

Subject: Funding for New Pelham Initiatives**Recommendation:**

THAT COMMITTEE receive Report #2020-0013 and recommend to Council:

THAT Council approve a net expenditure of \$8,942 in spending authority, to engage in the five separate initiatives as outlined herein.

Background:

Recently several opportunities for knowledge enhancement, Cannabis advocacy and/or potential savings have arisen. These are unbudgeted items. The purpose of this report is to seek \$8,942 net in spending authority to engage in five separate initiatives. At time of writing it is unclear where the monies to pay for these initiatives would come from. Staff is prepared to attempt to identify potential savings over the course of the year to fund these initiatives, failing which a report with recommendations will be presented to Council for consideration at that time.

Analysis:**Proposed (non-budgeted) Expenditure #1: Mohawk College Training Program in How to Manage in a Unionized Environment**

As Council is aware, Town staff in the Public Works Department voted to join and be represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees ("CUPE"). The first collective agreement is expected sometime during the spring or summer of 2020. This will create significant changes to the employer-employee relationship in this Department, and potentially in other Departments. To help ensure a smooth transition and to support the maintenance of positive relationships, a one-day training session in Union-Management relations, provided by Mohawk College, is seen as an ideal and cost-effective tool. At time of writing, the Town has received an expression of interest from Township of Wainfleet administration in having some of its managers also attend the session, which would likely be held at the MCC in late April or early May. Participation by Wainfleet may serve to reduce the average cost per participant. At time of writing \$8,000 is required to host this session.

Proposed (non-budgeted) Expenditure #2: Corporate Subscription to the Municipal Information Network

For roughly \$1,800 per year all Town staff and elected officials can be provided with access to the "Municipal Information Network" ("MIN"), which is a private sector, for profit enterprise that serves as a central repository for all significant municipal news stories, five days per week. The MIN is also a major forum for job advertisements in the municipal world. The \$1,800 fee would allow the Town to post an unlimited number of job advertisements to the site. This is a cost effective method to increase the visibility of Town jobs and also access news stories and best practices from other municipalities.

Proposed (non-budgeted) Expenditure #3: WSIB Excellence Program

Staff are seeking \$10,200 to participate in the new "WSIB Excellence Program". This cost includes program registration, salary for a three-month temporary hire, and administrative costs. If the program is successfully completed, the Town will qualify for \$18,558 in premium rebates, for a net financial gain of \$8,338, plus potential future WSIB premium savings.

The WSIB Excellence program is a new initiative intended for all types of organizations. The purpose of the program is to assist organizations in building health and safety practices and systems that not only meet minimum requirements, but reach a standard of excellence. The Town can select up to 5 health and safety topics they would like to create or build upon and submit an action plan to the WSIB. With guidance and resources from a WSIB approved provider, staff must complete the topics and submit evidence that demonstrates the topic has been created and implemented.

For every completed topic, the Town will earn a rebate. The rebate per topic is 2% of the WSIB premiums for the previous year. Based on the 2019 premium amount of \$185,580, the Town will earn \$3,712 per completed topic, for a maximum rebate amount of \$18,558. In addition to this direct monetary benefit, the Town has the potential to save additional dollars by creating a safer workplace and reducing the risk of WSIB claims and possibly lowering premium rates in the future through an improved claims experience. Further, the Town will receive public recognition on the WSIB Compass website and be given a digital badge. Most importantly, this will demonstrate that the Town is committed to improving our health and safety culture and ensuring the wellbeing of our staff.

Costs involved include a sign-up fee of \$1,000 plus all applicable taxes. This is paid to the WSIB approved provider who will be tasked with supporting the Town through this process and providing the resources necessary to complete each topic successfully. The request also includes \$9,200 which covers all employment costs of having a Health and Safety Co-op intern complete these topics over a 3-month period.

Proposed (non-budgeted) Expenditure #4: Contribution to CAO Niagara CAO Group Service Sharing & Integration

The twelve Niagara Region municipal CAOs have agreed that for the various sharing/ collaborating initiatives being investigated (legal costs, purchasing, drainage inspection, building inspection and potentially library services), it would be most beneficial to have a devoted person to champion and lead the initiatives. The Region is drafting a report in which the Region's Interim CAO will endorse the Region paying half the cost, with the remainder to be split, on a per-capita basis. Pelham's per-capita share of this cost is \$2,500. If these initial monies are supported, the group intends to apply for provincial funding to offset and possibly reverse this expenditure.

Proposed (non-budgeted) Expenditure #5: Participation in the Cannabis Host Communities Network ("CHCN")

The inaugural meeting of the CHCN was held in Toronto at the end of the ROMA conference, on Tuesday, January 21, 2020. Thirty-five (35) municipalities and/or First Nations groups indicated an interest and roughly twenty (20) attended the meeting. Discussion revolved around creating Terms of Reference, future meetings, advocacy with both the Province and Federal Governments, areas of focus, and financial considerations. It was suggested that the Town of Pelham would be open to providing some seed money in the ball park of \$5,000 to give the group some initial working capital, ahead of any formal decision to levy dues/contributions, given the importance of the topic and the need to find like-minded allies. At present the staff support to this initiative will primarily come from the Municipality of Clarington, which is one of the larger municipalities involved in the initiative.

Financial Considerations:

The net increase budget request of \$8,942 will be covered by expenditure savings or new additional revenue throughout the upcoming year.

Alternatives Reviewed:

Council may support all or some of the initiatives outlined in the report.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Strong Organization

Proposed expenditures #3 and #4 are ultimately intended to save tax payer money. Expenditure #5 pertains to the Town's dominant social issue, while proposed expenditures #1 and #2 are anticipated to increase staff and institutional capacity.

Consultation:

Most of SLT has been consulted on proposed expenditures 1-4. Proposed expenditure #5 has been discussed with Councillor Ciolfi and Mayor Junkin as they were in the room at the inaugural meeting of the CHCN and heard and participated in the same discussion.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Union Management Relations Course Description
CHCN Meeting Description Document

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