



Agenda
Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

September 30, 2020

10:00 am

Video Conference

Click the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzuUpFqxcEI8OG-dOYKteFQ>

Pages

1.	CALL TO ORDER	
2.	DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST	
3.	AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA	
4.	DELEGATIONS	
5.	ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES	2
6.	BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES	
6.1	Task Force Mandate	6
6.2	Phase 2	
6.2.1	Development of an online marketplace	9
6.2.2	Recommendation by Allan Stewart	10
7.	REPORTS	
8.	OTHER BUSINESS	
9.	UPCOMING MEETINGS	
10.	ADJOURNMENT	



Minutes

Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force Regular Meeting

August 19, 2020

10:00 am

Video Conference

Click the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzuUpFqxcEI8OG-dOYKteFQ>

Member Present Mayor Strathdee, Councillor Edney, Allan Stewart, Greg Thompson,
Scott Taylor, Sue Griffiths

Member Absent Ed Parkinson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved By Greg Thompson

Seconded By Allan Stewart

THAT the August 19, 2020 regular Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force agenda be accepted as presented.

Carried

4. DELEGATIONS

None

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Moved By Allan Stewart

Seconded By Greg Thompson

THAT the June 26, 2020 regular Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force minutes be accepted as presented.

Carried

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Kelly Deeks-Johnson provided a status summary of projects to date that were directed from the task force. These include: the sanitizer stations for downtown have been delivered, messages of safety have been implemented in the downtown, the banners are in progress and will be up in the near future and Sue Griffiths met with the BIA, along with Town staff, to discuss options for an incentive program to encourage shopping.

André Morin provided an update on the financial spend from the \$300,000 allocated for local COVID relief. At this point only about \$55,000 has been spent or committed. Of the \$100,000 allocated for business recovery, \$20,000 has been committed and expenditures are expected to be lower. The financial pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic doesn't seem to be what we initially thought, presumably because of Government financial support. However, we expect that businesses and residents will begin to experience further financial pressures over the coming months as financial relief programs begin to cease.

7. REPORTS

None

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Phase 2

The committee discussed their mandate and agreed that it needed to be refined.

Chair Taylor asked for an indication of interest from all members, each responding with a wish to keep going.

Sue Griffiths indicated that consumers are shifting to online and this seems to be the way forward, recommended that the committee help the businesses become proactive with technology. Griffiths added that, along

with the BIA, we are exploring an online marketplace for St. Marys, an amazon concept but for local shopping. North Perth has implemented a similar model.

Greg Thompson would like the committee to continue promoting the message of shopping safely and agrees with the suggestion of an online local shopping experience.

Allan Stewart agreed with a focus on retail and places that host events but would also like to consider business to business and service clubs.

Councillor Edney expressed that the Army and Navy has reached out to ask about support. Perhaps the committee should look at implement interest free loans. Also suggested the development of an ad campaign that further promotes shopping local.

Chair Taylor added that perhaps the group needs to consider recreation also, it's not a business in general but it's a business for the Town.

The Chair indicated that at this point it's up to the Town to decide if the group is still useful.

André Morin added that staff will discuss the mandate with Council and report back to the committee. Going forward they could discuss what phase 2 next steps are and be ready to move forward when needed. A challenge that has been identified is loans for a business to start up. This could be explored.

Sue Griffiths added that to set up a online shopping marketplace will take a resource to help get it started. Chair Taylor noted that the site would need its own identity and not be housed on the Town's municipal site.

Chair Taylor summarized that the committee agrees that this is worth pursuing. The next step is to determine what the implementation costs will be.

8.2 2021 Budget - Council Request

Discussion was part of 8.1.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meeting will be the last week of September. Chair Taylor asked that the agenda be sent a week in advance and the committee respond with their ideas for discussion.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Sue Griffiths

Seconded By Greg Thompson

THAT this meeting of the Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force adjourn at 11:18 AM.

Carried

Chair

Committee Secretary

FORMAL REPORT

To:	Mayor Stratthdee and Members of Council
Prepared by:	André Morin, Director of Finance / Treasurer
Date of Meeting:	8 September 2020
Subject:	FIN 28-2020 Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

PURPOSE

For Council to review and update the mandate of the Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

RECOMMENDATION

THAT FIN 28-2020 Business Support and Recovery Task Force report be received; and

THAT Council support staff's option # _____

THAT term of the Business Support and Recovery Task Force end on _____.

BACKGROUND

As part of Council's efforts to assist the community through the COVID-19 pandemic, a Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force (the "Task Force") was created by Council on May 19, 2020. The Task Force is comprised of 2 Elected Officials and 5 members of the public appointed by Council.

The current duties and mandate of the Task Force outlined in their Terms of Reference are:

The Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force shall advise and assist Council and the citizens of the Town of St. Marys on matters relating to business and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee' focus will be supporting the business community during and immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of the Committee is to assist in advancing the priorities as outlined by Council, the Community Business Plan and Community Financial Relief Plan.

Specific duties of the Committee may include:

1. Review and understand the current COVID-19 financial support/incentive programs offered to businesses and business owners by the Provincial and Federal Governments;
2. Engage with the local business community to understand the challenges facing businesses and their needs to overcome these challenges;
3. Research and make recommendations to Council on local financial programs that should be offered by the municipality to the local business community;

4. Research and make recommendations to Council on how best to support the local business community;
5. Research and make recommendations to Council regarding how to increase existing partnerships and develop new business partnerships.

REPORT

To date, the Task Force has operated under a hands-off approach by staff. Rather than staff researching and preparing reports for the Task Force to consider at each meeting, the meeting approach has been more informal, and discussion based. Staff took this approach to allow the members of the Task Force to have the ability to freely bring forward their thoughts, feedback, perspectives and proposed solutions to issues the members were observing in the local business community. A thorough report on the Task Force's work to date was provided at the August 25th Council meeting. The report is reattached as a reminder.

Through various discussions, members of the Task Force have asked if there could be or should be more that they are doing. The Task Force has requested a review of the current mandate to ensure it's meeting the needs of the business community and that the committee members' time spent is being utilized effectively. Current members of the Task force have all indicated an interest to continue with providing support and input.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been very disruptive to the economy. The true economic impact has been very difficult to predict; and as equally challenging to plan for. Furthermore, the timing of economic supports may have shifted – originally it was believed that financial supports would be required by our business community early on in the pandemic; it now appears that longer term support and recovery plans will be essential. With that all being said, Task Force members want to ensure their mandate from Council is clear.

There are 3 basic options for Council to consider:

1. Status Quo – Continue with current mandate as described above
2. Disband the Task Force
3. Change the mandate of the Task Force

The first two options are straight forward. The third option Council may want to consider is revising the mandate previous approved.

Without changing the Task Force mandate, staff have discussed some further options that may help the Task Force members better understand their focus and better utilize the members time and expertise. For consideration:

- Staff operate the Task Force more like an advisory committee of Council
 - Have scheduled meetings (every 2 months, monthly if needed)
 - Staff prepare reports for the discussion at the meeting, recommendations are forwarded to Council for approval
- Set a timeline for the Task Force – while originally expected to be short term, a longer-term horizon is now a reality. Setting a 1-year commitment may be helpful– say to August 31, 2021 (to be reviewed in June 2021)
- Add more members to the Task Force from business related organizations like Chamber of Commerce, Stratford Tourism Alliance, BIA, or the Stratford Perth Centre for Business – this may help coordination and resourcing of potential programs or incentives

Staff will discuss with Council the options and will look for guidance as to any changes required to the mandate or operation of the Task Force.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council has currently allocated up to \$100,000 to the Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force initiatives. To date, approximately \$20,000 has been committed.

SUMMARY

Council created a Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force in May 2020 to assist in developing actions and incentives to assist the local business community through the COVID-19 pandemic. Council has been asked to review and make any necessary changes to the Task Force's mandate.

STRATEGIC PLAN

☒ Not applicable to this report.

OTHERS CONSULTED

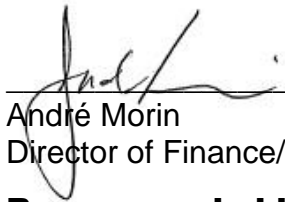
Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force
Kelly Deeks-Johnson, Economic Development Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force Status update July 27

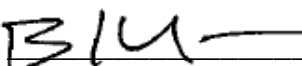
REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the Department



André Morin
Director of Finance/Treasurer

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk

Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

Phase 2: Development of an online marketplace for St. Marys

A shop local web site that would create a searchable directory of all businesses in St. Marys.

Greg Thompson explored this idea with his IT Department and the outcome to date is as follows:

- IT recommends running an off the rack program called “Searchables”. This program is easily managed through previously developed templates that are easy to complete. The suggestion is that one person with a laptop could visit each business location to get the necessary details, including photos, to complete the page in one visit.
- Each business web page would include phone numbers, addresses, business overview and some marketing space specific to that business. For those businesses with websites it would provide a link to that website. This should work for all categories of businesses including services, professional and any other categories.
- What we would look to contract from a website designer are primarily the design elements. They could perform the information collection, but it was suggested this was basic and could be easily managed by us. Cost estimate \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on level of data involvement.
- Unless there is a tender requirement, I think the Ottawa group design capabilities seem perfectly suited to do the job.

This project could become the focus for stage 2. Supporting the development of individual websites for all businesses, we can create a model that will manage costs which we can perhaps subsidize.

For businesses with web sites we could support E commerce options with well-priced add on programs. Online ordering and payment options could be cost controlled and again potentially subsidized.

Further explored could be local delivery options. The plan would be to link this through the websites.

Sue Griffiths suggested linking to a marketing initiative with subsidized gift cards.

Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

Town of St. Marys

Recommendation

Background: The Business Economic Support and Recovery Task Force (the Committee) had its inaugural meeting on May 25, 2020. The meeting was formed to provide recommendations to Council on how to spend \$300,000 in an effort to help businesses survive the Covid-19 crisis. At that meeting, Andre Morin, Director of Finance/Treasurer for the Town of St. Marys reviewed how Council had directed \$100,000 for Community Wellness, \$100,000 for Business Wellness and \$100,000 for Administration/future distribution. It was made clear that Council may determine (with input from the Committee) if these amounts need to change or shift.

Status Report: As of July 22, the Committee has recommended and implemented sidewalk decals, floor mat decals, sanitary stations (still waiting for delivery) and providing an online source for PPE. Total expenditure is approximately \$55,000 (\$20,000 for the above). These expenditures can be classed into all three categories (Community wellness, business wellness and Administration). We have spent 18.3% of the allotted money.

Other Pertinent Information:

1. The Federal Government has provided funds to each Provincial Government to help with Covid-19 relief. Last month, Ontario Premier, Doug Ford, took a lot of heat from the press for not having used the bulk of those funds.
2. The Stratford Business Chamber of Commerce has announced that they are managing for this area, the Canada United Small Business Relief Fund in this area. Applicants can apply for up to \$5000 relief for purchasing PPE, Renovating physical space to comply with Covid-19 protocols, and developing or improving e-commerce capabilities for your business. Any business can apply.

Recommendation:

1. We make a similar offer to local business owners as did the Canada United Business did.
2. We could offer up to \$2000 per business. This money could be available to any business who has had at least a 30% decrease in gross revenue since March 16.
3. We should either recommend or insist that the money can be used for purchases in the area (thus keeping the money in the community and invoking that "Rule of Seven"¹ discussed at an

¹ If money is given to someone, they will spend a significant portion of that money in their community. Those people/businesses who collect that money as revenue, will turn around and spend a significant portion of that money, benefiting more people and more businesses. As this process continues, it is estimated that the total amount of money that eventually gets distributed is seven times the original donated amount.

earlier meeting. If we insist that the money be spent in the community, this could be administered a number of ways:

- a. The recipient presents the Town with proof of purchase and is then reimbursed for up to the agreed upon amount.
 - b. The recipient makes the purchase with “St. Marys Bucks” and the receiving business contacts the Town for the agreed amount.
 - c. The recipient receives a cheque for the agreed amount after the recipient has signed a document stating that they agree to spend the money at a St. Marys business.
4. It can be argued that this strategy will fall under all three categories (Community, Business, and Future/Administration). So we only need to subtract out the projected administration costs outlined in point 3 from the \$245,000 left.

Conclusion/Summary:

We have been tasked with the distribution of \$300,000 to assist businesses and the community during this crisis. It is my belief that having only distributed 18.3% of that money in four months suggests that we have not met our original objectives. It is my fear that we might fail to help out those businesses that need help the most – when they needed the most.

We have discussed many ideas, but most have met roadblocks or been deemed too complicated to administer. The above suggestion is straightforward, easy to administer, and will get money into the hands of those businesses who need it the most – expediently.

I understand that this money will not mean the difference between continuing on and bankruptcy, but when added to other relief efforts, will make it a lot easier to continue on.

Allan Stewart,

Committee Member