

## Mayor's Message

### Mayor Carolyn Amyotte

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**Video Update #10 December 9, 2020**

Hi North Kawartha its Mayor Carolyn Amyotte here with a very important video update. I am sure that most of you have heard about the tragic fire that destroyed our local Sayers Foods grocery store in early morning hours this past Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup> 2020.

First I want to commend our Fire Department for their incredible response. We are so blessed to have a team of well-trained and dedicated volunteers that respond quickly and effectively to all emergency situations, not just fire. I also want to thank our awesome Roads department who were crucial in making the scene safe by sanding and knocking down the remaining structure.

While an emergency like this is always hard, this particular fire was a tough one for our firefighters and roads crew because of the emotional and social impact. This was their hometown grocery store too!

MMP Dave Smith met me that morning, to survey the damage and discuss next steps regarding various ministry support, and funding programs. I connected with Federal Minister Monsef for the support that will be needed for the Sayers' family and staff, and to address the social and economic challenges they and we now face. Both Dave and Maryam have pledged their full commitment and support to our town.

I also met Jeff Sayers that morning and the Sayers family Sunday morning as the demolished store was being fenced off. It was clear to me that the enormity of the situation was hitting them full force and that they needed time process, breathe and re-group. As their friend and mayor I am asking everyone to give them the time and space they need.

Many of you know, that when the pandemic began last March, Sayers and their staff stepped up... they stocked up and worked even harder to serve our community. They immediately set up an order system. They implemented curbside pick-up and home grocery delivery. They established 24-hour shift coverage to meet the food needs of our community. This 4 generation family business and staff worked tirelessly to serve not only Apsley and North Kawartha but surrounding communities as well.

As I stood with the Sayers looking over the rubble of the store I pledged my commitment to them and to our town. For nearly 50 years they have served our community's grocery needs. They are one of our biggest employers; they grant every donation request; they support our school, our sports teams, our community organizations and events. Sayers family and staff have taken care of Apsley and North Kawartha, now it's time for Apsley and North Kawartha to take care of them.

On Sunday afternoon, I attended an emergency meeting with the North Kawartha Economic Development Co-operative and various community leaders to begin formulating a community response and action plan to deal with the loss of our only grocery store. A task force has been created to mobilize volunteers and support. Every offer, suggestion and idea is on the table right now folks. It's crucial that we coordinate a multi-faceted response that addresses, immediate food and transportation needs, temporary grocery facilities and plans for the long term rebuilding.

That being said, action is already taking place. We have a first response plan that will rely on the expertise of the North Kawartha Food Bank and Apsley Community Care. These 2 organizations are already set up to handle the immediate challenges of food insecurity and assistance for transportation and shopping. In fact, a bus program is already underway for all residents that need transportation for groceries, along with an expanded food delivery program.

For any North Kawarthan that needs support please check out our township website at [northkawartha.ca](http://northkawartha.ca) for contact information. I will also share this info on my Facebook page @Mayor Amyotte.

Finally, I want to speak to the hundreds if not thousands of people that have offered support and are looking for ways to help our community. Please consider supporting our 'First Response Action Plan' by donating to Apsley Community Care. With the success of our recent Food Drive our Food Bank is currently in a strong, financial position to respond to this crisis. However, Apsley Community Care is in need of both financial and volunteer support. The best way to help our town right now is to help Community Care. Please check out their 'Be a Lifeline for Apsley' Campaign. Donations can be made online and you can also support them by becoming a volunteer. Links to this campaign will also be on my Facebook page and the Township website as well. This is only the first of what will be many ways for people to help us.

On behalf of the Sayers, their staff, the village of Apsley and North Kawartha I want to thank everyone for their messages of sympathy and offers of support. I wish I could personally thank every town, mayor, agency, business, group and every single individual that has reached out. While we are devastated by what has happened, please know that plans are being put into place and we are mobilizing to address this crisis. I ask for your patience and understanding as we respond to the enormous task in front of us. After all it's been just over 3 days since the fire happened and we can already see the long road that lies ahead of us. The outpouring of public support has been overwhelming and humbling and clearly demonstrates that we don't have to travel that road alone. That means the world to us. Please stay tuned for more updates.

Thank you!