

Shelburne to implement Dufferin County's vaccine policy for staff

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The Town of Shelburne is moving forward in implementing a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for staff after receiving a final report during their most recent meeting.

Shelburne Town council, on Monday (Oct. 2) received an updated report from chief administrative officer, Denyse Morrissey, which recommended that the town implement the same policy created by Dufferin County.

Council voted in favour of the policy with a majority 6-1 vote.

Moving forward with the same approach as Dufferin County, the vaccination policy for Shelburne staff will include the listed components:

? Proof of vaccination status or proof of medical exemption or proof of exemption under the Ontario Human Rights Code will be required by Nov. 1

? Staff not providing the proof identified will be required to attend an education session on vaccine safety

? Staff not vaccinated will be required to undergo regular testing (rapid antigen tests) prior to being onsite

? Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action

? Accommodations on human rights grounds will be considered on an individual basis

The policy also includes who will be responsible for the cost of the rapid test.

Morrissey said employees with exemptions, either medical or human rights, will be reimbursed for the cost of the test while unvaccinated employees will only be reimbursed until December 31. As of January 1, 2022, employees will be responsible for the cost of testing.

Morrissey noted that the financial impacts of the testing are not known and won't be known until a review is completed. A variety of scenarios were given to council in regards to how the cost would change with the number of unvaccinated employees. With rapid tests costing \$40, for one unvaccinated employee it would cost \$4,160 for 52 week. Another scenario looked at four employees, testing twice a week for 52 weeks which would cost \$17,600.

Coun. Lindsay Wegener, who voted against the mandatory vaccine policy for staff, questioned the feasibility of testing both vaccinated and unvaccinated employees with rapid testing.

?That's not something that we evaluate, but we can certainly provide that question to public health,? said Morrissey. ?I'm not aware of any other policy that has requested doubly vaccinated staff to undergo rapid testing.?

The mandatory policy that will be implemented will only include municipal staff members since elected officials are not considered town employee. A separate policy will be brought back to council regarding elected officials.

The mandatory vaccine policy for staff will go into effect on Nov. 1.