

Subject: Proposed Increase to Staff Complement in the RCW Department, 2023 - 2025

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report # 2023-0159 – Proposed Increase to Staff Complement in the RCW Department, 2023 - 2025, for information;

AND THAT Council approve the establishment and hiring of one senior services and community enhancement programmer position, the hiring of one facility operator position, the establishment of two full-time customer service positions, the creation of a supervisor, recreation and culture position with simultaneous elimination of the recreation facilities coordinator position and the general increase in customer service hours, with a target goal of starting these positions in September, 2023, as outlined in this report;

AND FURTHER THAT Council refer the proposed Manager, Recreation, Culture and Wellness position to the 2025 budget deliberations.

Background:

The Meridian Community Centre first opened its doors to the public in July of 2018. Public use and attendance at the facility has grown consistently since the opening. Attendance data has gone from 190,212 in 2019, (largely closed in 2020) to 406,047 in the 11 months the MCC was open in 2022, to 208,873 during the first four months of 2023 (on track towards more than 600,000 visits this year). Staff correctly considered themselves to be busy while working to serve 190,212 back in 2019. Since 2019, one middle management position has been cut from RCW and one entry-level management position has been added, for a net gain of zero positions, with reduced wage cost, which has in turn resulted in significant pressure upon all RCW staff in light of dramatically increased demand for services.

Over the past year, Town Council has received and endorsed two major documents associated with RCW operations: the KPMG Organizational Review and the Recreation Master Plan. The first document was created as the result of a

provincial grant designed to examine operations for efficiency and productivity improvements. While the Organizational Review document calls for nineteen changes (some of which have been implemented, some are works in progress), a number of the key recommendations involve the adequacy of staffing. Similarly, the focus of the Master Plan is upon provision of recreation services in the coming decades, however it makes fifty-nine recommendations, including several on the topic of staffing.

This report is not focused on the general work towards satisfaction and execution of the recommendations in the aforementioned reports. Because RCW is a service-based department, and because of the spectacular growth in demand for RCW staff services, it is considered necessary to determine the level of Council support for enhancements to the staff complement before many of the other recommendations can be addressed. Because staffing levels determine service capacity, once staff count is determined then implementation timelines and viability of the outstanding recommendations becomes clearer.

This report has been written in partial satisfaction of the Strategic Plan's "MCC Staff & Resources Reporting" Action Item. This report calls for a limited amount of immediate spending on wages and staffing as well as future increases to the staff complement in the 2024 and 2025 budgets.

Analysis:

While the data makes clear that overall demand for space and activities at the MCC has grown, so too has the range of services provided by the RCW Department, both in the MCC and elsewhere in Pelham. Service enhancements during and since the Covid-19 pandemic include two splash pads, Brock University fitness programming, spin classes, seniors programming in the Active Living Centre (with attendant official designation), art shows, Indigenous programming, an explosion in pickleball, bringing advertising sales in-house, the rain barrel program and youth mental health services through Pathways. Each of the foregoing requires some amount of staff time, cleaning and/or facilities support and maintenance. Additionally, Council has approved Pelham participating in the Communities in Bloom competition in 2024. While work in support of this initiative will be split with staff in Public Works, there will be a significant role for RCW staff to play and this additional demand will place added burden upon staff time.

A key part of MCC Operations are the private rentals of the various parts of the facility. The community rents space for parties, corporate events, comedy nights, concerts, graduations, training, conferences, trade shows, to play sports in the gymnasium, for skating parties, hockey camps, recreational leagues, etc. Highlights of the rental activities can be found in the table below:

Year	Hours	Revenue
2019	6,218	\$716,078
2022 (11 months)	28,509	\$1,009,493
2023 (4 months)	12,712	\$1,174,860

What most of the aforementioned rentals have in common is that in between activities, work must be performed by Town staff – be that setting up the Accursi Room for a Council meeting or erecting pickle ball nets or cleaning the ice, many tasks are necessary in short period of time between the back-to-back rentals. The huge increase in rental hours has directly increased the workload, but there has been no change whatsoever in facilities attendant and facilities support staffing to support this increase in demand.

At time of writing, staff project that in 2023 there will be approximately 36,000 hours of rental activity, which should equate to roughly \$1,174,860 in revenue. The MCC has already experienced an increase of \$293,715 in rental revenues over pre-Covid operations and it is predicted if activities and usage continue for 2023 estimated increase from 2019 of \$458,782 in revenues. Fundamentally, this report requests that some of these revenues be applied towards staffing both so as to maintain service quality for the public and to reduce the burden upon staff.

Staffing Recommendations

Senior administration has reviewed the documents written by external consultants and incorporated much of that advice into the proposed changes to RCW staffing levels, found below. One of the structural gaps identified by KPMG is the complete lack of middle-management in the RCW Department. The Department is led by a Director, with the only two other management positions being a Supervisor, Recreational Programs & Facilities and a Recreation Facilities Coordinator (“Coordinator” is the title used for the Town’s lowest ranking management position). It is notable that there are no full “Manager” positions in RCW, unlike in the Corporate Services, Public Works and Community Planning & Development Departments. By full-time employee count, RCW is the Town’s second largest department; during the summer season with part-time and seasonal staff it is the Town’s largest department, so the absence of a manager is notable.

For the purpose of this report, the key KPMG recommendations are to create a Manager position, to hire an additional facilities operator and to make some of the part-time customer service positions into full-time customer service positions as more hours are necessary and this will reduce turnover. The Recreational Master Plan is less specific about positions. Town administration has modified the

recommendations in light of increasing demand, slight changes to the services offered since the reports were first created and other factors.

The following proposed positions are listed in order of recommended chronological order of hiring, rather than by priority, cost or importance:

The first recommended change to RCW staffing is to create a new Seniors Services & Community Enhancement Programmer position. This position would absorb all of the existing specific-to-seniors duties of the Active Living Programmer and some of the festivals duties from the Culture & Community Enhancement Programmer. This change would significantly enhance the department's planning and organizational capacity with respect to recreation programs by having three specialists capable of supporting each other during times of absence. The Active Living Programmer position (which currently exists) would be partially freed-up to focus upon programs for all ages and to supervise the seasonal students (primarily life guards, swim instructors and camp counsellors). In turn, the Culture Programmer (also an existing position) would be able to focus upon Summer Chill and Supper Market, cultural workshops, Indigenous Programming, Cultural Advisory Committee support, library partnership and implementing Pelham's Culture Master Plan. It is proposed that this position commences in September 2023.

The second recommended change would be to hire an additional facility operator. The accumulation of overtime banks amongst the operators, the challenge with position coverage while others are sick or on vacation and the sheer growth in facilities rentals and thereby demands for skilled labour make this an obvious course of action. It is recommended that this position commence in September 2023.

The third recommended change would be to eliminate the Recreation Facilities Coordinator position and replace it with a Supervisor, Recreation, Culture and Wellness position (essentially a promotion for the current coordinator). This position would supervise all the RCW operations that are primarily not physical labour tasks – facilities rental, customer service, event planning and staff scheduling. This would result in there being two supervisors in the department and in the short-term it would do much to address the virtual absence of middle-management in the department.

The fourth recommendation is to create a Manager, Recreation, Culture & Wellness. This position (although not the specific title) was contemplated by KPMG. Without a manager, manager level work is currently either done by a director, who is essentially being overpaid for management duties, or is being done by the supervisor, who is theoretically undercompensated for the work. In the absence of the director, this position would have responsibility for all operations and programming. The exact division of duties would be subject to the manager's skill

set and private negotiation between that person and the director. The position would also be expected to work regular hours on the weekends to increase management coverage during peak times. It is recommended that this position commence in January 2025.

The final staffing recommendation is to increase the pool of money available for the customer service function. Currently, the Town only employs part-time customer service staff, of which there are five in total. For brevity, some detail is omitted, but fundamentally senior administration recommends that the five current part-time customer service staff should ultimately be transformed into two full time customer service staff members, one part-time customer service staff member and three dedicated bar servers who could provide back-up customer service during peak times or vacation coverage. It is believed that the move to full-time employment will reduce turnover and enhance morale. The cost estimates for this change are included in the Financial Considerations section. Importantly, this plan can be modified if Council approves a lesser amount of expenditure or if Council defers approval or partial approval to future budgets. While it is recommended that some of these changes be implemented in September 2023, there is considerable flexibility in this regard.

As general commentary, one of the structural problems for the RCW Department is that notwithstanding the size of workforce, most roles have only one person within them and so there is virtually no coverage available when someone is sick, on training or vacation. Any absence tends to result in an immediate impact upon service provision. The majority of these proposed changes will work to address this operational shortcoming. The new programmer can provide coverage and support to the two existing programming positions; the new supervisor can provide coverage to the existing supervisor, the increase in monies for customer service should lead to better service standard and more adequate coverage, the new facilities operator can support all of the existing operators and the new manager can provide coverage to both the director and the supervisors. The net result of these changes should be a better user experience and better service standard for all residents of Pelham.

For ease of reference and understanding, both the current RCW organizational chart and the proposed RCW organizational chart have been appended to this report.

Financial Considerations:

The total cost of the first four recommendations for 2023 is \$73,166. This will be covered by in-year revenue so there is no impact to the 2023 bottom line. The additional cost for a new RCW Manager in 2025 will be part of the 2025 operating budget and the revenue from the activities will be able to cover this complement.

Recommendation	Proposed Position/Change	Annual Cost	Sep 1 – Dec 31, 2023 Cost
1	Seniors Services & Community Enhancement Programmer	\$86,441	\$28,814
2	Removal of two part-time Customer Service Positions	(58,438)	(19,480)
2	Addition of Full-time Customer Service Positions	\$104,230	\$34,744
2	Net Cost	\$45,794	\$15,264
3	Facilities Operator	\$89,675	\$29,892
4	Removal of Recreation Facilities Coordinator	(99,141)	(33,047)
4	Addition of Recreation, Culture and Wellness Supervisor	\$119,627	\$39,867
4	Net Cost	\$20,486	\$6,829
Total		\$242,396	\$80,799
5	Addition of RCW Manager Position in 2025	\$145,705	

In summary, if all of the requests are approved by Council, the staffing changes are anticipated to cost \$80,799 between September 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023. The cost for a full year of operations (ie 2024) would be \$242,396, plus any cost of living awards made for 2024. In 2025, an additional \$145,705 would be added for the Manager position, leading to total salary cost increase of \$388,101 in that year.

Meridian Community Centre Consolidated Budget & Actuals 2019 to 2022

2019 was the first full year of operations for the MMC. The chart below shows the revenue and expenses for the first four years from 2019 to 2022 (which also includes the COVID years of 2020, 2021 and one month in 2022). The chart below shows that in the first full four years of operations, the MCC has surpassed budget by \$1,103,547. This is due to the increase in activity and programming at the MCC. Therefore, the justification for the additional staff is warranted. The additional funds required for the new complements can be funded by the additional revenue that will be generated at the MCC. They have had an excellent track record on surpassing their budget.

Meridian Community Centre Consolidated Report						
	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	Variance	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	Variance
Revenue	\$ 906,269	\$ 1,076,851	\$ 170,582	\$ 987,392	\$ 863,338	\$ (124,054)
Expenses	2,180,057	1,946,557	(233,500)	2,127,201	2,022,215	(104,986)
Total	\$ (1,273,788)	\$ (869,706)	\$ 404,082	\$ (1,139,809)	\$ (1,158,877)	\$ (19,068)
	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	Variance	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	Variance
Revenue	\$ 585,000	\$ 1,003,911	\$ 418,911	\$ 929,492	\$ 1,246,104	\$ 316,612
Expenses	2,240,516	2,070,351	(170,165)	2,390,494	2,577,649	187,155
Total	\$ (1,655,516)	\$ (1,066,440)	\$ 589,076	\$ (1,461,002)	\$ (1,331,545)	\$ 129,457
Summary	Variance from Budget					
2019	\$ 404,082					
2020	(19,068)					
2021	589,076					
2022	129,457					
Total	\$ 1,103,547					

Alternatives Reviewed:

Council could decline to approve any additional customer service hours or any new positions and simply use the increased revenues to decrease the amount of operational costs supported by the tax levy.

In the alternative, Council could decline to approve new positions or additional work hours at this time, but instead refer these requests to the 2024 budget.

In the further alternative, Council could approve all new positions for 2023 and direct that the Manager position be brought forward for a January, 2024 start, instead of a January, 2025 start.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Enhancing Capacity and Future Readiness

By any reasonable measure the MCC has been a spectacular success. Attendance numbers are very strong, revenues consistently exceed expectations and the facility is open for 17 hours per day, most days of the year. Staffing shortages are ultimately a good problem to have, however there are serious challenges both to quality of service and operational sustainability based on current staffing levels. This report recommends that Council approve the expenditure of additional dollars,

over a 2.5 year period, to increase both hours of work and the number of staff, so as to maintain the present, council-approved, service standard.

Consultation:

Many staff in RCW were consulted, directly or indirectly, in the drafting of this report. Specific consultation and contributions were received from the Director, Recreation, Culture and Wellness, the Supervisor, Recreation, Programs & Facilities, the Manager, People Services, the Staff Accountant and Payroll Clerk and the Director of Corporate Services & Treasurer.

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Town of Pelham Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan

KPMG - Recreation, Culture & Wellness Organizational Review

RCW – Existing Organizational Chart

RCW – Future State Organizational Structure

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