



The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

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Report:	CS-21-027	Committee Date:	August 30, 2021
		Due in Council:	August 30, 2021

Report To:	Corporate Services Advisory Committee
Subject:	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (the Town) commit to recognizing September 30, 2021, as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (National Orange Shirt Day) by sharing the stories of residential school survivors, their families, and communities;
- 1.2 the Town engage in meaningful education related to Truth and Reconciliation; and
- 1.3 the Town recognize and observe the federal statutory holiday for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

2. PURPOSE / PROPOSAL

The purpose of this report is to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, have Town Staff engage in meaningful training related to Truth and Reconciliation and observe the new federal statutory holiday for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to show continued commitment to the reconciliation and remembrance of the children and their families impacted by the residential school system and our Indigenous Communities.

3. BACKGROUND

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its final report on June 2, 2015, which included 94 Calls to Action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. The recent discoveries of remains and unmarked graves across Canada have led to increased calls for all levels of government to address the recommendations in the TRC's Calls to Action. All Canadians and all orders of government have a role to play in reconciliation.

A new holiday was proposed in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of

Canada as Call to Action #80. The federal government was called upon, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to establish a statutory holiday to honour Survivors of residential schools, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

On June 3, 2021, Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) received royal assent. The provisions came into force on August 3, 2021. September 30, 2021 will mark the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (National Orange Shirt Day) and a statutory holiday.

4. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

This new statutory holiday applies to federally regulated public and private sectors including, notably, employers subject to the Canada Labour Code. Various Ontario organizations are advocating for the Ontario government to adopt the statutory holiday as well.

This day provides an opportunity for Canadians to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools. This may present itself as a day of quiet reflection or participation in a community event. The September 30 date coincides with Orange Shirt Day, which is a day communities come together in spirit of reconciliation and hope because every child matters.

When the passing of this federal holiday was approved, Town Staff discussed how to properly honour and observe this holiday. Taking action to ensure the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools across the country will never be forgotten. Staff felt it was important for the Corporation to support, recognize and commemorate this day.

Senior Staff is investigating options to provide meaningful educational training to Town Council and employees throughout the month of September. Discussions have begun with community stakeholders, including the Museum, the Library, and the Niagara Regional Native Centre, to form partnerships and share resources. There will be two streams of education: one focused on educating and bringing awareness to the public, and the other focused on educating and equipping Staff with greater knowledge surrounding the Indigenous community.

Town staff will be working with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum and Public Library to provide access to and awareness of resources available to the public. This information will be shared through a social media campaign as well as on the Town's website. Additionally, similar information will be shared and displayed within the Town's facilities. These efforts will help build awareness about the day, highlight Indigenous history and provide the public with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of truth and reconciliation.

5. Strategic Plan

- Create a Culture of Customer Service Excellence**
 - Define, support and acknowledge customer service excellence
 - Support staff by providing comprehensive training
 - Use technology to improve levels of service
 - Other

- Excel in a Positive Workplace**
 - Strengthen staff and Council partnerships
 - Increase departmental collaboration
 - Acknowledge contributions to positive workplace culture
 - Other

Not Applicable

6. OPTIONS

The options are:

- 6.1 **Option 1:** to commit to recognizing September 30, 2021 by sharing the stories of residential school survivors, their families, and communities, observe the federal statutory holiday of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and provide education to staff and Council surrounding the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation; **(As Recommended)**
- 6.2 **Option 2:** to not observe the holiday and only provide education to staff surrounding the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- 6.3 **Option 3:** observe the holiday in 2021, assess and determine how to proceed in future years.
- 6.4 **Option 4:** do nothing - not observe the holiday, provide education or recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications include a paid statutory holiday to employees with Town facilities being closed. While there are no direct financial impacts to full time staff receiving the day off, there will be an impact to productivity. Contract staff will be entitled to public holiday pay per the Employment Standards Act. Contract staff that work the holiday will be paid at time and a half, in addition to receiving public holiday pay. This is estimated to cost approximately \$5,000 total, which includes the costs for Contract staff at the Community Centre, Arenas, Washroom Maintenance, and garden watering.

In addition, the meaningful education opportunities during the month of September cost approximately \$65 per employee. This totals to approximately \$6,500 to provide Council and full-time staff with multiple training modules and educational videos throughout the month of September. This funding can be taken from the Corporate Training account. There are sufficient funds in the 2021 training budget to cover this cost.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

External

Upon Council's approval, communications will commence advising the public that the Town will be observing the Federal statutory holiday of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. Residents and members of the public will be advised of Town Administration Building closures on this date via social media posts, information sharing on the Town's website, and signs posted on the exterior of administration buildings. Town programming and essential services will remain available similar to other statutory holidays.

Additionally, Staff will work with the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum to share information regarding Truth and Reconciliation on the Town's social media pages and website.

Internal

Internal communication about the statutory holiday and reconciliation education and training will be communicated to employees through a CAO Update, all-Staff Town Hall Meeting and email messaging.

All Staff will be invited to participate in continuous learning related to the Indigenous community to ensure the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools are never forgotten.

9. CONCLUSION

The federal government recently passed legislation to make September 30 a federal statutory holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day provides an opportunity for people to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools. Town Staff recommends the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake observe this day as a holiday and provide reconciliation training to show support. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake remains committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation across all divisions of the Corporation and the Town at large.

Respectfully submitted,



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