

Aurora looks to make sure it's business as usual in the event of emergency

Aurora is taking measures to ensure it is business as usual in the event of an emergency.

Sitting at the Committee level last week, Council tentatively approved a budget increase of \$103,200, funded by reserves and grants, to the Town's Emergency Management Program.

The resulting Business Continuity Management Program will ensure the business of the Town can be continue largely interrupted in the face of an emergency.

"We're expanding beyond just simple business continuity in the situation where there is an interruption like an outage or major emergency and we're bringing in tools for staff to do business planning along the whole spectrum," said CAO Doug Nadorozny. "[This will inform] the Business Continuity Plan when we do have an emergency or some other interruption of service, it is more comprehensive but it includes all the work of the Business Continuity approach.

"We have much more to work with [Emergency Preparedness] but we want to do it holistically with all the business practices in mind as opposed to just continuity from the perspective of the emergency. It will be a subset of the broader plan."

Further examples cited by Mr. Nadorozny included an IT failure and extreme weather.

In approving the measures, Council sought assurances that emergencies from the public safety perspective would still be the focus of its own plan and strategy.

That assurance came, but given the work that went into business continuity during the global pandemic across the board at the municipal level, Councillor Sandra Humfries said she wanted to make sure this wasn't a matter of reinventing the wheel.

"Looking at potential improvements, have we learned on what our own gaps are?" she asked. "Do we necessarily need to do more consultation? I think we have just lived through two years of substantial disruption and I think the Town did an incredible job. It sounds like some IT work, which is already in the mix.

"I think the Town has done such a good job; I'm not sure if we have to go all out."

But there were other aspects of business continuity that weren't "tested" with the pandemic, including "catastrophic IT disruption" and other challenges that would impact the Town's "ability to generate revenues" including getting out tax bills.

"I am confident there is a lot more work to do in this area," said Mr. Nadorozny. "This is an area where you're never really finished, quite frankly, but I think there is a significant gap to bring us up to today's standard for a municipality.

By Brock Weir
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