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Subject: COVID-19 Weekly Update – June 5th

Dear Staff,

I hope you all remain well, under the circumstances. There is obviously a lot going on in the world right now, particularly south of our border, although these issues and concerns are worldwide and share no borders. 2020 has certainly thrown the world into turmoil. It is my sincere hope that this tragic time and, resulting groundswell of emotion and action, results in a turning point, a reset, and a collective awakening. We've been talking a lot about rebuilding, and bettering what was – this comes in all forms, including social change.

There are many things for which I believe in giving people a chance to learn and grow. And there are some things in which I have zero tolerance for. Racism and discrimination is one of those things. I can't stress that highly enough. Our [Respectful Workplace](#) Policy puts into words our expectation for the type of environment we want to create, and support. Every single one of us is part of the solution. It's not enough to not participate in what's wrong, we have to be willing to intervene, to make it right.

Personally, I am using this time to listen, to learn. To try to take action. As an organization, we'll also be increasing our work on inclusion in the coming weeks and months, in partnership with all of you – stay tuned for more on this.

I heard an anecdote a while ago, that has stuck with me, and seems particularly apt right now. Years ago, anthropologist [Margaret Mead](#) was asked by a student what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student was expecting Mead to respond with something about tools such as fishhooks, or clay pots, or grinding stones. But that didn't happen. Mead noted that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thighbone) that had been broken and then healed. Mead then went on to explain that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You cannot run from predators, escape danger, hunt for food or find water. You are food for prowling predators. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal. For humankind, a broken femur that has healed was evidence that someone had taken the time to stay with the one who fell, had bound up the wound, had carried the person to safety and supported the person through recovery. Mead noted that helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts.

We are at our best when we serve others, and support others through difficulty – physical or emotional. Thanks to all of you who have done so and continue to do so. Please keep going.

Here are a few updates.

June 5th Board Budget Workshop

We had a really positive Board Budget workshop today. Understandably, there's clearly concern about the financial implications that all of our member jurisdictions and residents are experiencing, as a result of COVID-19. What we need to think about, as an organization, are those actions that can contribute to

lowering the household impacts on our residents without jeopardizing the future. We received direction from the Board today which includes:

- 1) Short-Term Relief for Households (through leveraging of tools to create a 1-3-year action plan)
- 2) Maintain Current Goals and Objectives (continue to work on strategic and long-range plans)
- 3) Realize New Opportunities (partner on projects to increase affordable housing, reduce GHGs, help drive economic recovery, greater emphasis on continuous improvement and finding efficiencies)

Departmental updates

Our departments continue to support key operations and adapt as required. In Water Services, our staff had a productive meeting with the health authorities of both Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health, where WS shared our response to managing the regional water system during the pandemic, and ensuring safety of staff, and both authorities were pleased with the protocols in place. While water quality has remained excellent through the pandemic, we are slightly increasing the chlorine residual in our drinking water system, to support safe re-opening in buildings that have experienced extended closures. This is consistent with best practices outlined by the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) and complies with a request made by our local health authorities. For Liquid Waste Services, there have been no significant changes to wastewater flows since the establishment of public health measures in the region, and critical work and maintenance is being undertaken throughout the summer before the Fall weather arrives. For Solid Waste Services, after an initial dip in March and April, the system continues to provide near full service levels compared to the same time in 2019.

For Regional Parks and the LSCR, high visitation continues. Barnston Island and Brae Island Regional Parks remain closed for now; discussions are underway regarding potential re-opening. Following discussions with our member jurisdictions and other orders of government, parking lots at Lynn Headwaters Regional Park, the LSCR, and Acadia parking lot at Pacific Spirit Regional Park have reopened. Parking restrictions have been implemented on Bedwell Bay Road, adjacent to Belcarra Regional Park near White Pine Beach and Sasamat Lake, until further notice. With the on-going increase in visitation, we are reviewing our plans for managing all of our parks.

For Housing, our staff teams are demonstrating resilience and commitment to service in working through a number of issues related to supporting COVID-19 protocols, as well as increased concerns from tenants regarding parking, noise, and other areas as residents spend more time at home than usual.

Internal Communications

Part 2 of your answers, to my question on “what has inspired you during this time,” is in the attached document and in the [intranet news article here](#). Again, please take some time and read through these – I continue to think and reflect on your answers.

I shared a song last time. Allow me to share two more- some of our local talent, from right here in our region. Dutch Robinson, local singer-songwriter, and [his song ‘One’](#), and Frazey Ford, [with her song Azad](#), reflecting on her unusual upbringing in a tiny BC town/pacifist colony outside Castlegar. Okay, I lied on two songs. Three songs. In the attached, one of you mentioned how you live in a high-rise neighbourhood, and the nightly 7pm applause spreads through the balconies, erupting into a cacophony of sound, and one elderly couple plays “Oh sole mio” at full volume. I loved that story and so had to look up the song again - [check it out here](#). (Feel free to send/share more songs – or recipes. I see some of you

have been baking bread and becoming chefs over the last couple of months– I’m still struggling to master anything than the barbeque.) You can share them by commenting on the Part 2 article here – use the arrows to see past the first 10 comments. I’ll keep checking for updates, and encourage you all to as well – it would be great to share this with each other.

What’s next

I’m realizing that it might be time for me to slow the weekly emails for the time being. My hope is to spend the next few months getting to meet with you as many of you as possible. (In small groups, physically distanced of course, or on Zoom.) I will also continue to write from time to time; likely monthly at minimum and more often if something substantial comes up. I enjoy hearing from you all and I hope you also continue to write back periodically as well.

I look forward to seeing many of you, at your respective work sites, or at the very least, on a Zoom screen, soon.

Thank you, and until then,

Stay well, choose kindness.

Together we make our region strong.

Jerry

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