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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date: September 10, 2024
From: Kris Croskery-Hodgins, Municipal Administrator-Clerk-Treasurer
Re: Adding a Deputy Treasurer to the Administration Team

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

The municipal sector has seen a number of changes to service delivery, service demands, reporting requirements and staffing requirements since 2020 as a result of COVID and societal changes.

An Organizational Review and Succession Plan Proposal was prepared by Janet LeClair, CHRL, Stratford Managers Corporation for Council in September 2020. This report outlined a proposed structure review including a recommendation to hire one new position of Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant.

At that time the Office staffing included CAO-Clerk-Deputy Treasurer (3 days per week); Treasurer-Deputy Clerk (full time); and EDO-CEMC (full time).

In 2021 Council directed changes to the position descriptions and experienced the resignation of the CAO-Clerk-Deputy Treasurer.

In 2022 the position of Office Administrator-Deputy Clerk was adopted by Council and filled. This allowed for 3 full time office staff of Municipal Administrator-Clerk-Treasurer-Alternate CEMC; Land Planning and Technology Administrator – Deputy Treasurer; and Office Administrator-Deputy Clerk. This still left the 3-day coverage previously provided, vacant.

Following several changes and amendments to position descriptions, titles and positions, a Pay Equity review and position description amendment was completed by Pesce and Associates in 2024.

With the staff structure and position descriptions amended to reflect the Organizational Chart adopted by Council March 15, 2022, a review of duties, work load, operational changes and service delivery demands has been completed by the Municipal Administrator.

RESULTS

Three important areas need to be included in this review and the resulting recommendation.

Succession Planning

The current staffing structure in the Township Office Administration has three full time employees. This stems from the previous structure where the CAO-Clerk-Deputy Treasurer had over 30 years of experience to share and train. He trained the Land Planning Administrator on all planning and land requirements.

He trained the Municipal Administrator-Clerk-Treasurer on Clerk duties and Treasurer duties. This also included training on cemeteries, municipal software program and current and historical legal matters of the municipality. This also included the Human Resources component with payroll and benefit administration being trained and transferred to the Municipal Administrator early on.

The successful administration of a municipality includes a complete understanding of the demographics served; adequate understanding of the tools used to manage those services provided including software, mapping, historical issues and shared services; and political acuity.

With a staff of three, the two streams of training are being provided to only one staff member which is not sustainable nor effective for future uses.

1. Creating a full-time position of Deputy Treasurer-Office Assistant would provide one staff member to be consistently trained on Treasury ensuring continuity of financial practices and management in line with Township procedures and policies in the event of the loss of the Treasurer due to illness or attrition.
2. The Deputy Clerk-Administrative Assistant is expected to follow the land planning and use training, providing assistance and back up to the Land Planning Administrator for the same purposes.
3. This is a non-union environment and the cross-training of all administrative staff has been a practice followed for several years with great success. This was proven during COVID when limited staff could be in the office. Service delivery was not affected during the pandemic, with all staff members working collaboratively from home or on site to provide the required support to residents regardless of the department they required assistance from.

This opportunity will provide business continuity regardless of the reason for absence or lack of staff in the Township Office.

Reporting Burden/Work Load

Since 2021 the following changes have taken place within the Administration of the Township:

- a) Township gained Consent Graving Authority and now provides the sole support for land consents from pre-consultation to the final deed stamping.
- b) Change from the Baker software system to CGIS for cemetery administration, dog tag management, service request tracking and building permit issuance and management.
- c) Baker Software will be closing and the transition to TownSuite software for tax purposes, accounts receivable, payroll, general ledger and accounts payable.
- d) Increased reporting burden from the different levels of government including the updates and implementation of the Asset Management Plan including core and non-core assets and levels of service; Energy Demand Planning and annual reporting, Waste Diversion reporting and maintenance; transitioning from providing waste diversion programming of blue box to the Provincial responsibility; Community Safety and Well Being plan maintenance; as well as the required reporting for financial, accessibility, payroll, health and safety, school board balancing and remitting and grant reporting.
- e) Increased pressures from legal matters, land matters and public expectations of increased levels of service and support.
- f) A staff member is now appointed to each committee of Council as a secretary and a staff resource. The increased meeting demands and work demands from program expansion and creation has resulted in additional workload within the office to assist in the provision of programming and advertising.
- g) Increased requirements for cyber security are affecting the workload for Technology Administrator, those tasks may not be receiving the attention required as other duties are interrupting the time allotted for that.

The Staff Report to Council dated April 4, 2023, identified a need for an additional full-time staff member in the Township Office which was to be filled by the Intern position temporarily to allow for the training of an individual and to assess the requirements covered by the position.

The workload being covered by the Intern Position has taken a lead in the treasury cross-over with AMCTO training courses in finance being successfully obtained and a successful assumption of accounts payable duties as well as other items. This position has also provided support for grant research, committee support and staff coverage for illness and vacation times. This also allows the staff to not be in a position to work alone. This has been identified as a health and safety concern in the Township Office due to the recent societal changes and increased challenges with customer support.

The Intern position has also provided support in the preparation of data for the software conversion, a detail oriented and time-consuming task with serious implications when not completed correctly.

With limiting use of outside consultants for several projects including the update to the Asset Management Plan (MFOA Amp It Up program intake 1, 2 and 3 were provided free of charge to the Township with support of a KPMG staff member for guidance), Strategic Plan update, Service Delivery Review including the use of a community survey, the costs for these required reports has been kept to a minimum; however the resulting workload has increased significantly when added to daily tasks.

Implementation of New Programming/Procedures

The following new programs/procedures have been implemented since 2021 that increase public interaction, public education and improve the municipal service delivery structure:

- i) The use of CANVA for the preparation of public notices on the Township website and social media. This allows for branding of the Township from our logo and improved information sharing.
- ii) Use of CGIS for service requests/complaint tracking, cemetery administration, building services and permit maintenance as well as zoning inquiries, property concerns and dog tags. This is an important tool for Key Performance Indicators and will be utilized in the Levels of Service requirements of the Asset Management Plan.
- iii) Implementation of FirePro for the issuance of fire permits and maintenance of same, input of fire reporting requirements and support of Fire Department functions.
- iv) New address change process that eliminates the need for residents to contact MPAC and allows the Township to act on their behalf to enact the change. This improves information sharing and provides a support service for residents.

Looking to the future we need to digitize historical records currently stored in the basement of the Township office in non-secure boxes and cupboards. The Township is required to maintain most of those historical records permanently. In the event of a fire, flood or other structure altering event, those records could be lost and deprive the Township of the historical value of the records as well as have legal ramifications.

The digitizing and organizing of historical records will be a large task and require the attention of a staff member with knowledge of what is stored within the documents. This is in addition to the software conversion and training and ongoing municipal operations.

RECOMMENDATION:

In reviewing a recent market survey presented to Council, 11 municipalities were compared by population, land area and number of staff.

Municipality	Population	Land Area Kms	Total # Staff
Township of Nipissing	1769	387.95	15
Municipality of East Ferris	4946	151.94	35
Municipality of Callander	3964	102.98	33
Municipality of Powassan	3346	223.26	39
Township of Dawn-Euphemia	1968	445.14	22
Township of Chapleau	1942	13.2	19
Municipality of Huron Shores	1860	51.87	22
Municipality of Magnetawan	1753	526.31	33
Township of Faraday	1612	217.44	16
Township of Armour	1459	163.52	12
Township of South Algonquin	1055	867.73	22

In order to better compare Administrative Staff Complement, the updated report detailing 9 municipalities administrative staff structure is as follows:

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	Number of Administrative Staff
Township of Armour	1,459	4
Township of Bonfield	1,975	6
Village of Burke's Falls	957	5
Municipality of Callander	3,964	9
Municipality of East Ferris	4,750	7
Municipality of Markstay Warren	2,656	5
Municipality of Powassan	3,346	7
Township of Ryerson	745	3.5
Township of Nipissing	1,769	3

A review of a staff position for Deputy Treasurer-Office Assistant was weighted by Pesce and Associates during the 2024 review. The removal of the Deputy Treasurer title from the Land Planning & Technology Administrator was also taken into account during the weighting procedure, providing no change to the current wage range due to the increase in workload and responsibility to that position with the added consent duties.

Work load pressure has been a notable issue affecting current Township Administrative staff in the recent years with a marked increase in personal time required and a backlog of work accumulating. The current staffing structure versus workload is unsustainable as noted by the HR review performed in 2020 by Stratford Managers and also by E4M during the CAO replacement role in 2021. In order to maintain a sufficient business continuity plan and support for all staffing positions, it is my recommendation that Council consider a new position be added to the Organizational Chart, Deputy Treasurer-Office Assistant, effective November 1, 2024.

This position may be offered internally to the Intern currently with the Township, per HR Policy Number B 2.02.

Respectfully,

Kris Croskery-Hodgins, Municipal Administrator-Clerk-Treasurer