Thank you, Judy Kay, for your deputation tonight. And thank you for your long, dedicated service to the Town of Goderich as Treasurer.

As Mayor I understand the concerns and questions you and the public have regarding both the process of any decisions made ... and the implications of those decisions. To be clear, Council is here at the will of the constituents... and it is our obligation to follow the guidelines and ensure transparency. So again, I thank you for being forthcoming with your concerns and I will address these in the following statement.

Firstly I will frame the topic of transparency with the explanation that decisions made by Council result from Council discussion. These take the form of motions or By-laws ratified by this body of Council. We want to assure the public that we are following the right process for transparency. We want the citizens of Goderich to have confidence in their Mayor and Council.

Next, I turn to the decisions in question. Again, I’ll provide some initial context. It is not a regular occurrence to replace two top key positions in a Municipality... and it is further challenging when the positions have been held for over 40 years. That represents a wealth of acquired knowledge and strategic relationships that benefit the Town of Goderich. While we had the foresight to anticipate these retirements, in actuality, much of the process and considerations are influenced by the circumstances at the time of receiving notice.

Upon receiving both Mr. McCabe’s and Mr. Wilson’s letters of retirement, we initiated a process that sought to select the best hires possible for the Town of Goderich, including both internal and external candidates. We recognized that organizational change offered an opportunity to stop and look through a fresh lens. We were able to see what the Town of Goderich would benefit from... reflecting upon changing times, different skill sets, and technology that may influence the construct of these roles. This review allowed us to assess our needs and ultimately eliminate one staff position.

As we undertook the decisions in question, we were in the midst of the recruitment process with no certainty who the successful candidates would be. These decisions span the timeframe during which recruitment was unfolding and Council was anticipating a transition situation.

As it relates to Mr. McCabe....again, we are addressing a CAO with an excess of 40 years of service. We entered into discussions with Mr. McCabe to identify a course that would allow for an orderly transition according to the timetable that fit the needs of the Town and Council’s goals. This was done, all the while considering a 40-year employee and the legal entitlements that person had as a result of his service to the Town.

The course of action provided for an overlap between the incoming and outgoing CAOs, a continuity of service to the community, and ensuring the continued ability to draw on the experience and expertise of the outgoing CAO during the transition. As an example, Mr. McCabe sits on several boards and committees due to his long-term service and experience that are greatly beneficial to advancing the Town’s priorities. That cannot be replaced, nor are these board commitments within our ability to influence. The resulting arrangement made for Mr. McCabe is not an unusual arrangement in business and public service.
Turning now to Mr. Wilson... there are other circumstances that were specifically taken into account. Upon evaluating the new position replacing the existing Director of Operations, it was determined with HR consultation, that there had been an inequity in compensation between what the incumbent had received and what he would have received if the appraisal of the job had been addressed earlier. In order to address that inequity, Council negotiated an arrangement that looked at the situation related to a long-term, loyal employee, and also secured the opportunity for continued assistance and expertise to the new Director and to the Municipality for a period of time during the transition.

With these recruitment processes now complete, I can share that the individuals in these new roles have the full confidence of Council in their capabilities and vision, and that we support their need to have space to make these roles their own. Providing transition support does not undermine that conviction. These are our two top roles. We want to ensure the individuals are provided the resources and knowledge they need to be successful.

There is more additional information that it is rightful for Council to provide to both Judy, and to the public, in regard to how we arrived at these critical decisions. That includes the Financial Impact to our Budget... and what that means to our rate payers. It is a complex matter to balance both public openness and the privacy of personnel matters. That is not always an easy line to navigate. And it can make it challenging to address every aspect of decisions.

We appreciate it is important to be timely and responsive to ensure the public has the full context and considerations that went into this decision. We want to be thorough and responsible. Your Mayor and Council are absolutely committed to demonstrating good governance and transparency and we thank you for the opportunity to address this matter.

I will now ask our Treasurer to define the financial implications of our decisions. Our Treasurer, Dianna Hastings.