

Subject: Union Library Endorsement

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2022-0010, Union Library Endorsement, for information;

AND THAT Council receive the report by Watson and Associates which was funded by the Modernization Grant Phase 2, for information;

AND THAT Council approve posting this final report on the Town's website as per the grant agreement,

AND THAT Council accepts and approved the recommendation of the Joint Lincoln/Pelham Library Board Committee and endorses the report on the Potential Operational Merger of Lincoln and Pelham Public Libraries, effective April 1, 2022;

AND THAT Council directs the Town Clerk to present a by-law appointing a new Library Board effective April 1, 2022.

Background:

This report is being written to provide staff endorsement of the presentation and written report provided by Pelham Public Library and Lincoln Public Library staff and further to satisfy a condition of a provincial grant (Modernization Phase 2). The specific recommendations included in that report (see library delegation material) have been agreed to by staff at both the Town of Lincoln and the Town of Pelham. It is understood and appreciated by all parties that there will be some growing pains in this process, but by having some amount of administrative support provided by each municipality, it is believed that the burden shall be shared and problems solved more expeditiously.

The review process has been thorough and has involved the time and talents of all members of both library boards, staff at both libraries, staff at both municipalities, consultants at Watson & Associates and leadership from both municipal councils. There is a strong and general consensus that the administrative salary savings can

and will be plowed back into frontline salaries, so as to enhance the customer experience and increase institutional capacity. Both libraries have similar, client-focused cultures with high quality programming, and relatively little cultural friction is expected.

The new Lincoln Pelham Union Public Library will officially commence operations as a unified entity on April 1, 2022. This will be a 'soft opening' and at some point thereafter a formal celebration/grand opening event will occur, as Covid conditions permit, likely in the April-July.

Analysis:

Formal analysis is contained in both the Watson & Associates report (attached) and in the report written by Lincoln Public Library and Pelham Public Library staff. There will be a division of labour between the respective town administrations, at least during a transitional period, and the future funding and operations will be reviewed at least once every four years, to ensure that funding remains in line with relative populations and that efficiency is maximized for back office operations. The concept and plans have been widely reviewed by a large number of professionals, which provides a degree of comfort that the undertaking will be highly successful.

Financial Considerations:

The consultant review was financed in its entirety by the Modernization Phase 2 grant. There are no direct financial costs associated with the union process. Both municipalities have and will continue to provide support services, the cost of which is currently and will continue to be absorbed by existing operations budgets. While there will be financial savings as a result of the elimination of one CEO position, those dollars are being reinvested in front line staff and operations.

Alternatives Reviewed:

The alternative is to abandon this opportunity and hire a CEO for the Pelham Public Library. Given the potential for enhanced service this is not an advisable course of action.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Build Strong Communities and Cultural Assets

The new Lincoln Pelham Union Library will be a strong cultural and recreational asset for both communities. By shifting expenditures from administration to front line service, there is every expectation that both communities will benefit. This initiative is an excellent example of collaboration and co-operation amongst neighbours and proves that community spirit and managerial savvy are alive and well in Niagara.

Consultation:

Lincoln Public Library CEO
Pelham Public Library, Acting CEO
Lincoln, CAO
Lincoln Treasurer

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Library Integration for the Town of Lincoln and the Town of Pelham by Watson & Associates Inc. - See library delegation material

Appendix 2: Lincoln Pelham Public Library Report on Potential Merger of Lincoln and Pelham Public Libraries. - See library delegation material

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