

## Mayor & Council Message

April was a month of upheaval, disruption and difficult decisions throughout Summerland as the community started to understand the realities of the extended impacts of the pandemic. Many residents faced layoffs, their children did not return to school and Easter gatherings were cancelled. Many businesses were ordered to close by the Province; others had to adjust to a new way of serving customers to adhere to the sanitation and physical distancing directives. Here at Municipal Hall, the District also had to adapt. Significantly reduced revenues resulted in an organizational restructuring that saw many layoffs, including three permanent layoffs. Senior management also had to trim their operational budgets. These operational reductions were redirected to provide some relief to residents and business owners in the form of deferral of the property tax due date, reductions on water utility billings and deferral of utility payment penalties through to December 31, 2020 (more details in this newsletter and at [summerland.ca](http://summerland.ca)). Most of us in the community are facing increased tension and stress.

Now, it is May and we are another month closer to restrictions being lifted. Although the Province cautions that they will continue to rely on scientific data and it will be a gradual process to ensure that the sacrifices we have made are not lost, this is good news.

On behalf of Council, thank you Summerland—from frontline workers, essential service providers, and everyone who has shown kindness and caring to others in this unsettling time. We are in this together. We will persevere and will, we hope, be a kinder and more resilient community for having experienced this. Enjoy the warmer days ahead. Be safe; continued health.

**\*\*\* STAY STRONG, STAY CALM, STAY HOME, SUMMERLAND—WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS! \*\*\***

## District of Summerland supports residents and business community through 2020 budget amendments

In response to financial challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, at the Special Meeting on April 17, 2020, municipal Council at the District of Summerland directed staff to support the community through the following measures:

### *Property Tax Remittance Extension*

Property tax remittance due dates were extended from July 3 to September 30 with penalties for late payment being postponed until October 1, 2020. This will provide relief for those in the community that need additional time for property tax payments.

### *2020 Property Tax Increase*

Council directed staff to commence preparation of the 2020 Property Tax Bylaw for presentation to Council with a 4% property tax increase. Council considered an adjustment, however, it was determined that keeping the tax rate the same would have a more beneficial impact on the community long-term.

### *General Operating Fund Reductions*

Council supported a reduction of approximately \$1.5M in operational expenses for 2020 to offset revenue reductions expected over the remainder of the year. Operating fund reductions were made up of operating line item and project adjustments and savings resulting from recent organizational changes. These savings will sustain the District financially for the remainder of 2020 and assist in building strategic and impactful budgets as our community recovers in 2021 and beyond.

### *Utility Billing Discount Extension*

Council supported extending the 10% utility billing discount until December 31, 2020. This will provide relief for customers not able to make utility payments on time. This initiative will provide the average Summerland household approximately \$217 of savings by ensuring every utility customer within the District receives the 10% discount even if payment was not received by the due date.

### *Electrical Utility Rate Investigations*

Council directed staff to continue working on the potential for electrical rate reductions, working with FortisBC and the BC Municipal Electrical Utilities.

## *Agriculture and Domestic Water Rate Reduction*

Council supported a 25% rate reduction to be applied to commercial, municipal and residential water rates for July and August 2020, and a 25% reduction in agricultural and domestic second service rates—not including tiered rates—for 2020. These savings are expected to provide some relief for Summerland's commercial, domestic and agricultural water customers during peak months for water use in the community.

**Residents that have the financial ability to meet the July 3 property tax deadline date as well as monthly utility due dates are strongly encouraged to continue making these payments on time.** This will ensure the stability of the District's cash flows which allow for the provision of essential services that are vital to all residents of Summerland. Non-essential services will be reduced in the short-term and District staff will provide further information over the coming weeks regarding these impacts.

**Keep Up To Date:** The District will post community updates to our website, Facebook and Twitter Accounts—Please follow our pages to keep up to date on COVID-19 information and more.

**Website:** [summerland.ca](http://summerland.ca)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/SummerlandBC](https://www.facebook.com/SummerlandBC)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/SummerlandBC](https://twitter.com/SummerlandBC)

**Sign Up for our Online Newsletter:**

<https://www.summerland.ca/your-city-hall/newsletter-subscribe>

**District Facilities Update** District facilities are currently closed to the public, however staff are available during regular business hours at the numbers below:

- Municipal Hall – General Enquiries: (250) 494-6451
- Development Services: (250) 494-1373
- Utility Billing: (250) 404-4047
- Property Tax/Accounts Receivable/Accounts Payable: (250) 404-4055
- Parks & Recreation: (250) 494-0447
- Fire Department (Non emergency): (250) 494-7211
- Works & Utilities: (250) 494-0431
- After Hours Emergency 3:30pm - 7:00am Monday to Friday, weekends or Statutory Holidays for Water/Sewer/Roads/Parks/ Electrical Utility: (250) 493-0005



Explore Summerland Trails!

### Stay Active & Safe!

District of Summerland 'active parks' remain closed until further notice (skatepark, tennis, pickleball and basketball courts and all playgrounds) in order to support requirements for physical distancing. Thank you to all residents for abiding by these restrictions.

Summerland parks, greenspaces and trails continue to be open for 'passive' use. To help ensure that they remain open, do not gather in groups and keep 2 metres (6 feet) apart for distancing measures. Getting out in nature can help support your physical and mental health. Enjoy a walk, hike or bike through Summerland's natural outdoors. Explore, have fun and stay safe!

### Landfill Construction

The District began construction on the second scale and entrance upgrades at the Summerland Sanitary Landfill on April 20, 2020. The Landfill remains open to the public during construction. The Landfill Recycling Depot has been temporarily moved to new locations within the Landfill.

Thank you for your patience while we work to improve access to the Landfill.

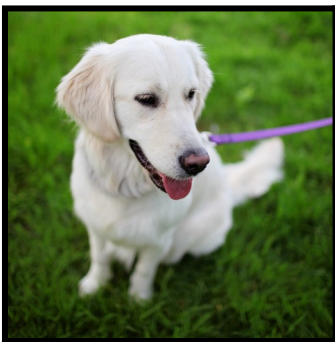


### Compost Loading—Changes

Due to the increased operational and safety demands and reduced resources as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, **compost loading times have been temporarily reduced to 9am - 12pm Monday through Friday**. A truck load of compost is approximately \$37.50/pick-up (with the 25% discount) and approximately \$25/half pick-up (no discount). Self loading will continue to be available during regular operating hours. For current information on landfill operational hours please visit [www.summerland.ca](http://www.summerland.ca).

### Parks Maintenance Levels

With the operational changes and reduced staffing levels that have occurred over the past few weeks in response to COVID-19, the maintenance of our parks and beaches will be undertaken in a revised manner. Maintenance schedules will be reduced as staff prioritize higher profile areas. Park access for passive use is still permitted in our community. Please respect the Provincial Orders and any signage posted for physical distancing (a minimum of 2 metres). Lawn mowing, field maintenance, beach cleaning and litter collection will be reduced or occur less often, however staff will ensure that our parks are kept to an acceptable standard for the spring and into the summer. Public washrooms will remain closed for the time being. We appreciate the community's patience with these changes. As restrictions are eased, we will keep the community up to date.



### Doggone It!

The temporary off-leash period at Peach Orchard Park came to an end on April 30. Dogs are required to be leashed at all times on park trails. Dogs will be allowed off-leash at Peach Orchard Park starting October 1. Dogs are allowed off-leash year-round at Peach Orchard Dog Beach.

### CANCELLED DISTRICT EVENTS:

- GIANT'S HEAD RUN (June 6)
- ONE DAY RECYCLING DEPOT (June 27)

### What are the options to pay my utility bill?

1. Drop off a cheque to the secure drop box located outside the front door of Municipal Hall.
2. Pay online. It's quick and easy to set up your Utility Billing account. Receive your monthly utility bill by email and manage your account online. Here's how to set it up:

Step 1. Go to [www.summerland.ca](http://www.summerland.ca)

Step 2. Click - City Services

Step 3. Choose - Utility Billing - Online Utility Inquiry

Step 4. Click on - Online Services - Choose - Link & Register

Step 5. Follow the instructions to Set Up Access to our Online Services - Choose - Show me How

Signing up will also give you access to the monthly newsletter online!



### ARE YOU FIRESMART?

What measures have you taken to protect your home and property from a potential wildfire? Please visit <https://firesmartbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FireSmart-Homeowners-Manual.pdf> to greatly reduce the risk.

### Snowpack Update

As of May 1, snowpack levels at the Headwaters and Isintok snow survey sites are 67% and 112% of the historical average. For comparison, on May 1, 2018 snowpack levels were at 270% and 243% of the historical average and in 2019 there was no snow remaining as of May 1.

On the Trout Creek system, most of the dam outlets are currently open to accommodate the incoming water flowing to the reservoirs. Only Crescent Dam is spilling but all others have significant buffer room for incoming water.

For the Eneas Creek system, the Garnet Dam level was rising approximately 8 cm/day over the last week of April. At this melt rate, Garnet Dam is expected to start spilling by mid-May. For comparison, in 2018 Garnet Dam was spilling as of April 19 and in 2019 it spilled on May 17. So far this spring, relatively cool nighttime temperatures and lack of rain have tempered the melt. **Residents along Eneas Creek should continue to monitor the flow levels in May and take any necessary action to protect their property for localized high water levels.**

### Property Tax Notices

Property tax notices will be mailed out by the end of May 2020. The due date for Property taxes, including eligible Home Owner Grant (HOG) has been extended to 4:00pm Wednesday, September 30, 2020. Contact Municipal Hall if you have not received your property tax notice by early June. Details about Home Owner Grants, payments and tax information can be found on the insert sent with the tax notice or on our website. The Finance Department will be pleased to help you with any questions; call (250) 494-6451 or email [propertytaxes@summerland.ca](mailto:propertytaxes@summerland.ca).

### Utility Bill Equal Payment Plan

If you are on the utility bill equal payment plan, April was reconciliation month. Those wanting to be on the Utility Equal Payment Plan have until May 15 to apply. To request an application contact (250) 404-4047, email [utilities@summerland.ca](mailto:utilities@summerland.ca), send a written request to apply in the drop box at Municipal Hall or notify us by mail. All participants must be on the **pre-authorized payment plan** which requires a copy of a "VOID" cheque or Customer Account Information from your financial institution to be included with your application.