



CAO Verbal Update to Council

Feb 25, 2019 Council Meeting

This winter has been particularly merciless with little time to recover from one event till the next one and a mix of precipitation and temperatures that has been very taxing on our resources both human and equipment.

PWs has been throwing all it can at the conditions. We have incurred significant overtime and have called in other resources from local contractors to rent equipment however they are all strained and running at capacity at the same time.

PWs cannot do snow removal and cut back snowbanks to widen driving lanes unless it stops snowing enough to be able to dedicate the resources.

We are finally gaining some traction on widening drivable lanes on the larger arteries and will move into the smaller streets in the coming days but again that depends on the weather. The first priority is always plowing roads and we cannot do both at the same time.

All our municipal buildings were designed to withstand northern Ontario winters and has clearly been an eye opener for other commercial building owners, we can see that on the rooftops in the community and at the Blind River hospital as but a few examples.

We understand the gravity of the situation and are doing all that we can to recover and respond to the collapse in several different ways.

We issued a press release and updated the website within 75 minutes of the collapse on Thursday evening. We have been making our best efforts to keep the media and the public informed with regular updates and plan to continue that effort.

Tulloch structural engineers were on scene by noon on Friday. The Ministry of Labour is investigating and we are working with them. In the meantime, no one can enter the building for the foreseeable future, certainly not the theatre area.

However, the Ministry did allow Tulloch to enter the building on Friday strictly to observe and report on the state of the building outside of the theatre area.

We are anticipating a preliminary report from Tulloch on their observations shortly.

Currently we have no idea when or to what degree we will be able to re-enter the building to retrieve anything.

There will be time to learn from the Civic Centre collapse and we will do so as transparently and accountably as possible.

In the meantime, we need to let the Ministry and our engineers do their work and our priorities for our limited resources are best focused on 3 key areas:

1) resuming municipal services disrupted by the loss of the civic centre space

- Rec and Culture Dept has temporarily relocated to city hall, phone lines redirected to cell phones
- We will be working with all Civic Centre tenants and stakeholders to assist them wherever possible to secure alternate locations for their events or their work
- Having an initial meeting with all tenants later this week
- No doubt that some will be easier to accommodate than others but will be working with all of them

2) safely assessing and reopening other facilities

- As a precaution the arena, pool and Collins hall were closed until we can remove the snow and ice from the roofs and/or otherwise get a green light from our engineers that the buildings are safe for staff and the public
- Weekend weather hampered those efforts and in order to maintain health and safety regulations for working at heights the process is slow and only a select few can be on a roof or a scissor lift at any given time
- We have contracted a firm from the Barrie area who will be in the community tomorrow and will greatly assist with the effort and increase the pace of work (with an 85 foot boom)
- We will focus at first on Collins hall as a venue for events and as a headquarters for much of the rec dept
- Then the focus will be the pool, then the arena
- We are leaving the arena for last because we know the roof there is much larger and more complicated and we anticipate it will be more complex to re-open whereas the Collins Hall and pool should be simpler, and hence faster
- We are working with the Wildcats and the Town of Blind River to accommodate ice time elsewhere
- Espanola's pool will be honouring Elliot Lake's swim passes
- We don't have a detailed timetable on when the other buildings can reopen but after last Thursday, we will not be rushed we need to make extra sure the buildings are safe and we would ask that the public be patient with the process

3) ensuring our staff and volunteers have the support they need in the aftermath of the collapse

- offered trauma counselling to all staff (regardless of part-time or full-time status) and volunteers last Friday during a 4-hour window for drop-ins
- we are offering more time this Wednesday and the service is open 24/7 as needed
- we will hear from the Counselling Centre of East Algoma this evening on how similar services are also open to anyone from the general public locally in-person or on the phone.

We are just at the beginning of the recovery effort and we still have more questions than answers but we will keep the public informed as much as possible along the way.

In the early period like now, we anticipate that with each passing day we will have more and more to report and will be updating the media and the website accordingly

Want to thank all city staff for their efforts, I can't say enough of the response from all departments and our local contractors and our neighbours in Blind River and Espanola have all been there for us and we will need them even more in the days to come.
