

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Media Release

Re: Elgin County Staff Impacted by Ongoing Closures

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As part of the Elgin response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as a direct result of the closure of cultural and public facilities, including the County's ten (10) libraries and Heritage Centre as well as the adjournment of Provincial Offences Administration court dates until May 29<sup>th</sup>, a number of staff members have either been reassigned to support Elgin County's three (3) Long Term Care Homes in various non-health care related roles or have either voluntarily or otherwise been placed on a temporary unpaid Declared Emergency Leave. A Declared Emergency Leave is a job protected leave and allows impacted employees to apply for supports made available by the Province of Ontario and Government of Canada.

Of the County's 450 staff, approximately 20 have accepted reassignment or partial reassignment, and 37 are on a temporary leave the majority of whom are part-time staff from libraries and museums. All full-time staff who were affected by closures or service disruption have been offered reassignment to our essential service area, the Long Term Care Homes. "This has been an extremely challenging time for our community and for Elgin County staff. The staff reductions are exclusively due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are temporary. While the County maintains minimal operations and essential services, and as the effects of COVID-19 continue to have significant impacts on citizens, County services and our employees, we had no choice but to consider reassignments and temporary leaves," said Julie Gonyou, the County's Chief Administrative Officer. "Our staff remain fully committed to serving the community during this difficult time. I am so proud of the flexibility and dedication our employees have shown and we are all looking forward to a time when we are able to reopen our facilities, restore impacted services and bring back our valued employees," Gonyou said.

There might be further changes as the situation develops. "We are working to ensure staff are able to do their work as safely as possible. A lot of the services our staff deliver are critical to the everyday lives of Elgin County residents, whether it is ambulance services, long-term care or building roads and critical infrastructure, we are making every effort to ensure that work continues," said Warden Dave Mennill.

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