test for Employees and the Public (RPT 21-461)

5.2.1 CUPE Local 160 Response to Covid-19 Vaccination Policy (CORR 21-91)

5.2.2 CUPE Local 882 Response to Covid-19 Vaccination Policy (CORR 21-92)
(PRESENTED AT MEETING)

Verbal Presentations were provided by Leslie Mourot-Bartley, President and Mike Huxley, Vice President, Canadian Union of Public Employees Local No. 160.

0372. **Moved by:** Councillor B. Edwards
Seconded by: Councillor T. Zurakowski

1. That in order to best meet the legislated obligations of both the City and of City employees to provide and cooperate toward safe workplaces, it is approved:
 - a. That Administration proceed with the implementation of a Safety Policy for Mandatory proof of Covid-19 Vaccination applicable to all City employees in all City of Prince Albert facilities and workplaces;
 - b. That employees that do not provide proof of being fully vaccinated with the recommended number of doses of a federally approved Covid-19 vaccine by October 25, 2021, they shall submit proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken within seven (7) days prior to reporting for work;
 - c. That the test is to be completed on non-work time and at the employee's cost;
 - d. That if an employee receives their 1st vaccination by October 25, 2021, the City will reimburse the employee for their required testing until November 22, 2021;
 - e. That all third party contractors who come into regular close proximity to City employees and workplaces confirm they have a policy that meets or exceeds this safety standard;
 - f. That all members of Council provide proof of being fully vaccinated to the City Clerk by October 25, 2021; and,
 - g. That all volunteers who access City facilities be in compliance with the same regulations for members of the public accessing City facilities effective October 13, 2021; and,

2. That in order to protect all City facilities and workplaces against the spread of Covid-19, it is approved:
 - a. That all City facilities, excluding the Police Service Headquarters and Substation, City Hall Foyer and Airport, require proof of vaccination for those eligible, or alternately proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken within 72 hours prior to entering the facility, effective October 13, 2021.

CARRIED

0373. **Moved by:** Councillor T. Lennox-Zepp
Seconded by: Councillor D. Kilmer

That the City send a strong letter through the Mayor's Office to the Provincial Government stating concerns with the Provincial Government's Covid-19 measures, which have left the City in the position of implementing its own Covid-19 measures.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

17.1 Motion – Mayor G. Dionne – Covid-19 Regulations for 12 Year Old Children

Councillor B. Edwards assumed the Chair.

0393. **Moved by:** Mayor G. Dionne
Seconded by: Councillor D. Kilmer

That pursuant to the provisions of the City's Procedure Bylaw No. 26 of 2014, that the Notice Provisions be waived to permit consideration of Mayor G. Dionne's Motion regarding Covid-19 Regulations for 12 Year Old Children.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

0394. **Moved by:** Mayor G. Dionne
Seconded by: Councillor D. Kilmer

That in order to maintain access to Municipal facilities, any child that is 12 years old as of October 13, 2021, has ninety (90) days from October 13, 2021 to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and any child that turns 12 years old after October 13, 2021, has ninety (90) days to be fully vaccinated from the date of their birthday.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mayor G. Dionne resumed the Chair.

17.3 Motion – Councillor D. Kilmer – Covid-19 Guidelines for City Facilities

0466. **Moved by:** Councillor D. Kilmer
Seconded by: Councillor D. Cody

That pursuant to the provisions of the Procedure Bylaw No. 26 of 2014, that the Notice Provisions be waived to permit consideration of Councillor D. Kilmer’s Motion regarding Covid-19 Guidelines for City Facilities.

CARRIED

0467. **Moved by:** Councillor D. Kilmer
Seconded by: Councillor D. Cody

That in order to continue to protect all City facilities and workplaces against the spread of Covid-19, it is approved:

1. That all City facilities excluding the Police Service Headquarters and Substation, City Hall Foyer and Airport, require proof of full vaccination in order for any member of the public 12 years or older to be permitted to enter, or alternatively proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken no more than 72 hours prior to entering the facility;
2. That these proof of vaccination or negative test result requirements shall apply to a child that turns 12 years old ninety (90) days following the date of their 12th birthday;
3. That effective February 28, 2022, these proof of vaccination or negative test result requirements apply to members of the public 5 years of age and older; and,
4. That after February 28, 2022, these proof of vaccination or negative test result requirements shall apply to any child that turns 5 years old ninety (90) days following the date of their 5th birthday.

CARRIED