

# District of Barriere

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

## Request for Decision

<b>Date:</b> September 15, 2025	<b>File:</b> 530.20/Rpts
<b>To:</b> Council	<b>From:</b> Chief Administrative Officer
<b>Re: District Hall Opening Hours</b>	
<b>Recommendation:</b> THAT Council instructs Staff to change the general Opening Hours for the District Hall offices to 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday, except for statutory holidays, starting on January 5, 2026.	

### Purpose

For Council to consider amending the District Hall opening hours.

### Background

As part of the Strategic Plan 2025/26, Council asked Staff to review the Opening Hours for the District Hall offices to seek opportunities for more efficient delivery of services to the community.

Staff undertook an almost 3-month interaction logging project which was primarily undertaken at the reception counter. In total 46 days were utilized for front counter interactions between March and June, which included a full Utility Billing cycle (which is where the majority of interactions were expected).

The below table tries to illustrate the overall findings from the project:

	Billing	Fees	Planning	Bylaw	Business Licence	Roads	Solid waste	Utilities	Building Permit	Funding Support	Other	Day Total	830-900	400-430
In Person	267	3	3	0	20	10	5	7	27	0	172	514	21	6
Phone	163	1	2	10	13	21	1	21	18	0	293	553	18	3
Total	430	4	5	10	33	31	6	28	45	0	465	1067	39	9
In person avg	5.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.0	3.7	11.2	0.5	0.1
Phone avg	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.0	6.4	12.0	0.4	0.1
Total avg.	9.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.7	0.1	0.6	1.0	0.0	10.1	23.2	0.8	0.2

As previously expected, the majority of interactions came from the Utility Billing cycle roughly 270 in-person visits (which could be to pay a bill as well) and roughly 160 inquiries via phone. Together, these made up for over 40% of all the interactions during that 46-day time period.

We also noticed a substantial number of “Other” inquiries, which ranged from anything Cemetery related to members of the public calling for assistance with locating contact information for businesses or other agencies. The next time we do a sample 3 month run we will try to further understand the “Other” needs the community has.

Our finance department will also further investigate opportunities on streamlining financial operations for example by providing additional education on online payments or converting vendors to the automatic funds transfer (AFT) program to fast track District payments.

## Opening Hours

The current opening hours for the District Hall offices are from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, except for statutory holidays. The data was analyzed by day of the week to see if there were any days that had a lower interaction volume.

	In Person avg	Phone avg	Total avg
<b>Monday</b>	12.1	12.3	<b>24.4</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	8.6	12.4	<b>21.0</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	12.4	12.3	<b>24.8</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	11.9	12.5	<b>24.4</b>
<b>Friday</b>	11.0	10.4	<b>21.4</b>

Although we anticipated a lower interaction volume on Friday’s, which seemed true during some weeks, other Friday’s had higher interaction volumes and as such essentially equalled each other out. Given the above data, there was no clear day that stood out to potentially try to reducing an entire day or afternoon to gain some efficiencies. This also shows that the current model of being generally available Monday through Friday works for the District’s tax and rate payers.

However, when looking at the early morning hours (8:30am to 9:00am) and the late afternoon hours (4:00pm to 4:30pm) there was a clearer picture.

From 8:30am to 9:00am – roughly 0.45 in person interactions occurred at the office per day, while roughly 0.39 interactions occurred via phone, so a total of roughly 0.84 per day.

From 4:00pm to 4:30pm – the interaction volume was even more reduced than for the morning hours at 0.13 for in person and 0.07 via phone per day, so for a total of 0.2 interactions each day on average.

So, if Council considers eliminating this 1.0hrs total per day of public open hours (0.5hrs in the morning and 0.5hrs in the afternoon), on average 1.0 person per day may find the office closed during that time for in-person visits or phone calls. Staff is still expected to be in the office for their regular hours, but can now dedicate time towards focused work like balancing and reconciling cash receipting and other critical tasks that currently are at time interrupted. This change would further help with potential overtime cost reductions for in-office staff.

## Summary

Based on the data collected and highlighted above, the only efficiency gain at this time would be recognized if the District Offices would remain closed until 9am and close at 4pm each regular workday.

## Start Date / Communications

To allow staff and the community some time to establish those changes into a new routine, staff would propose a start date for the reduced hours as of January 5, 2026, once the offices are open again for the public after the winter holiday season.

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## Benefits or Impact

### General

As per Council's strategic goal, staff is presenting an option for reducing the opening hours for the District Offices to help create an efficient and cost-effective structure that meets the needs of the community.

### Finances

N/A – there may be some positive variances to District budgets as potential staff overtimes would be reduced.

### Strategic Impact

Priority#2: Fiscally Responsible Operations

Goal 2. – develop a Strategy to mitigate cost increases and downloading pressures.

Actions: a. Seek opportunities to increase efficiencies, for example:

- a. Procedure Bylaw – Meeting dates and times, other efficiencies
- b. Opening Hours for Town Hall

Results: b. Collect Statistics for visitations to Town Hall and present in 2026.

### Risk Assessment

Compliance: Community Charter

Risk Impact: Low

Internal Control Process:

Council can set the service level that meets the community's needs

### Next Steps / Communication

- If approved, as opportunities arise, Staff would advertise the new opening hours.
  - Staff would also source some blinds or other visually appealing materials to provide privacy while the doors are closed.
  - The changes would take effect on January 5, 2026, after the winter holidays.
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## Attachments

- N/A

## Recommendation

**THAT Council instructs Staff to change the general Opening Hours for the District Hall offices to 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday, except for statutory holidays, starting on January 5, 2026.**

## Alternative Options

1. Council could instruct Staff to utilize a different schedule for the opening hours.
2. Council could instruct Staff to keep the hours as is forgoing any potential efficiencies.
3. Council could eliminate a day of the week to create efficiencies. This is not recommended as the community seems to rely on the District's assistance on a regular basis each day of the week.

Prepared by:

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