



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Friday, April 17, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and look at ways to support the community.

Today, the federal government announced more help for small and medium-sized businesses. The government will provide \$962 million to the federal regional economic development agencies and to the Community Futures Network of Canada to provide help to small businesses that don't qualify for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) or the federal loan program.

The government will also provide \$270 million to Futurpreneur Canada and to the Industrial Research Assistance Program to support innovators who don't qualify for these other funds.

In addition, the Government of Canada is providing \$500 million to establish a new COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations to help address the complex financial needs of affected organizations within these sectors.

"Every day I'm so grateful for the support coming from all levels of government," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "And they are looking at every sector and industry to ensure people don't fall through the cracks."

Yesterday, the provincial government announced a new program to help post secondary students who are struggling with anxiety, depression, addiction or any other challenges at this difficult time. The new platform, Here2Talk is available in English, Chinese and Punjabi, and allows students to seek support via phone or online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week with trained counsellors. The Here2Talk app can be downloaded, or you can visit here2talk.ca.

"These are challenging times for everyone, and I encourage anyone who may be struggling to reach out to the great resources available", said Mayor Helps. "And for me, art and music can be a great way to feel connected to others. That's why I'll be tuning in to the free concert happening tonight at 8pm on CHEK TV".

'Rock for Relief: A Living Room Concert for Vancouver Island' is commercial free on TV, YouTube, and CHEK's Facebook page and will also raise funds for the Greater Victoria Rapid Relief Fund, and the Island Response Fund. The line up includes the City's own Artist in Residence – Kathryn Calder.

For information on the City's response to COVID-19, the public is invited to tune into the Mayor's Facebook Live weekday updates at 2:30 p.m. on the City of Victoria Facebook page, and to visit victoria.ca/covid19response.

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