

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: DLIS-2024-02

Date: November 21, 2024

Originator: Shauna Lehtimaki, Director of Legislative and Information Services

Subject: **Legislative and Information Services Update**

BACKGROUND

The Township of The Archipelago is in the final phases of organizational changes aimed at ensuring that it has the resources, skill sets, capacity, positive working environment, and organizational configuration needed to achieve its strategic priorities as outlined in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. A major change is the creation of the Division of Legislative and Information Services (DLIS), introducing three new full-time positions and consolidating three departments: the Clerks Office (adding External Communications), Protective Services (Emergency and Fire Management and By-Law enforcement), and Innovation and Information Technology (IT, Connectivity and GIS). These changes aim to establish a divisional overarching mandate to continuously improve how the Township serves and communicates with its residents by embracing the role of technology, clustering protective services, and adding external communications functions. The goal is to streamline processes, improve services, support strategic priorities, and enhance staff support and mentoring. Below is the status of DLIS as Quarter 4 ends.

LEGISLATIVE AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Director position has been filled as of July 22nd, 2024. As an external candidate, the Director has prioritized becoming familiar with the Township, staff, and procedures in their first 90 days. Division-wide quarterly staff meetings and regular bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with direct reports are implemented. A comprehensive review and re-writing of all job descriptions in the division is done and two of the three new full-time positions have been filled.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Recommendation 5 from the organization review proposed a new Coordinator of Protective Services position reporting to the Director of Legislative & Information Services. Following a thorough recruitment process, Liam Thompson began his full-time role on November 4, 2024. Staff are transferring all fire and emergency services responsibilities to Mr. Thompson through an established training and transition plan. This is expected to be completed by spring 2025. However, until then, Joe Villeneuve will serve as the primary Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC), with full duties transitioned by the end of 2025. The now-vacant part-time By-law position will be filled by spring 2025. This transition is important for the

Manager of Technology and Innovation and the Clerk to implement multi-year IT projects and advance existing ones. Below is a summary from each of the areas of Protective Services:

By-law Enforcement Services staff are currently functioning within the prescribed level of service with no observed interruptions. Starting November 1st, the hours of service changed to the winter operational hours of Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. In November, general parking patrols are being done due to increased vehicle parking during hunting season.

Emergency Management staff attended Emergency Management Ontario's Lakes Sector Meeting on September 24th and Hydro One, Powering Preparedness workshop on November 5th, 2024. A training exercise will be conducted on November 28th, 2024, as part of the Township's legislated requirements under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

Fire season came to an end as of November 1st, with a total of 40 days at a HIGH Fire Danger Rating. Discussions are underway to renew the Crane Lake Fire Protection Agreement with Seguin Township which expires at the end of the year 2024.

CLERKS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Recommendation 4 from the Organizational Review highlighted the need for incorporating additional new responsibilities regarding external communications into the DLIS, especially within the Deputy Clerk's role. The updated job description for the newly re-named Deputy Clerk and Communications Specialist, allocated 80% of their tasks to legislative work and 20% to external communications. However, the Deputy Clerk is currently spending 40% on external communications. Staff are collaborating with Banko Communications to streamline processes and better use their monthly services. The goal is to establish a sustainable division of tasks by the end of the 2024 year, with continuous monitoring to ensure efficient use of consultants and a balanced workload in the Clerk's office.

Staff are updating procedures for planning Council agendas during a four-month pilot running from September to December. These changes reduce the number of meetings needed and are now accessible to all staff involved, such as Planning staff and the Deputy Clerk. Improvements include a shift to electronic planning via an MS Teams hub that consolidates deadlines, calendars, documents, and chat functions, as well as increased internal Clerk's Office email communication supporting Council directives. The Executive Team (previously named the Senior Leadership Team) continue to meet monthly, however, this change allows for more time to discuss corporate strategic priorities. As mentioned at the last Council meeting in the Department Project Lists and Council Directions report, the revised Council Planning procedures includes deadlines for the Project List updates with monthly internal, quarterly for the Council, and annually for Work Planning, to aid with project monitoring. The Council Directives Report now outlines any directives for activities expected to be completed in less than three months, regardless of staff assignment.

Finally, the survey of the cemetery lands is nearly complete at 95%, and the MNR has initiated consultations with Indigenous communities. This process may take up to a year to finalize but is progressing accordingly.

INNOVATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (GIS, Connectivity, IT and Innovation)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - Recently, the West Parry Sound Geography Network (WPSGN) presented at the BeSpatial Industry Conference in Sudbury. Some may recall that the WPSGN recently won the **2024 Best Small Organization GIS Gold Award** from BeSpatial. The presentation, led by **Chris Mahon, Rob Artega, and Emily Holdsworth**, was well-received, highlighting effective multi-community collaboration and innovation. A WPSGN stakeholders meeting is scheduled for November 14th to discuss next steps for the collaborative.

Information Technology - To date, 2024 workplan items completed include upgrades to one-third of Township workstations, enabling remote functionality on the phone system, implementing an IT ticketing system, and completing IT setups and configurations for nine employee transitions. The launch of Microsoft 365 was successfully completed, though it was not originally included in the workplan or IT Strategic Plan (ITSP).

Innovation - Staff are actively supporting the Financial ERP software launch. This launch accelerated certain tasks from the ITSP, such as the ERP steering committee. Following Council approval for procurement of an ERP system in June 2024, two years sooner than the IT Strategic Plan called for, there is a need to revise all tasks for 2025 to ensure the successful implementation of the ERP. Staff are adjusting the plan and updating the 2025 budget impact.

Connectivity – under a separate report in the Technology section of the Council Agenda.

NEXT STEPS

Staff are working on compiling 2025 workplans, operating and capital budgets. As the final staff vacancies are filled, there is a growing need to seek interim measures for additional office space. Two projects not included in the IT Strategic Plan are the need for a new records management system and the development of IT infrastructure to support remote work. Since these were not previously identified, they will need to be incorporated into the 2024-2026 IT Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This is in alignment with the following Strategic Priorities contained within our Strategic Plan:

- Sustainable & Cost-Effective Services
- Effective Relationships & Partnerships
- Leadership & Communications

Respectfully Submitted,



Shauna Lehtimaki, Director of
Legislative and Information Services

I concur with this report,



John B. Fior, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS: Organizational Chart: Division Legislative and Information Services (DLIS)