

Subject: Clerk's Department – Business Case for Licensing and Records Clerk

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2024-0161 Clerk's Department – Business Case for Licensing and Records Clerk, for information.

Background:

The Clerk's Department will be requesting the addition of a full-time permanent Licensing and Records Clerk during the 2025 budget process. The position will support both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and alleviate workload pressures of the Legislative and Committee Coordinator. It is anticipated the position will be a band 4 on the Town of Pelham's pay scale. The pay scale is a range of \$58,922-68,930 a year, plus benefits.

The purpose of this report is to provide the business case for the position and to allow Council an opportunity to discuss the merits of the proposal prior to budget considerations, so as to save time during that highly structured process. Unless Council directs otherwise, the position will be included in the draft budget and can be removed at that time should such be the will of Council.

Analysis:

Service Improvement Opportunities

By hiring a Licence and Records Clerk, the Clerk's Department and the corporation as a whole will benefit. These benefits include:

1. Taking on Council Statutory and Advisory Committees

The Clerk's Department proposes to take over the administrative responsibility for all the Town of Pelham's Statutory and Advisory Committees. This includes committee recruitment, agenda compilation, providing parliamentary procedural advice, recording minutes and other such administrative duties associated with Statutory and Advisory Committees.

In order to successfully take over Statutory and Advisory Committees, the Legislative and Committee Coordinator must be able to dedicate a large portion of their work hours to administering and supporting these committees. It is intended the proposed Licensing and Records Clerk would take on all licensing, permitting and vital statistic responsibilities from the Deputy Clerk and Legislative and Committee Coordinator to facilitate this need.

Corporate Benefit

- Agenda and minute consistency;
- Use of eSCRIBE for all Statutory and Advisory Committees;
- Sister department staff are no longer required to create agendas or minutes and can focus on their respective departmental duties;
- Administrative review and coordination of agendas becomes possible;
- Brings procedural knowledge and expertise to Committee discussions; and
- Tracks and follows-up on action items and decisions made during Committee meetings.

2. Improved Licensing and Permit Process

The Clerk's Department has identified existing processes and licensing/permit by-laws that require review for efficiency purposes. Licenses and permits such as short-term accommodation and special events have increased significantly in recent years. The addition of a Licensing and Records Clerk position will allow for the review of such cross-departmental processes for the purpose of improving efficiency for the corporation and the applicant(s).

Corporate Benefit

- Review of existing processes to improve efficiency;
- Creation of new policies and/or by-laws to create processes to ensure corporate consistency and messaging;
- Having a dedicated Licencing Clerk will provide for one individual facilitating the process for all departments and ensure that deadlines are met and licences/permits are distributed timely;
- Provides a point of contact for residents and business owners seeking information and assistance with licensing and permit requirements; and
- Relieve the Clerk and Deputy Clerk from routine administrative tasks.

3. Administrative Records Management

The Clerk's Department is responsible for overseeing corporate records. Staff often have questions about record classification, retention, and destruction. Additionally, the Town of Pelham would like to adopt and implement a new electronic records management system. To successfully

implement this program the Clerk's Department will have to invest a significant amount of time in not only learning the program itself but working with all other departments to ensure successful implementation and continued use.

A new Licencing and Records Clerk would allow the Clerk's Department to better support sister departments with their documentary and records needs, including supporting them through a program transition. An additional team member is critical to this project.

Corporate Benefit

- Having a dedicated records resource will aid in the successful adoption of a new and more complex records management system corporate-wide;
- Staff will have a dedicated 'go-to person' to provide accurate and timely information to support informed decision-making related to record-keeping and use of the software;
- Will help facilitate file and record consistency throughout the corporation;
- Having a dedicated records resource for onboarding training to all new staff on records management and the software; and
- Ensures the organization complies with record-keeping regulations and legal requirements.

4. By-law, Policies and Procedural Review and Update

Over the past few years the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk have identified numerous by-laws, policies and procedures to be reviewed and updated. Currently, workload demands do not allow staff to dedicate time to this work. Rather, updates and revisions are made on a reactionary basis.

The addition of a Licensing and Records Clerk position will allow for job responsibilities to be reorganized allowing staff more time to dedicate to reviewing and updating by-laws, policies and procedures.

Corporate Benefit

- Able to implement a new policy binder divided by Council Approved; Policies and Administrative Policies approved by the CAO;
- Update policies to be on the new corporate template;
- Identify and update outdated by-laws (i.e. Land Sale By-Law);
- Ensures that corporate by-laws and policies remain compliant with legislation and align with the organization's strategic objectives; and
- Ensures the organization can adapt to change and manage risks effectively.

5. Elections Support

Every four years, the Clerk's Department requires approximately \$25,000 in additional funding to run the municipal election as a staff of three persons is entirely insufficient to run such a major event in addition to normal duties.

The Clerk's Department is prepared to permanently reduce the budgetary request in the fourth year of the election cycle if this position is approved by Council. Having a permanent, fourth member of the Department will enable it to require reduced assistance in support of the election process, a savings which will occur only once every four years, albeit on a permanent basis. The exact amount to be saved cannot be quantified at present, because the election methodology/technology may change, which may impact the amount of labour required. Regardless of the technology employed, the Clerk's Department is committed to a reduction of at least \$15,000 from what would otherwise be required as a permanent, partial off-set cost measure.

Corporate Benefit

- Fully retain corporate election knowledge as a part-time election coordinator is temporary and does not necessarily return for the next election
- The experience and knowledge of the Licencing and Records Clerk is expected to be greater, as part-time election coordinator positions tend to attract entry-level staff
- Clerk's Department staff will be more equipped to organize and run a by-election if needed
- The Town will save staff resource time by not having to train new staff on elections every four years

Comparison to Area Municipalities

The Town of Pelham has continued to grow and is targeted to reach a population of 28,830 by 2051. The Clerk's Department has not grown in size for at least a decade.

The Town Clerk surveyed the area municipalities and found that municipalities similar in size or slightly larger generally have 4 or more full-time, permanent staff within the Clerk's Department. Please see Chart No. 1.

The addition of a staff person within the Town of Pelham's Clerk's Department is aligned with the area municipalities and is shown in the chart below.

Chart No. 1 – As of July 2024

Municipality	No. of Staff in Clerk's Department (full-time, permanent)	Position Type	Population (2021 Statistics Canada)	Staff Per Capita (staff divided by population multiplied by 10,000)
Town of Pelham	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Legislative and Committee Coordinator 	18,192	1.649
Thorold	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Clerk • Deputy Clerk • 2 Records Management and Licensing Clerk • Legislative and Municipal Elections Coordinator • 2 Customer Services 	23,816	2.939
Wainfleet	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO / Clerk • Deputy Clerk / Executive Assistant to the Mayor 	6,887	2.904
Niagara-on-the-Lake	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Legislative and Committees Coordinator • Digital Records Coordinator • Administrative Assistant / Licensing Clerk (shared with corporate services) 	17,511	2.855
West Lincoln	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk 	15,454	2.588

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk's Secretary • Legislative and Records Management Coordinator 		
Grimsby	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Records Coordinator • Legislative Services Coordinator • Committee Coordinator • Customer Service Representative 	28,883	2.077
Port Colborne	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Legislative Assistant • Licensing Clerk 	20,033	1.996
Lincoln	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Legislative and Committee Coordinator • Cemetery Coordinator • Records Assistant /Administrative Assistant 	25,719	1.944
Fort Erie	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk • Deputy Clerk • Records Management Assistant • Executive Assistant to the Mayor 	32,901	1.215

Financial Considerations:

The proposal for a new position within the Clerk's Department will require a budgetary increase with the majority of the funds coming from the tax base. Assuming a starting wage of approximately \$60,000, this would result in a roughly 0.33% increase on the levy.

As an important potential offset, the Clerk's Department earns revenues from issuing licences, permits and other services such as commissioning. At time of writing, the Clerk's Department has a \$2,000 surplus in licences. It is important to note the Town is undergoing a fee review from which it is anticipated that the fees for commissioning will increase significantly as it appears Pelham has one of the lowest fees in the Region and some municipal neighbours have ceased to offer this service, resulting in increased demand. The net effect of both increased fees and increased demand is currently unknown, however those revenues will be used to offset the cost of the new position.

Alternatives Reviewed:

Council can direct staff not to include this position in the 2025 budget.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Enhancing Capacity and Future Readiness

By delegating licensing, permitting, vital statistics, general customer service tasks and elections support to this new role, the Clerk's Department aims to enhance operational efficiency and service delivery. This includes assuming administrative responsibilities for Council Statutory and Advisory Committees and streamlining licensing and permit processes, ensuring readiness for growing demands. Additionally, it supports the implementation and upkeep of a records management system, enabling existing staff to focus on updating by-laws, policies, and procedures.

Consultation:

Chief Administrative Officer

People Services Manager

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

None.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Holly Willford

Town Clerk

Prepared and Submitted by:

David Cribbs, BA, MA, JD, MPA
Chief Administrative Officer