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Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, September 23, 2021

6:30 pm

Meeting Will be Held Electronically due to COVID-19.

Please contact Michelle Paton at michelle.paton@rvca.ca or 1-800-267-3504 ext 1177 in advance of the meeting if you wish to receive instructions to join.

AGENDA

Meeting 7/21	Page
1.0 Agenda Review	
2.0 Adoption of Agenda	
3.0 Declaration of Interest	
4.0 Approval of Minutes from July 22, 2021	
5.0 Business Arising from Minutes	
6.0 COVID-19 Vaccine Policy Staff Report Attached (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson)	1
7.0 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Staff Report Attached (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson)	15
8.0 2022 Preliminary Budget Discussion Staff Report Attached (Sommer Casgrain-Robertson)	18
9.0 Meetings	
a) Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee Meeting: September 7, 2021	
b) RVCF Board of Directors Meeting: September 8, 2021	
c) Policy Working Group Meeting #4: September 14, 2021	
Upcoming	
d) Conservation Ontario Council Meeting: September 27, 2021	

**Proudly working in partnership
with our 18 watershed municipalities**

Athens, Augusta, Beckwith, Central Frontenac, Clarence-Rockland,
Drummond/North Elmsley, Elizabethtown-Kitley, Merrickville-Wolford, Montague,
North Dundas, North Grenville, Ottawa, Perth, Rideau Lakes, Smiths Falls, South Frontenac, Tay Valley, Westport

- e) Ontario East Municipal Conference: October 20-21, 2021
- f) Lake Links Workshop: October 23, 2021
- g) RVCA Board of Directors Meeting: October 28, 2021

10.0 Correspondence

- a) Letter to Minister Piccini Re: New Appointment and Conservation
Authorities Working Group (dated July 13, 2021)21
- b) Response from Minister Piccini (dated August 27, 2021)22

11.0 Member Inquiries

12.0 New Business

13.0 Adjournment



**6.0 COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy
Report #: 1-210923**

To: RVCA Board of Directors
From: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager
Date: September 16, 2021

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Attachment

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority direct staff to implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination and testing policy requiring all RVCA employees, board and committee members, contractors, students and volunteers to provide proof of vaccination or undergo a vaccine education session and regular antigen testing as noted in the policy outlined in this report.

Purpose

To seek direction and approval for a workplace COVID-19 vaccination policy.

Background

The RVCA continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and implement measures based on the advice and recommendations of government and public health officials to:

- Protect employee health and safety first and foremost;
- Protect the health and safety of clients and the public;
- Maintain delivery of programs and services where possible; and
- Protect the legal and financial interests of the RVCA.

This staff report provides an update since Report # 4-210225, presented to the Board on February 25, 2021.

On August 24, 2021 the provincial government amended Ontario Regulation 364/20 to add the following section:

(2.1) The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall operate the business or organization in compliance with any advice, recommendations and instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, or by a medical officer of health after consultation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health,

(a) requiring the business or organization to establish, implement and ensure compliance with a COVID-19 vaccination policy; or

(b) setting out the precautions and procedures that the business or organization must include in its COVID-19 vaccination policy.

Following this regulatory amendment, Ottawa Public Health issued a guide to support workplace vaccination policies. The guide is attached and states in part:

Ottawa Public Health strongly recommends businesses and employers develop and implement workplace vaccination policies for their employees and workforce, and that all those eligible receive a complete series of the COVID-19 vaccine. Supporting employees to get fully vaccinated is the best way to help protect them from the risks of COVID-19, prevent outbreaks and build confidence in the health and safety of the workplace as we face a Delta variant-fueled resurgence in our community.

Employers have a responsibility to maintain a safe work environment for their employees. To help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, a vaccine policy is an important measure employers should implement.

While strongly encouraged, these recommendations are voluntary, and are not intended to be legally enforceable under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit also issued guidance regarding workplace COVID-19 vaccine policies. This guidance is attached and states in part:

There are many benefits for all workplaces to have an organization specific COVID-19 vaccine policy. It can be part of the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan considering specific risks in the organization for COVID-19 transmission, provide an opportunity to provide education and awareness to all employees, and promote higher levels of vaccination in the workplace to increase the safety of employees and the public.

In workplaces, vaccination adds to, rather than replaces, the strict adherence to established COVID-19 public health measures. Employers must continue to implement all COVID-19 prevention measures for their sector outlined in Ministry of Labour and provincial regulations and guidelines: screening for symptoms, physical distancing, wearing of masks, hand washing, regular environmental cleaning, and a COVID-19 safety plan.

In recent weeks, there have been many federal, provincial and local announcements regarding the implementation of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies. To our knowledge:

- The Government of Canada is requiring all federal department, federally regulated sector and crown corporation employees to be fully vaccinated (unless they have a medical exemption).

- The Province of Ontario is requiring all Ontario Public Service employees as well as those working in long-term care, hospitals, schools, home care service providers and paramedics to be fully vaccinated (unless they have a medical exemption). Unvaccinated employees will have to undergo a vaccine education course and regular antigen testing.
- The City of Ottawa is requiring all employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers and students to be fully vaccinated (unless they have a medical exemption). Unvaccinated employees will be required to complete a vaccine education session. Employees who do not comply with the policy will not be permitted in the workplace and may be subject to a variety of consequences, which can include leave without pay or discipline, up to and including dismissal.
- University of Ottawa, Carleton University and Algonquin College (Ottawa, Perth and Pembroke campuses) are requiring staff and students to be fully vaccinated.
- As of September 22, 2021, Ontarians will also need to be fully vaccinated to access certain public settings and facilities including:
 - Restaurants and bars (excluding outdoor patios, as well as delivery and takeout);
 - Nightclubs (including outdoor areas of the establishment);
 - Meeting and event spaces, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres;
 - Facilities used for sports and fitness activities and personal fitness training, such as gyms, fitness and recreational facilities with the exception of youth recreational sport;
 - Sporting events;
 - Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments;
 - Concerts, music festivals, theatres and cinemas;
 - Strip clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs;
 - Racing venues (e.g., horse racing).

Analysis

When it comes to developing a workplace vaccination policy, employers ultimately need to balance health and safety legal duties with employee's privacy and human rights protections. After reviewing public health guidance, seeking legal counsel and consulting with other conservation authorities as well as RVCA's management team and Joint Health and Safety Committee, it is recommended that the RVCA implement a mandatory vaccination and testing policy for the following reasons:

- Under the Occupational Health & Safety Act, employers are obliged to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of its workers. To-date, the RVCA has followed all public health direction regarding COVID-19 by putting multiple safe work procedures and protocols in place to protect employees and the public. These include daily health screening, masking and distancing requirements, additional PPE, enhanced cleaning, the closing of buildings to the general public, signage at our conservation areas, work from home policies and virtual meetings. The addition of a mandatory vaccination and testing policy would demonstrate our ongoing commitment to following public health guidance

and our commitment to taking all reasonable precautions to protect staff from COVID-19.

- Specifically, this policy would align the RVCA with Ottawa Public Health guidance which is where three of our four main worksites are located (main office, workshop and Baxter Conservation Area).
- This policy will also enable the RVCA to more safely implement a return-to-work plan for those staff working remotely and relax other COVID-19 measures in the workplace such as masking, distancing and virtual meetings once allowed for by public health.
- As an organization that serves the public, our clients also want to ensure they can access our programs and services safely and this policy will inform them of the steps being taken by the RVCA to not only protect staff but also our clients and the public.

Proposed Policy Outline

The mandatory policy will require the following of all RVCA employees, board and committee members, contractors, volunteers and students (herein referred to as “employees”):

- 1) Be fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
 - 2) Advise of a medical or human rights exception for not being vaccinated and undertake regular testing; or
 - 3) Complete a COVID-19 vaccine education session and undertake regular testing.
- Employees will be required to provide proof of their vaccination status by October 8, 2021. Those employees who have not been vaccinated or who do not wish to disclose their vaccination status by October 8, 2021 will be required to attend a vaccine education session.
 - Unvaccinated employees will then need to provide proof of their first dose no later than October 29, 2021. As of November 29, 2021, it will be mandatory for all staff to have received their first and second doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Proof of vaccination will consist of the documentation issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health, other province or territory or international equivalent indicating individual immunization status against the COVID-19 virus with vaccines approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization.
 - The procedure for collecting, using and storing proof of vaccination by Human Resources will be determined by the RVCA and will comply with privacy legislation.
 - Those employees who continue to be unvaccinated or prefer not to disclose their vaccination status will be subject to undertake regular testing for COVID-

19 and provide proof of a negative result. The logistics, process and intervals for testing will be determined by the RVCA.

- Vaccination exceptions are subject to bona fide medical and human rights reasons and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to RVCA's accommodation process.
- RVCA will support and encourage employee vaccination by providing paid time to attend COVID-19 vaccination clinics or appointments during work time.
- All employees are required to continue to practice all public health measures and adhere to all safe working procedures and policies as outlined in RVCA's COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures to control the spread of COVID-19 regardless of their vaccination status.
- Non-compliance with the policy will result in a meeting with the employee and possible discipline. Such discipline to be up to and including termination.

Should this policy outline be approved, a communication memo will go out to staff immediately advising of the rollout of this policy and that as additional details of the policy are finalized, we will keep all staff informed.

Input From Other Sources

As the province continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RVCA continues to have discussions with other conservation authorities, watershed municipalities, health units and other partners to discuss public health recommendations, provincial regulations and local responses. RVCA also continues to seek legal counsel and work with its Joint Health and Safety Committee regarding the pandemic and employment implications. Special thanks to Hamilton Conservation Authority who shared their COVID-19 policy outline with RVCA.

Financial Considerations

Ontario has a Provincial Antigen Screening Program that provides free antigen tests to organizations that are permitted to open under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and where individuals must be physically present on site, to enable them to test employees.

Legal Considerations

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, employers have a range of legal duties to protect the health and safety of employees. Employees also have the right to refuse unsafe work and the right to be informed about actual and potential dangers in the workplace.

The province has also issued regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act* including Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3 which applies to Green, Yellow, and Orange zones.

The *Employment Standards Act* also provides minimum standards for most employees working in Ontario, setting out the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers including new COVID-19 job-protected unpaid leaves.

In light of these and other legal considerations, the RVCA has been working, and will continue to work, with legal counsel to develop all COVID-19 related policies and procedures.

Adherence to RVCA Policy

RVCA's COVID-19 procedures, policies and practices will continue to be updated as the pandemic evolves.

Link to Strategic Plan

N/A

Attachments

- Ottawa Public Health: *A Guide on How to Create a Workplace Vaccination Policy*
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit: *Workplace COVID-19 Vaccine Policies*



A Guide on How to Create a Workplace Vaccination Policy

Last revised: September 13, 2021

Ottawa Public Health strongly recommends businesses and employers develop and implement workplace vaccination policies for their employees and workforce, and that all those eligible receive a complete series of the COVID-19 vaccine. Supporting employees to get fully vaccinated is the best way to help protect them from the risks of COVID-19, prevent outbreaks and build confidence in the health and safety of the workplace as we face a Delta variant-fuelled resurgence in our community.

Employers have a responsibility to maintain a safe work environment for their employees. To help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, a vaccine policy is an important measure employers should implement. Below are some aspects that should be considered as businesses and employers develop a COVID-19 vaccination policy for their workplace.

Please note: While strongly encouraged, these recommendations are voluntary, and are not intended to be legally enforceable under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#). The information provided in this document does not contain legal advice and should not be relied on or treated as legal advice. Workplaces should seek their own legal advice to address their specific circumstances.

Organizations do not need to submit their vaccination policies to OPH for approval and will also not be reviewing individual vaccine policies. A workplace policy should be in writing and adhere to applicable laws including those related to occupational health and safety, human rights and privacy.

Developing a workplace vaccination policy:

To best protect workers and the community, employers should continuously assess the risk of transmission at the workplace by considering the following:

- Are workers required to be in close contact with others in their place of work or while performing their work duties?
- Can workers keep at least two metres apart while performing their work?
- How long and how often are workers in close contact with other workers or customers?
- Does your workplace have physical barriers when workers cannot keep distance from each other, good ventilation, and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks to protect workers or patrons?
- What is the size of your workforce and does your workforce have a high vaccination rate?

- Does the workplace have workers or clients who may be at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 or unable to be vaccinated? Some people may have reduced immunity due to age, pre-existing health conditions or medical treatments.
- Is the workplace able to offer alternative work for people who require accommodation, for example remote work?

Key components in a vaccination policy:

There are many components to a workplace vaccination policy, included below are points which should be considered and discussed during the development and implementation of the policy:

1) Continued adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures and local public health guidelines

- The vaccines prevent against serious illness and death, they reduce but do not fully prevent individuals from transmitting or becoming sick with the virus.
- Vaccines do not replace the need for strict adherence to established COVID-19 public health measures, especially when interacting with others whose vaccination status may be unknown. Employers must continue to implement all COVID-19 prevention measures for their sector, as outlined in [provincial guidelines](#) and [Ottawa Public Health](#) guidance including, but not limited to: COVID-19 screening, physical distancing, wearing of masks, hand hygiene, infection prevention and control measures, and having an up-to-date [COVID-19 safety plan](#).
- There are those few individuals who cannot receive the vaccine due to a medical exemption. Most individuals are able to safely receive the vaccine series, and a vaccinated workplace helps to protect those who are medically unable to be vaccinated.

2) Determine the scope and purpose

- Outline the reasoning of the policy including the risks of COVID-19. Vaccination against COVID-19 is one of the best ways to protect workers and patrons from becoming seriously ill or transmitting the virus to others. Studies show that the Delta variant is more contagious, with greater risk for severe outcomes and hospitalization.
- Explain who the policy applies to. Consider if the policy will apply to all workers, in addition to contractors or agency staff, students, or volunteers and if there's a separate policy for customers. In addition, whether the policy will apply to any workers who are working from home to reduce the risk of workplace transmission and limit absences.
- Explain that the policy may evolve as the pandemic situation changes or legislation and public health advice is altered.
- Develop a clear communications plan to inform workers about the policy.

3) List actions workers must take

- Workplace policies should require workers to provide proof of vaccination status, with vaccines approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization [as outlined by provincial guidance](#). The policy should indicate where employees can provide proof of vaccination while also addressing privacy concerns.
- A policy should also include documentation requirements for unvaccinated employees. For example, they must provide the following to the employer:
 - Indicate that they have a legitimate medical exemption, including if the reasons are temporary or permanent. The medical exemption should be from a licenced medical doctor or nurse practitioner and does not need to include the reason for the exemption

4) Set deadlines for when actions must be taken

- Determine a reasonable date when workers must demonstrate compliance with the entirety or elements of the vaccination policy. For example, this can include a set date for when first and second doses are required.

5) List available supports for vaccination

- It is important for employers to demonstrate and be committed to supporting workers to get vaccinated. Ways to support workers to get vaccinated may include:
 - Providing vaccine information from credible sources or translated [resources](#).
 - Supporting vaccine champions to initiate conversations with their peers.
 - Encouraging workers to discuss their concerns with their healthcare provider.
 - Providing paid leave to get vaccinated and highlighting support (e.g. transportation) for those who may need help getting to and from a vaccination clinic.
 - Reminding workers that they are [entitled to up to three paid sick days](#), if they have side effects from the vaccine.
 - Helping employees [locate a community clinic](#) or [neighbourhood vaccine hub](#) near them for drop-in vaccinations.
 - Hosting an [on-site vaccination clinic](#) in partnership with Ottawa Public Health.
 - Engage Employees – Consider hosting listening sessions for Q&As, to gather feedback and answer basic questions from staff. OPH has prepared a guide on [How To Talk Vaccines](#) to help you increase vaccine confidence.

6) Non-compliance

Employers should develop a policy for those who voluntarily choose not to get vaccinated. This could include but not limited to:

- Completing a vaccination education course, with a signed declaration stating that they have reviewed and understood the content. The vaccination education course should at a minimum include information on:
 - How the COVID-19 vaccines work.
 - Vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines.
 - The benefits of vaccination against COVID-19.
 - Risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19.
 - Possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination.
 - Outline the potential consequences for workers who do not fulfill the requirements of the policy.

7) Provisions for unvaccinated workers

- The policy should list alternative options for workers who decline to get vaccinated for reasons protected by applicable laws, such as the Human Rights Code or who are unable to complete their vaccination series for medical reason. Options may include:
 - Consider if workers can be relocated and modified work or reassignments may be possible. If this is not possible, consider if unvaccinated workers may use vacation or unpaid leave until it is safe for them to return to the workplace.
 - In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, unvaccinated and partially vaccinated workers (who have only received one dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series and less than 14 days since their second dose) should not be permitted to work in the outbreak area. Workers without vaccination records should be assumed to be unvaccinated.

8) Privacy considerations

- The policy should reflect that information about employee's vaccination status is subject to applicable privacy law.
- The policy should outline how vaccination status of employees may be used by their employer to mitigate the health-related risks of COVID-19. To help protect workers, their families and the community, knowing the status of vaccination for employees will be important to help take appropriate action quickly, in the event of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. This can include sharing the information with Ottawa Public Health.
- Limit the collection, use, disclosure and retention of information to what is reasonably necessary. Keep worker vaccination information separate from their personnel file.
- Develop a plan to safeguard employee's personal information and ensure vaccination status records are retained, accessed and disposed of in a secure manner.

9) Staff contact

- Identify an individual in your organization that employees may contact with questions about the policy, privacy concerns, to request accommodations, or for information on how to comply with the policy.

10) Other Considerations

- Workplaces can partner with Ottawa Public Health to host a vaccination clinic to ensure easy and convenient access for vaccination for their employees.
- Regular and up to date communications with employees will help support and sustain the policy.
- Routine asymptomatic testing is not an equivalent substitute for a completed series of a COVID-19 vaccine. Ensuring that employees are fully vaccinated and continue to follow all public health measures in the workplace remains the best way to protect individuals and our community against COVID-19.

Other resources:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Employers](#)
- [OPH's Business and Workplaces web page](#)
- [Reporting Exposures to COVID-19 in Workplaces](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health Vaccine Policy](#)

Workplace COVID-19 Vaccine Policies

Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) has stated on August 17, 2021 that COVID-19 vaccine policies will also be required in the licensed childcare, education sector, colleges and universities, residential and congregate living settings. The CMOH did share this release that they are now mandatory in high risk settings with policies effective no later than Sept 7, 2021. This is in addition to the release on May 31 for Long Term Care Homes. More details to come.

There are many benefits for all workplaces to have an organization specific COVID-19 vaccine policy. It can be part of the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan considering specific risks in the organization for COVID-19 transmission, provide an opportunity to provide education and awareness to all employees, and promote higher levels of vaccination in the workplace to increase the safety of employees and the public.

In workplaces, vaccination adds to, rather than replaces, the strict adherence to established COVID-19 public health measures. Employers must continue to implement all COVID-19 prevention measures for their sector outlined in Ministry of Labour and provincial regulations and guidelines: screening for symptoms, physical distancing, wearing of masks, hand washing, regular environmental cleaning, and a COVID-19 safety plan.

Workplace COVID-19 Vaccination

Promoting vaccination in the workplace is an important step in ensuring your staff understand the importance of being vaccinated and have an opportunity to receive credible information about vaccines. This will also help them show support for vaccination in the workplace.

Benefits to your employees of being vaccinated

- The vaccines are very safe, and mRNA vaccines provide 88% protection from COVID-19 symptoms and 95% protection from hospitalization 14 days after the second dose.
- When you are more protected from getting COVID-19, it also means people around you are more protected.
- It makes travelling safer, when also following COVID-19 precautions.
- You are more protected and protect others when playing sports and attending other activities or events.
- There is less time off from work or school if you are a close contact of a person who has COVID-19 and have no symptoms.
- You can discuss having close contact without a mask with others who are also fully vaccinated.

- It will help us keep workplaces, businesses and services open with a better quality of life.

Resources you could use for education and promotion in your workplace

Where to get vaccine in the community

Know what is happening locally

Resources for Workplace Health and Safety

Policy Development Information

Important Note: Each business/organization is responsible to implement their own workplace vaccine policy. The Health Unit can provide information about the elements of a policy, as above. The Health Unit cannot approve another business or organization's workplace vaccination policy.

How to create a policy:

COVID-19 and mandatory vaccination: Ethical considerations and caveats (World Health Organization policy brief)

There are some elements that would be important to include in your policy:

1. **Inform employees.** Explain the purpose of the policy and provide clear and strong **information on the virus, authorized vaccines, and the vaccination process.**
2. **Outline if vaccines are highly recommended or required,** and for which employees, based on an assessment of the risk of being exposed to the virus, and the risk of transmitting the virus to others, in the workplace. Explain the rationale for this policy.
3. **Discuss the Occupational Health and Safety Act,** the general duty clause, and Ontario's Internal Responsibility System, which set out employer, supervisor and worker duties for keeping the workplace safe in the context of a pandemic.
4. **Outline what proof of vaccination looks like.** For example, seeing a copy of the provincial vaccine clinic record or verbal attestation. From an employer privacy perspective, collect as little vaccine information as possible.
5. **Discuss exemptions under the Human Rights Code.** The code protects workers with disabilities from discrimination. For example, the risk of an allergic reaction to the vaccine would be considered a medical disability. Employers are required to accommodate exempted workers, on an individual basis, to the point of undue hardship. Identify how medical exemptions will be handled.
6. **Address privacy issues.** Address these concerns by outlining why you are collecting the information – e.g., to keep all workers safe – describe how you will use it, how securely it will

be stored, and the only purposes this information will be used for. It's always a best practice to secure consent.

See the Workplace Safety and Prevention Services website for this and more information and resources.

What unvaccinated employees do if there is an outbreak

During an outbreak of COVID-19, Public Health will identify who needs to isolate based on their contact with the case and whether they are fully vaccinated. The Policy could include details about the isolation period for non-vaccinated employees e.g. if the time will be paid and for how long.



**7.0 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Report #: 2-210923**

To: RVCA Board of Directors
From: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Date: September 16, 2021

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Recommendation:

Option 1

That the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation through meaningful actions that honour residential school survivors and commemorate their history and the legacy of residential schools.

and / or

Option 2

That the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority amend RVCA's Personnel Policies to observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a non-statutory paid holiday on September 30 of each year.

Purpose

To seek direction from the Board of Directors regarding the observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Background

On June 3, 2021, the federal government enacted legislation establishing September 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Bill C-5 stated that the new national holiday is intended "to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 80 by creating a holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which seeks to honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis Survivors, their families, and communities, and to ensure that public commemoration of their history and the legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process." The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is to be observed in 2021.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action provide direction to all levels of government, institutions, as well as all Canadians, to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation. The date of the new statutory holiday, September 30, coincides with a grassroots movement called Orange Shirt Day, in recognition of Phyllis Webstad, whose orange shirt was forcibly taken away from her on her first day at residential school. The orange shirt has become a symbol of remembrance of all Indigenous children who were forcibly removed from their families to attend residential schools where their language and culture were repressed, and many children endured physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. The painful legacy of residential schools has had lasting impacts on Indian residential school survivors and their families.

Analysis

To-date, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories have decided to observe the new statutory holiday provincially, while other provinces including Ontario have not. Ontario has stated that it is "working in collaboration with Indigenous partners, survivors and affected families to ensure the respectful commemoration of this day within the province, similar to Remembrance Day". The Province also acknowledged that "while the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is not a provincial public holiday this year, employers and employees may agree to treat this day as such, and some may be required to do so if it has been negotiated into collective agreements or employment contracts".

In Eastern Ontario, conservation authorities and municipalities are choosing to observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in two different manners. Some are observing the day through meaningful actions and events to promote awareness and understanding of the impacts of the residential school system while others are also observing the day as a non-statutory paid holiday to provide staff with an opportunity to reflect and participate in community events.

Input from Other Sources

Information was gathered from conservation authorities in Eastern Ontario and municipal websites in the Rideau watershed to determine what decisions were being made locally with respect to how the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation would be observed.

Financial Considerations

Neither option has a financial impact.

Legal Considerations

Bill C-5 amended the Canada Labour Code to add the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to the list of public holidays for which employees whose employment is governed by the Canada Labour Code are to be granted a holiday with pay.

Subsequently, the province of Ontario decided not to include it in the list of public holidays set out in the provincial Employment Standards Act, 2000.

Adherence to RVCA Policy

RVCA's Personnel Policies defer to Ontario's Employment Standards Act and does not automatically observe federal statutory holidays (some federal statutory holidays are included in a list of Board approved non-statutory paid holidays). Specifically, section 5.1 of RVCA's policies states:

The RVCA observes the following Statutory Holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

We also observe the following non-statutory paid holidays:

- Remembrance Day
- Easter Monday
- August Civic Holiday
- Office Closure between Christmas and New Years

Link to Strategic Plan

RVCA's Board of Directors identified "improved indigenous awareness and engagement" as a workplan priority for 2022.



**9.0 2022 Preliminary Budget Discussion
Report #: 3-210923**

To: RVCA Board of Directors
From: Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Date: September 16, 2021

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Purpose

To seek high level direction from the Board of Directors regarding the preparation of RVCA's 2022 budget.

Background

Each year, the RVCA prepares an annual budget and workplan for the coming year based on priorities from our Strategic Plan and other guidance.

- July – staff outline key workplan considerations for the coming year and seek high level direction from the Board.
- September – staff outline key budget considerations for the coming year and seek high level direction from the Board.
- October – staff present a preliminary draft budget and workplan for Board review and input.
- November – staff present a revised draft budget and workplan for Board consideration. If approved for circulation, this draft budget and workplan is circulated to all member municipalities for review and comment. Presentations to council are also offered.
- February – all comments received from municipalities are considered by the Board before approving a final budget.

At their July meeting, the Board endorsed the following workplan priorities for 2022:

- Review of provincially mandated programs
- Preparation of a watershed plan
- Improved indigenous awareness and engagement

Analysis

Heading into 2022, conservation authorities are monitoring a number of factors that could affect budgets which will be expanded upon and discussed at our meeting. They include:

- Impact of COVID-19 on municipalities and other sectors.
- Factors impacting wages (cost of living, grid movement, payroll taxes and contribution rates for OMERS and benefits).
- Other cost pressures impacting conservation authorities such as increasing insurance rates.
- Assessment growth in the watershed and direction on fee and municipal levy increases. In recent years, RVCA, MVCA and SNC (as well as many other Eastern Ontario conservation authorities) have implemented an annual increase to their fees of 2% to keep pace with cost of living. They have also implemented an annual increase to their municipal levy of 2% plus assessment growth to keep pace with cost of living. This reflects budget direction from some watershed municipalities including Ottawa Council.
- Potential impact of regulatory changes under the *Conservation Authorities Act* from both MNRF (natural hazards work) and MECP (governance, mandate).
- Continued enhancement of RVCA programs and services to improve efficiency, effectiveness, client service and address priority issues like climate change.

In 2021, RVCA's budget totaled \$12,674,189 and was broken down as follows:

2021 Budget Overview		
	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Operating Costs		
Staffing Costs		
Salary	\$ 4,681,787	\$ 4,874,672
Payroll taxes and benefits	\$ 1,258,118	\$ 1,267,784
Subtotal of Staffing Costs	\$ 5,939,905	\$ 6,142,456
Non-Labour Operating Costs	\$ 3,260,356	\$ 2,975,444
Rideau River Ice Management	\$ 996,215	\$ 1,088,292
Total Operating Costs	\$ 10,196,476	\$ 10,206,192
Capital Costs		
Water Control Infrastructure TCA's	\$ -	\$ -
Other TCA's	\$ 45,000	\$ 1,616,586
Reserve Transfers (net)	\$ 239,293	\$ 648,707
Office Building Debenture Repayment	\$ 255,568	\$ 202,704
Total Capital Costs	\$ 539,861	\$ 2,467,997
Total	\$ 10,736,337	\$ 12,674,189

Input from Other Sources

A draft budget and workplan is circulated to all member municipalities in November for review and comment prior to the board considering the budget for approval in February. RVCA also offers to attend a meeting of council to present the draft budget and answer questions.

Financial Considerations

The annual budget sets revenues and expenditures for all RVCA programs and services (operations and capital projects) and sets the general and special levies for municipalities. Actual expenditures and revenues are tracked throughout the year by managers and reported on three to four times a year to the Board.

Legal Considerations

RVCA prepares an annual budget and municipal levies in accordance with:

- *Conservation Authorities Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.27
- O. Reg. 670/00: Conservation Authority Levies
- O. Reg. 139/96: Municipal Levies

Adherence to RVCA Policy

RVCA prepares an annual budget in accordance with its Administrative By-law.

Link to Strategic Plan

RVCA's annual budget and workplan are designed to support the implementation of multiple priority actions in its Strategic Plan.



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July 13, 2021

The Honourable David Piccini
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Re: Continued Support for the Conservation Authorities Working Group

Dear Minister Piccini,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority I want to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. As you know, Ontario's conservation authorities have been actively participating in your government's review of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

While we remain concerned about some of the changes that were made to the *Act* through Bill 229, the formation of a Conservation Authorities Working Group was a positive initiative, and hopefully it will better address the concerns of our member municipalities by providing a more effective and collaborative approach to developing regulations. Soliciting input from those stakeholders who will be impacted – conservation authorities, municipalities, developers and farmers – ensures that changes will be effective, implementable and have minimal unintended consequences.

We are fortunate that our General Manager, Sommer Casgrain-Robertson is a member of the working group and believe that the group's work will be very important in completing Phase 1 and 2 regulations. We stress that regulations must be enabling and not prescriptive, so that conservation authorities and municipalities can implement changes practically, efficiently and effectively, and also that municipalities and conservation authorities are given adequate time to implement changes.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pieter Leenhouts", is written over a light blue circular background.

Pieter Leenhouts
Chair

**Proudly working in partnership
with our 18 watershed municipalities**

Athens, Augusta, Beckwith, Central Frontenac, Clarence-Rockland,
Drummond/North Elmsley, Elizabethtown-Kitley, Merrickville-Wolford, Montague,
North Dundas, North Grenville, Ottawa, Perth, Rideau Lakes, Smiths Falls, South Frontenac, Tay Valley, Westport

**Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks**

**Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs**



Office of the Minister

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357-2021-2518

August 27, 2021

Pieter Leenhouts
Chair
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Email: pieter.leenhouts@gmail.com

Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
Email: sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca

Dear Pieter Leenhouts and Sommer Casgrain-Robertson:

Thank you for your letter regarding my appointment as Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and for your comments on the review of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the formation of the Working Group.

I am honoured to have been appointed to this position and am looking forward to hitting the ground running. With a professional background in healthcare, I understand that healthy people and a healthy environment go hand-in-hand. As Minister, my number one priority moving forward is to build on the great work of our government to ensure clean air, land and water and further support clean, green growth for our communities.

I am embarking on this new role with a forward-looking, energized and collaborative approach. I look forward to working with all Ontarians as we build a more sustainable future today, and for generations to come. I welcome your ideas and input so please feel free to reach out to my office anytime and we can further discuss.

I am pleased to learn that Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has been an active participant in the Conservation Authorities Working Group and thank you for your valuable input on the government's regulatory proposals to support the *Conservation Authorities Act* amendments. Over the past couple of months, we have also received feedback from a wide range of members of the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities on the first phase of regulatory proposals. We are continuing to review the diversity of input received prior to finalizing the regulations.

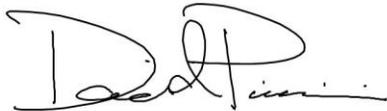
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Pieter Leenhouts and Sommer Casgrain-Robertson
Page 2.

In the coming months, we will be engaging with the working group and consulting on the second phase of proposed regulations, including details on municipal levies related to programs and services, and expectations for how non-mandatory programs and services should be delivered. I look forward to Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's continued engagement in the working group and further input as these discussions unfold.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Piccini". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and "P" at the beginning, followed by a cursive "avid Piccini".

David Piccini
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks