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## 2023 Business Plan & Budget

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### Human Resources and Payroll Services

The role of the Human Resources division is to be a business partner that is aligned to, and works closely with, the County's ten departments to allow each department to perform as effectively as possible. Human Resources accomplishes this through ensuring the organization's most important asset—its human capital—is being nurtured and supported through the creation and management of programs, policies, and procedures designed to attract, develop, and retain employees, as well as by fostering a positive work environment through effective employee-employer relations. We believe that our people are our most valuable resource, and our goal is to implement programs and practices that align with the County's mission, vision, core values and Strategic Plan.

The payroll division provides accurate and timely payroll processing of employee pay, identified entitlements and deductions including CPP, EI, Income Tax, etc. and benefits administration. Payroll also prepares Ministry reporting to ensure that we receive the maximum possible funding for salaries and benefits throughout the County. The payroll staff also provides customer service support to all County employees and retirees as it relates to payroll services, benefits, and pension administration.

### Prior Year Accomplishments

During 2022 the Human Resources and Payroll staff remained affected by the impact of Covid-19, frequently readjusting priorities and creatively problem solving to respond to ongoing changes. There was a large increase in reporting and documentation required for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care with the department tasked with tracking all internal labour costs related to Covid-19 and ensuring that the use of Covid-19 funding was allocated according to Ministry of Health & LTC guidelines. The Temporary Wage Enhancement for PSW's introduced by the Provincial Government in 2021 became permanent in 2022. This department also managed and administered a Provincial incentive for registered nursing staff. The statistical information for both including hours and costs created additional reporting to the Ministry. Interpreting ESA requirements, and counselling front line and senior leaders in the application of paid and unpaid Infectious Disease Emergency Leaves and EI entitlements for COVID related absences became a regular occurrence along with the submission of claims for reimbursement to WSIB (administers this funding) to recover all eligible expenses. In addition, implementing



and adjusting processes was necessary to reflect mandatory vaccination policies (which were subsequently revised for all except new hires in LTC and Paramedics). Finally, staffing shortages have led to increased feelings of burnout and lower morale which the HR/Payroll team are constantly looking for positive, sustainable solutions for. The “People Plan” was introduced in 2022 to link staff development, training, succession planning and recruitment. The “People Plan” is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan and flows from the County’s mission, vision, and values. It places people in the right roles and optimizes their skills, abilities, and capacities to drive organizational success.

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The Human Resources and Payroll division supports all departments in managing their labour costs in a very labour-intensive industry. This is done by offering expertise in employee and labour relations, recruitment and selection, and payroll, benefits, and pension administration.

### **Sustainable Growth**

Recruitment and Selection August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022, 237 Recruitments

The labour market was incredibly tight in 2022 causing difficulties for Northumberland to attract and retain employees. This led to increased recruitment efforts requiring positions to be advertised multiple times, making offers well outside our standard start rates to be subsequently declined and underfilling positions.

- External Recruitments 101)
  - 0 CAO Department
  - 2 – Communications Department
  - 10 Community & Social Services Department
  - 8 Corporate Services Department
  - 2 Economic Development Planning and Strategic Initiatives Department
  - 5 Finance Department
  - 14 Golden Plough Lodge Department
  - 4 Information Technology Department
  - 13 Northumberland Paramedics Department
  - 43 Public Works Department

Average time to complete recruitment 6 – 8 weeks

Includes seasonal and student recruitments

- Internal Job Postings (136)
  - 7 Community & Social Services Department
  - 3 Corporate Services Department



- 2 Economic Development, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Department
- 1 Finance Department
- 96 Golden Plough Lodge Department
- 1 Information Technology Department
- 10 Northumberland Paramedics Department
- 16 Public Works Department

#### Labour Relations August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022

- Collective Bargaining
  - CUPE 1748 – Golden Plough Lodge contract expired December 31, 2020, negotiations are ongoing
  - CUPE 1203 – Road’s contract expiring September 30, 2022
- Grievances, settled internally
  - 13 CUPE 1748 – Golden Plough Lodge
  - 10 OPSEU – Northumberland Paramedics
  - 2 CUPE 3725 – Community & Social Services
  - 1 CUPE 1203 Roads
  - 0 UFCW – Material Recovery Facility
- Grievances, settled in mediation/conciliation
  - 13 CUPE 1748 – Golden Plough Lodge (3 settled, 10 withdrawn at mediation)
  - 8 OPSEU – Northumberland Paramedics

#### Job Evaluations & Pay Equity

- Provided support and guidance related to proposed departmental reorganization projects and newly approved positions and performed job evaluations for all departments.
- Reviewed 15 updated positions and 4 new positions within the non-union group and updated the Pay Equity Plan and salary grid.

#### Other Initiatives include:

- Participation in the staffing evaluations for the new Golden Plough Lodge
- Roll out new on-line recruitment module of HRIS
- Review and update of non-union comparator group to include municipalities that better reflect the services provided by Northumberland County.



- Non-union compensation review initiated to be completed during the first quarter of 2023.
- Opened a new account with WSIB for Northumberland Paramedics to better analyze injury/illness within the front-line services with a focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

#### Payroll & Benefits (\$49.7M)

- Benefit provider proposed a +10% increase to the annual premiums for benefits including, Life, AD&D, LTD, Medical, Dental, and Weekly Indemnity however, through negotiations this increase was reduced to +1%.
- Implemented and paid Temporary/Permanent Wage Enhancement funds to PSW's. Completed Ministry of Long-Term Care reporting requirements
- Implemented and paid Temporary Retention Incentive for Nurses and reported to Ministry of Long-Term Care.
- Negotiated annual costs with no increase in premiums for the Employee and Family Assistance Program

#### Training and Development

- Intake #22 for Loyalist Managing and Leading in a Municipal Environment Program began in an in-person format in April 2022 and Intake #23 scheduled to begin in September 2022.
- We reevaluated, with our municipal partners, for Loyalist Managing and Leading in a Municipal Environment Program and delivery format prior to starting Intake #22.
- Continued to strengthen the County's culture of continuous improvement and empower staff to work smarter and eliminate waste in their daily tasks. In 2022 the HR/Payroll staff reviewed their employee change process to eliminate waste and include the change in process due to the implementation of 'StarGarden.
- Continued to utilize online platform (HR Downloads) for mandatory training requirements including WHMIS, and Accessibility/AODA, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Telecommuting training (fire safety, ergonomics etc.) training and self-directed professional development. In 2021, we upgraded to HRdownload's updated platform. For the period of August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022, there were 501 mandatory courses and 151 elective courses completed.
- Continued to review and promote appropriate HRdownloads courses.
- Promoted relevant HRdownloads webinars to managers.
- Indigenous Cultural Competency Training (ICCT) through the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre's (OFIFC):



- All directors completed Cycle 2
- All supervisors and managers completed Cycle 1
- All directors and Supervisors participated in a “Next Step Session”
- Updated the employee learning and development program application form to improve accuracy and completion of required information.
- Supported staff with funding through the corporate training & development budget in professional development activities including: (approved August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022)
  - Master of Engineering course
  - Practical Nursing
  - Infection Prevention and Control Certificate
  - By Law Enforcement course
  - Municipal Law Enforcement Foundations course
  - Executive Diploma in Municipal Management
  - CPA preparatory courses
  - Advanced Care Paramedic graduate certificate
  - Bachelor of Social Work degree
  - Professional Facilitator Program
  - Payroll Compliance Legislation and Payroll Fundamentals courses
  - Mental Health Interprofessional Practice graduate certificate
  - AMCTO Municipal Administration Program Unit 1 & 2
  - Negotiation Skills
  - Managing in a Unionized Environment

Accessibility (including collaboration with operating departments and obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

- Updated 2012-2021 multi-year accessibility plan and finalized 2021 annual accessibility status report.
- Awarded 3 employee accessibility champions the 2022 Helping Hands Award for their dedication to accessibility.
- Proclaimed week of May 24, 2022, to June 4, 2022, as National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) with the theme of “Get Involved”. Awareness activities included reaffirming County’s commitment to accessibility, inviting the public to visit the new 2022-2025 Multi Year Accessibility Plan, promoting recent accessibility improvements and internally providing tips on communicating with people with hearing loss
- Trained Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and other county staff on accessible Word and PowerPoint documents.
  - 45 staff trained on Accessible Word and PowerPoint Documents (August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022)
- Continue to support employees with disabilities through the accommodation process



- Facilitated the installation of hearing loop technology at reception desks at County Headquarters and at the Provincial Offences Court Offices at 860 William Street where the plexiglass installed due to COVID-19 is creating a barrier to those with hearing impairments.

#### Human Resources Policies & Procedures

- Policies approved by County Council and communicated to staff:
  - Telecommute (August 2021)
  - Disconnecting From Work (May 2022)
  - Code of Conduct reviewed and updated
  - Confidentiality reviewed and updated
  - Conflict of Interest reviewed and updated
  - Workplace Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Violence reviewed and updated

#### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Provide support and guidance to member municipalities relating to payroll, OMERS, and human resources questions and/or challenges.
- Service Agreement in place for the Township of Cramahe for Pay Equity, Collective Bargaining and Labour Relations.
- Service Agreement in place for Alnwick/Haldimand for Labour Relations and Pay Equity
- Canada Summer Jobs Grant (CSJ)
  - Supported post-secondary students through the CSJ program, which provides students with valuable work experience to complement their formal education.
- Provided support and expertise on accessibility related projects (accessible picnic tables and outdoor seating, NCAM logo, council templates for eScribe, GPL/NCAM signage and wayfinding, gate installations, off street parking requirements.)
- Coordinated meetings acting as staff liaison to the Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Responded to internal and external feedback related to accessibility of facilities, programs, and services.
- Provided recommendations and support to departments related to accessible information and communications. (ongoing)
- Completed and submitted 2021 Accessibility Compliance Report to Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.



- Developed 2022-2025 Multi Year Accessibility Plan using staff and community consultations and began implementing the plan.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Responded and adjusted to COVID-19 challenges related to staffing, recruitment, payroll, and Ministry reporting for current and additional funding. Worked with individual departments to overcome challenges that required creative, collaborative responses to ensure continued service levels.
- Implemented an exit survey for employees
- Support operating departments with continuing education
- Implemented StarGarden's Recruitment module

## **2023 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The Human Resources and Payroll Services department will continue to support all departments in managing their labour costs by offering expertise in employee and labour relations, recruitment and selection, compensation and pay equity, organizational development, training and development, disability case management, attendance support, and payroll and benefits administration.

### **Sustainable Growth**

Collective bargaining will continue with contracts expiring in 2023:

- UFCW – Material Recovery Facility , December 31, 2023
- ONA – Golden Plough Lodge March 31, 2023
- CUPE 3725 – Community & Social Services, September 30, 2023

Other initiatives include:

- Finalize and implement first day orientation process using Lean principles to maximize efficiency and add value for new employees and operational managers.
- Continue to review non-union comparator salaries and benefits to ensure that we remain competitive with both our internal and external comparators.
- Continue to engage a collaborative work environment that supports innovation and continuous learning.
- Continue using Lean continuous improvement training to find efficiencies in our everyday processes



- Policies to be reviewed and updated in 2023 and those policies that may be subject to change during certain periods. (e.g., emergencies, pandemics)
  - Whistleblower Protection
  - Accommodating Disabilities
  - Attendance Support Program
  - Conditions of Employment
  - Compensation

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Continue to provide Human Resources and Payroll support as required to our member municipalities relating to payroll, OMERS, and human resources questions and/or challenges and enter into shared service agreements where appropriate.
- Continue to implement the 2022-2025 Multi Year Accessibility Plan
- Conduct proactive outreach and sharing job postings with local disability organizations to encourage applications from people with disabilities
- Explore and provide training on communicating using plain language
- Develop and facilitate Accessible Presentations training
- Prepare 2022 Accessibility Status Update and post on website.
- Continue to address barriers to accessibility in County goods, services, and facilities (ongoing)
- Continue to offer training on creating accessible documents (ongoing)
- Continue to review accessibility of County facilities, programs, and services (ongoing)
- Continue with Service Agreement with Township of Cramahe for Pay Equity, Collective Bargaining and Labour Relations.
- Continue with Service Agreement with Alnwick/Haldimand for Labour Relations and Pay Equity
- Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) Grant
  - Continue supporting post-secondary students through the CSJ program, which provides students with valuable work experience to complement their formal education.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Continue working on a full compensation review for non-union employees using the updated comparator group approved by County Council with an estimated completion date during the first quarter of 2023.



- The HR team will be a key partner with the Senior Leadership Team at the GPL in managing and preparing for changes in advance of and once in the new home.

## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Continue to review and adjust the new structure of the Human Resources and Payroll team to ensure the flow of work enhances job satisfaction and development. Work with operating departments as a business partner through collaboration to implement new ideas, methods, and technologies to better meet the requirements of the County and the workforce.

### Sustainable Growth

- Continue to provide strategic advice, information, and guidance to departmental managers to allow them to plan, direct and manage staff performance to meet operational requirements.
- Implement the People Plan linking development, training, succession planning and recruitment.
- Continue to implement strategies to fill current and future vacancies in areas where there is a skill shortage and encourage cross transfer of corporate knowledge and skills amongst the multi-generations throughout the organization
- Collaborate with the Communications department to develop and implement an employer branding strategy designed to attract and retain talent.

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Continue to implement student and youth recruitment and retention initiatives to strengthen the public services and create employment opportunities throughout the County.

### Leadership in Change

- Continue to lead by example under the AODA to help Ontario reduce and remove barriers for people with disabilities so that Ontario can become more accessible and inclusive for everyone.



- Continue to find efficiencies using Lean principles in reporting methods and processes to ensure our internal and external customers receive timely and accurate information required for planning, budgeting, and funding purposes.
- Continue to raise the bar for providing goods, services and facilities in ways that are accessible to all. (ongoing).
- Continue to strengthen the workforce reporting and data analysis capacity to inform program and policy development and provide evidence-based decision making to all departments.
- Continue to offer Managing and Leading in a Municipal Environment program (Loyalist College) to County leaders.

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## 2023 Business Plan & Budget

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### Health Safety Emergency Planning and Customer Services, including Occupational Health Service

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

As with the years 2020 and 2021, the impact of COVID-19 continued to be a primary focus of the Health Safety Emergency Planning Department (HSEPD) in the first quarter of 2022. The HSEPD coordinated the lead for the County Control Group in assisting all departments of the corporation in following Ontario Provincial legislation and Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit directives.

#### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

#### Non-COVID-19 Health and Safety in collaboration with Occupational Health Services

The HSEPD, including Occupational Health Services with Walsh and Associates, assisted all departments in tracking WSIB costs through injury investigations and disability case management return to work initiatives.

- Total number of reported occurrences is 48 (July 25, 2022); 161 in 2021.
- Total number of WSIB Claims is 17 (July 25, 2022); 25 July 2021; total 42 in 2021.
- Total number of Occupational Health visits is 671 (July 25, 2022); 957 in 2021.
- Total non-WSIB costs are \$6,744 (July 25, 2022); \$56,455 in 2021.
- Total WSIB costs are \$226,996 (July 25, 2022); \$157,199 on July 30, 2021

#### Prior Year History:

- 2010 claims = 35 (\$374,547)
- 2011 claims = 40 (\$186,319)
- 2012 claims = 42 (\$114,491)
- 2013 claims = 37 (\$158,558)
- 2014 claims = 45 (\$119,149)
- 2015 claims = 47 (\$102,388)
- 2016 claims = 55 (\$114,671)
- 2017 claims = 62 (\$299,797)



- 2018 claims = 82 (\$347,054)
- 2019 claims = 72 (\$402,954)
- 2020 claims = 40 (\$298,151)
- 2021 claims = 42 (\$271,839)
- 2022 claims = 17 (\$226,996) (July 25, 2022)

## **Sustainable Growth**

The HSEPD sustained growth of the operational services:

### **COVID-19:**

- Continued to update COVID-19 isolation protocol in compliance with most recent Provincial and Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit directives.
- Continued to assess staff isolation protocols through the occupational health services.
- Conducted contact tracing assessment of employees confirm positive for COVID-19.
- Continued to provide protective measures such as masks, sanitizer, and disinfectant to operational departments.
- Provided accommodation for front line GPL workers backfilling the nursing staff shortage.

### **Non-COVID-19 Health and Safety**

- Completed recruitment to fill open Health and Safety Coordinator position.
- Provided HSEPD position specific training to staff (Ergonomic Specialist).
- Supported eight County Health and Safety Committees.
- Assisted H&S reps to conduct hazard assessments on workplace hazards.
- Supported the Disability Case Management Committee to assist worker safe and early return to work after injury or illness; 671 (July 25, 2022).
- Completed ergonomic reviews; Community and Social Services, Public Works Service, Corporate Services, Golden Plough Lodge, Finance Service (total 15 July 15, 2022).
- Conducted or coordinated health and safety training in New Employee Orientation, Supervisor Health and Safety, Defensive Driving, Ministry of Labour Health and Safety Rep Certification, Working at Heights, Forklift Operation, First Aid, and Mental Health First Aid.
- Supported Human Resources/Accessibility Coordinator with the installation of communication assistive devices at the planning area customer service desk.
- Cross trained HSEPD Staff in WSIB reporting and orientation training.



- Rebranded the Wellness Committee, focusing on department specific initiatives.

### **Non-COVID-19 Emergency Management**

- Completed recruitment to fill open Emergency Planning Coordinator position.
- Provided HSEPD position specific training to staff (CEMC Certification, Business Continuity Certification).
- Supported the Emergency Management Program Committee in compliance with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and the Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management (Public education, Control Group Meetings, Control Group Training).
- Continued supporting the operational departments with further implementing business continuity plans.
- Implemented a functional emergency management exercise building on the 2022 tabletop exercise with a scenario of a cyber-attack and ransom request. Two objectives are:
  - To further implement business continuity plans.
  - To implement a staff notification system.

### **Customer Care Service**

- Continued to support all departments in the Corporation with being the first point of contact for all visitors, administrative duties such as sending/receiving deliveries and mail, booking meeting facilities, clerical support (printing copying), financial reconciliation.
- Completed recruitment to backfill Administration Clerk maternity leave.

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

The HSEPD supported community initiatives:

#### **COVID-19:**

- Continued to network with member municipal human resource and safety professionals regarding COVID-19 Vaccination policies.

#### **Non-COVID-19 Health and Safety:**

- Supported Safe Communities Northumberland with rebranding.
- Supported Northumberland County Agriculture Advisory Committee when required.



- Supported the joint scheduling and maintenance of the Portacount Respirator Fit Testing Program with County Departments, member municipal Fire Departments, Northumberland Hills Hospital, Campbellford Memorial Hospital, and Port Hope Community Health Center. Purchased three new Portacount units with trade-in of older units.

### **Non-COVID-19 Emergency Planning:**

- Reestablished in-person meetings since 2019, with the Northumberland Evacuation Strategic Committee and Community Emergency Management Coordinator Committee.
- In partnership with member municipalities, reviewed standard operational procedures for established evacuation shelters.
- Continued the five-year agreement with the City of Peterborough to deliver fire dispatch service to the member municipal fire departments.
- Reviewed with the CEMC Committee, the proposal for the HSEPD to support the administrative functions for the member municipalities in compliance with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.
- Continued implementing County wide inter-municipal communications systems with the intent to remove the County communications tower.

### **Leadership in Change**

The HSEPD supported leadership:

### **COVID-19:**

- Continue to guide the County Control Group to assess the workplace environment for the impact of COVID-19 and respond accordingly.
- Implemented a COVID-19 Protocol Reference Chart to keep staff current on changes with the specific COVID-19 safety measures.
- Updated Health and Safety Policy HS12.2 Immunization, including Coronavirus (COVID-19) to follow trends of other municipalities and provincial directives.

### **Non-COVID-19 Health and Safety:**

- Implemented draft Health and Safety Policies
  - HS 8.1 Health and Safety Training
  - HS 11.3 Naloxone
  - HS 13.1 Personal Protection Equipment
  - HS 14.1 Lockout/Tag Out Procedures



- HS 15.4 Ladders
- HS 16.1 Confined Space Program
- Updated HS 17.1 Heat Stress and Cold Stress
- HS 17.2 Hot Work Policy
- HS 23.1 Violence Response Plan
- HS 23.2 Working Alone Policy
- HS 24.1 Working at Heights
- HS 27.1 Diabetes in the Workplace Policy
- Implemented 17 Physical/Cognitive Demands Analysis for the Communications Department and Economic Development, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Department.
- In collaboration with the GPL, implemented compliance with the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development's (MLTSD) Health and Safety Compliance Initiative on Safe Transition / Transfer of Care impacting health and community care workplaces. The initiative is active from June 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023.
- Continued implementing the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan focusing on workplace hazard assessments.
- Continue to foster an increase for health and safety culture through the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan, hazard assessments, safety talks, See Something Suggest Something, and newsletters.
- Continued partnership with the Human Resource staff to review the existing orientation and onboarding under the "LEAN" principles.
- Supported HSEPD staff enhancement by attending position specific certified credentials, webinars, conferences, and online training programs.
- Supported Wellness Committee in hosting a series of 24 webinars under the themes of Stress Management, Mental Health, Work-Life Balance, and Nutrition.
- Continued Membership with Ontario Municipal Health Safety Professional Representatives Assoc.
- In collaboration with Occupational Health Service, continued to lead the Disability Case Management Committee to return injured workers back to the workplace on either full or modified duties.
- Implemented a therapist for mental health within the occupational health service with Walsh and Associates.

### **Non-COVID-19 Emergency Planning:**

- Implemented the corporate TOMRMS indexing system into the emergency management filing.



- Updated training programs for Emergency Social Service Staff and Control Group Training.
- Collaborated as lead in development of a multi-department master events log for the 2022 cyber-attack emergency exercise.
- Conducted regular corporate wide emergency preparedness awareness through Safety Talks, Jostle Postings, and promotion of Emergency Preparedness Week.

### **Customer Care Service**

- Supported the transition of a temporary part-time Corporate Service Clerk into a full-time contract engineering position within the Public Works Department.

### **2023 Service Objectives & Initiatives**

#### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The objectives of the HSEPD in 2023 are:

#### **Health and Safety**

- Continue to support all departments with a Corporate Health and Safety Program to reduce worker injury, WSIB costs, and non-WSIB costs as a participant in the Disability Case Management Committee.

#### **Emergency Management**

- Collaborate with the Northumberland Community Emergency Management Coordinators Committee to find efficiencies in joint emergency management programs such as joint training and exercise design.

#### **Sustainable Growth**

The sustainable growth objectives of the HSEPD in 2023 are:

#### **General HSEP Department Wide:**

- Build business continuity within HSEPD by cross training staff, preparing operational procedures, utilizing operation logs, and continuing engagement meetings.



- Suggested areas are 3<sup>rd</sup> alternate CEMC training, co-training for emergency management training and exercises, WSIB reporting, and inclusive operational department initiatives.

## **Health and Safety**

- Continue to monitor the workplace environment for impacts of COVID-19 through hazard assessments and implementing protective measures as required.
- Support all departments with efficient customer care representation.
- Continue implementing corporate due diligence strategies with documenting reasonable care standards, policies, hazard identification, analysis, prioritization, leading/lagging key performance indicators, control measures, and training needs analysis.
- Support Corporate Health and Safety Committee initiatives in compliance with Ministry of Labour initiatives.
- Support all departments with health and safety initiatives to reduce worker injury using control measures of job hazard analysis, protective training, and ergonomic reviews.
- Continue to support Occupational Health Services to return injured workers to either full or modified duties.
- Implement Physical Demands and Cognitive Demands Analysis for new or previously missed positions within the corporation.
- Continue health and safety training in New Employee Orientation, Defensive Driving, Ministry of Labour Health and Safety Rep Certification, First Aid, Competent Supervisor Lead Hand Training, and Mental Health Awareness.
- Continue rebranding initiatives with the Wellness Committee initiatives such as department specific initiatives.

## **Emergency Planning**

- Continue corporate wide business continuity planning.
- Continue to support a Corporate Emergency Management Program in compliance with the Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management.
- Continue to provide staff training in Public Inquiry, Control Group, Emergency Social Services, Basic Emergency Management.

## **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

The inclusive community objectives of the HSEPD in 2023 are:



## **Health and Safety**

- Continue to support member municipalities with health and safety initiatives, if possible, when requested.
- Continue to support Northumberland Safe Communities and the Northumberland Agriculture Group.
- Continue liaison with Ontario Municipal Health and Safety Professional Representatives Association to assess trends in the municipal environment.

## **Emergency Planning**

- Continue leading the Northumberland Community Emergency Management Coordinators Committee and Northumberland Evacuation Strategy Committee on joint projects such as common emergency plans, exercise design, evacuation sheltering and training initiatives such as Basic Emergency Management.
- Collaborate with the County Public Works Department to implement County wide inter-municipal communications systems with the intent to remove the County communications tower.

## **Leadership in Change**

The leadership objectives of the HSEPD in 2023 are:

### **Health and Safety**

- Support HSEPD staff professional enhancement by attending position specific webinars, online training programs, designated certification, and employee engagement.
- Continue to guide the County Control Group to assess the workplace environment for the impact of COVID-19 and respond accordingly
- Continue compliance for the GPL with the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development's (MLTSD) Health and Safety Compliance Initiative on Safe Transition / Transfer of Care impacting health and community care workplaces. The initiative is active from June 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023.
- Expand the above MLTSD violence initiative to include violence assessment in other County departments.
- Implement the corporate TOMRMS indexing system into the health and safety filing.



- Continue to foster an increase for health and safety culture through the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan, hazard assessments, safety talks, See Something Suggest Something, and newsletters.
- Support HSEPD staff involvement in LEAN project initiatives such as Orientation/Onboarding Process and Injury Reporting Process.
- Conduct a mock injury exercise for documentation training and exercise.
- Continue rebranding the Wellness Committee, focusing on department specific initiatives.
- Conduct Disability Case Management training for managers.

### **Emergency Planning**

- Support HSEPD staff enhancement through training in emergency management courses and conferences.
- Conduct a corporate wide Emergency Preparedness Challenge to promote Emergency Preparedness Week.
- Expand staff resource depth within the County control group and HSEPD to support business continuity for emergency response.

### **Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives**

#### **Economic Prosperity & Innovation**

The Health Safety Emergency Planning Department and Customer Care Services are support services to the County operational departments and the member municipalities. The department identifies with the long-term objectives of those operational areas and offers support under the umbrella of the County's vision, mission, and values.

#### **Sustainable Growth**

The HSEPD will continue to support all departments with a Corporate Health and Safety Program to reduce worker injury and WSIB costs as a participant in the Disability Case Management Committee.



## **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

### **Emergency Planning**

The HSEPD will continue collaborating with the Northumberland Community Emergency Management Coordinators for a County wide joint multi-agency and all-inclusive member municipal emergency exercise. The design duration of this caliper exercise is 2 years of planning. The year 2023 will include the design of a tabletop/functional exercise between emergency operation centres with the objective of expanding to an all-inclusive full-scale exercise in 2024. In The HSEPD currently has a reserve of \$140,000 for a large joint municipal exercise.

### **Leadership in Change**

The HSEPD will need to update the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020. This update will increase a corporate wide awareness for Health and Safety Culture.

The HSEPD requires professional, accredited, knowledgeable employees. The department must continue supporting staff training in health, safety, and emergency planning courses.

## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Full-time Administrative Clerk

#### Purpose

The purpose of this issue paper is to present the need to increase the existing part-time Administrative Clerk position in the Corporate Services Department to a full-time position.

#### Background

In 2020 during the 2021 budget approval process, County Council approved the Issue Paper for part-time Administrative Clerk position for the Corporate Services Department.

The position is located within the Customer Care Service area, working 5 hours per day, 25 hours per week. The hours increase to cover full days of vacation, other absences of the full-time Customer Care Representative.

The following tasks are the completed by the position:

Health Safety Emergency Planning Service administrative functions:

- Data Entry: training records, sign off sheets, safety talks
- Distribution of training certificates to HR Service and employees
- Training and orientation assistance: scheduling trainer and room bookings, RSVP lists for training, photocopy training material
- Wellness Committee: Jostle postings, coordinating and registering webinars, promotional material, photocopying
- H&S Initiative: Write Newsletters, Safety Talks, distribute communications to other departments, photocopying, postings on Jostle
- Records Management: labelling, TOMRMS filing compliance, filing in HR Department
- Injury Reports: Indexing and Filing
- Update Emergency Plan contacts
- Update document compliance for AODA

Customer Care Representative functions:

- Primary backfill for reception area.
- Support visitors entering County Headquarters and for all phone calls.
- Sending/receiving deliveries and mail, booking meeting facilities



- Clerical support (printing copying), financial reconciliation, indexing waste management manifests, and office supply orders.
- Coordinating messaging on the electronic message sign.
- PCard reconciliation

Human Resource and Payroll Support functions:

- Review of document compliance under the AODA.
- Facilitation of employee service award program inclusive of invites, coordination of letter from the Warden, distribution of gifts etc.
- Facilitation and distribution of annual staff Christmas cards & gifts.
- Assemble orientation documentation.
- Recruitment – assemble interview packages; Assist with resume ranking.

## **Consultation/Options**

The Director and Managers of the Corporate Services Department provided a breakdown of the functions within their services that can be streamlined with having full-time assistance from the Administrative Clerk.

Health Safety Emergency Planning Service administrative functions:

- Note taking for committee meetings (JHSC, Wellness, CEMC, Evacuation Committee)
  - These committees currently utilize the HS or EP Coordinators to document meetings making it difficult for these positions to have strategic participation. Some of the JHSCs (Roads, GPL, OAFVC) do not have members who have access to a computer for note taking. The current 5-hour day of the CS Administrative Clerk, 10:00 to 3:30, and requirement to backfill reception does not allow time to attend these meetings. Increasing the hours to full-time can allow the Administrative Clerk to attend meetings to take notes for the committees.
- Preparation of monthly social media public education on emergency preparedness
  - The Administrative Clerk position currently prepares the HS Safety Talks. The addition of Emergency Preparedness awareness aligns with the responsibility for the safety talks.
- Data entry on previous business continuity activities.
  - Currently, the operational department Business Impact Analyses are handwritten.
- Documentation for staff emergency management training
  - The HSEP Department maintains a list for staff Health Safety and Emergency Plan training. The two coordinator positions currently document administrative functions for the tracking. Assigning the tasks to the Administrative Clerk will allow the two coordinators to focus on core duties of their roles while being supported by admin staff.



- Post-covid recovery
  - Many projects and training were on hold for the past 2 years. With full reopening of all services, the HSEP Department is re-establishing previous training and in-person meetings and creating additional training opportunities for staff. Many non-essential projects were also delayed and are now starting back up. The combination of the day-to-day work, catch-up of delayed projects, re-establishment of regular training and in-person meetings along with initiating new projects culminates in a significant increase of necessary tasks to meet these goals. The admin position is well-aligned to support the department in meeting these goals.

#### Natural Heritage Service administrative functions:

- Supply orders: binders, folders of various types, banker's boxes, labels
- Mailing and courier support
- Data entry, digital filing
- Inventory data clean-up/standardization; Label-making
- Pcard reconciliation,
- Populating software, research and inventory support and audits.
- Meeting minutes.

#### Clerk Service Administrative functions:

- At direction of Clerk or Deputy Clerk:
  - Prepare e-mailings to Ontario Municipalities, local MPP and MP, Ministers (post-Council work)
  - Scan and email Committee and Council Resolutions to Directors (post-meeting work)
  - Scan & upload enacted By-laws to SharePoint
  - Reconcile monthly p-card statements (for Clerk & Deputy Clerk)
  - Schedule/coordinate monthly e-SCRIBE training sessions (virtual and/or in-person)
  - Room Bookings for year – for Committee and Council meetings
  - Assist with Council and Committee meetings (room set up, supplies, liaise with Facilities staff, IT staff, signage, etc.) Assist with storage of original documents (e.g. order binders, prepare table of contents for By-law Binders) Maintain updated mailing labels for Member Municipalities' CAOs and Clerks, Schools Boards (English and French), MP, MPP \Photocopy: publicly posted Committee and Council meeting agendas, presentations, training materials, etc.
  - Train as an alternate to the Deputy Clerk to assist in Committee & Council meetings as needed



#### Human Resource and Payroll Support functions:

- Coordination of new employee orientation.
  - There has been an increase in turnover of staff due to the volatile recruitment landscape and challenges with attracting and retaining staff. There is now foreseeable expectation that this trend will change. The trend over the past 3 years has been:
    - In 2019, 93 people were hired; there were 22 orientation dates.
    - In 2020, 57 people were hired; there were 10 orientation dates.
    - In 2021, 145 people were hired; there were 26 orientation dates.
    - To date, July 2022, 131 people were hired; there have been 16 orientation dates.
  - There is an increase in turnover of staff due to the Baby Boomers becoming eligible and beginning to retire. Between the years of 2018-2020, an average of 10 retirements occurred per year. In 2021, there were 25 retirements, which represents a 250% increase from the average of the previous 3 years. Currently, 34 employees will be eligible to retire in 2022. An additional 69 employees will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years. This large upswing creates additional work on the HR department for assisting operational department staffing be it through new incumbents or succession planning.
  - The Corporate Services Department conducted a Lean Review of the orientation/onboarding process. The tedious and laborious administrative functions are currently completed by both HR and HS Coordinator level positions. The Administrative Clerk is only responsible for photocopying training manuals. The proposal is to add more duties to the Administrative Clerk position in alignment with tasks in the pay gird of other administrative clerk positions in the corporation. This allows the Coordinator positions more time for the strategic tasks of their positions.
  - The administrative functions to be added to the Administrative Clerk position are:
    - Contact and schedule new incumbents into orientation dates.
    - Notify department managers of the orientation schedule and onboarding follow-up.
    - Coordinate instructors, training rooms, and equipment.
    - Compile and file incumbent documents.
    - Track training records.
    - Follow-up onboarding compliance with managers.
  - The HR and HS Coordinator level positions will complete strategic functions:
    - Working with operational departments to create and update training plans and succession plans for employees.
    - Strategically recruit incumbents to fill gaps in the labor market.
    - Create and maintain diversity, equity & inclusion initiatives.



- Develop, collect, and analyze data on various HR initiatives to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the HR operations.
- Develop, review, and maintain a corporate recognition strategy.

## **Financial Impact**

The position is Grade C. The increase from 25 hours to 35 hours per week equates to an additional cost of \$18,000 per year including benefits.

## **Risk Considerations**

A major responsibility of the Corporate Service Department is to support the people resources of the operational departments, notably through health and safety, payroll, and human resource assistance. The operational departments have expanded in staffing to meet service demands. The Paramedics have expanded services with Community Paramedicine staff. Public Works has expanded service with Capital Projects and Facility staff. The IT Department has expanded to meet the needs of member municipal service agreements. As the operational departments expand, the Corporate Service staff are impacted to meet the staffing demands of the operational departments. Examples being more orientation sessions, more health and safety training, more payroll administration, and more human resource support. The Corporate Service staffing must expand in proportion to the staff expansion of the operational departments.

Under the existing model, Manager and Coordinator positions are conducting administrative functions. This impacts the management positions for having time available to play a strategic role. The Manager roles require time to be spent on proactive research measures to stay abreast on current legislation within the Strategic Plan to maintain a sustainable service. The Coordinator roles require time to be spent on active engagement to support hands-on initiatives with the operational departments. Currently much time is spent on administrative work leaving limited time for the strategic and leadership roles.

In the 2018 Employee Engagement Survey supports this trend. 63% of the department staff felt that their workload was manageable, however workload has continued to increase significantly over the past 3 years placing additional pressure on all levels of staff. 69% felt they had balance between work and personal life, although like many other organizations, the County struggles with sufficient work life balance for some levels of staff due to staffing shortages, increased workload and enhanced levels of service. The additional duties for the Corporate Service Administrative Clerk will off-load some of the administrative functions and help make the workload of some staff more manageable.



### **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

The Corporate Service Managers and Coordinators will have more time to support strategic leadership in collaboration with the member municipalities.

### **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. In 2020, the Administrative Clerk Position Issue Paper was implemented as part-time with the understanding the department would monitor the workflow within the department each year. During 2020 and 2021 and 2022, the workload in the Corporate Service Department has continued to grow to meet the strategic needs of the operational departments and service agreements with member municipalities.

## 2023 Issue Paper

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# Summer Student, Health Safety Emergency Planning Department

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the issue paper is to request a permanent, seasonal summer student position within the Health Safety Emergency Planning Department.

### **Background**

The Health Safety Emergency Planning (HESP) Department is responsible for compliance with two provincial ministries, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MOL), and the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM). The MOL compliance focuses on occupational safety. The OFMEM compliance focuses on municipal safety.

Typically, these portfolios are treated separately. Colleges and universities, such as Toronto Metropolitan University, Durham College, and Fleming College provide courses in occupational health and safety separate from their courses in emergency management. Occupational health and safety can be within the human resource or occupational health department. Emergency management is usually within the fire or paramedic emergency service fields.

However, at Northumberland County, the two portfolios are placed within the Corporate Service Department. This structure has worked well to illustrate a corporate wide support for all operational departments and the member municipalities. Both portfolios include common elements in their general approach to safety. They include:

- legislated compliance; Occupational Health and Safety Act versus Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act,
- hazard assessment to rank seriousness of consequence to exposure,
- methods of protection to mitigate or remove hazards,
- committees to address program development and crisis situations, Joint Health and Safety Committee versus Municipal Emergency Control Group,
- reporting of crisis situations; critical injury reporting versus declaration of an emergency.

From December 2021 to August 2022, the Corporate Service Department conducted a recruitment search to fill the Health Safety Emergency Risk Manager position. The search



conducted four rounds of candidates resulting in few potential candidates with management of both an occupational health and safety and emergency management background.

In following the County Mission "To be a best practices leader of County government and a collaborative partner with our member municipalities and community partners", and in following the core values of Innovation and Excellence, the HSEP staff foresee value in mentoring a student in both portfolios with a focus to help fill a job market gap. This proposal falls within the County 2019-2023 Strategic Plan under the priorities of Sustainable Growth and Leadership in Change. The student must be enrolled in either a health and safety program or emergency management program.

### **Consultation/Options**

The Health Safety Emergency Planning Department reviewed the corporate questionnaire for Business Case for Additional Staffing Request for Additional Funding.

This staffing request is to enhance the services of the HSEP Department and to mentor a student in both portfolios of health and safety and emergency management. The Corporation has a new "People Plan" whereby staff can develop a plan to become competent in other positions in the County. The People Plan however, does not provide mentoring for people entering the workforce during educational schooling. Mentoring a summer student in both health and safety and emergency management will groom the student for future full-time employment opportunities at the County.

In 2017, the HSEP Department developed its Northumberland County Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Plan with focus on corporate wide risk assessment. The assessment process is an ongoing process using the internal responsibility system. Staff at all levels collaborate to continuously review workplace hazards and protective measures. The County operational departments are accepting the value of risk assessment as the foundation of health and safety. The HSEP Staff have become more involved in assisting the other departments with implementing risk assessments.

In the past, the HSEP Department assisted some member municipalities with their compliance with OFMEM. This has been discussed with the CAO Committee and CEMC Committee to establish a more formal process within one County Emergency Plan. To date, nothing has been formally established. The HSEP Department has also assisted with delivery of health and safety training such as WHMIS and ergonomic reviews to member municipalities.

Currently, the HSEP Department is meeting daily service levels such as injury investigation, policy updates, WSIB reporting, Occ Health Services, training, emergency exercise, public education, and evacuation shelter updates are being met. The risk assessment project and business continuity project are critical foundations to the succession of the County operations. They involve extensive networking with operational departments. As a result, these are deferred until the daily items are completed. Additionally, the Corporation is having difficulty



finding an incumbent with both safety and emergency management portfolios to meet the job description for the HSEP Manager position.

While the HSEP Department consists of six staff, inclusive of the Manager, Health and Safety Coordinator, Emergency Planning Coordinator, Customer Service Representative, Corporate Service Administration Clerk, and Occupational Health Services, the portfolios of each position are very specialized. The department has implemented cross training components to the extent possible, however each position has very specialized functions. The summer student will be mentored in many functions of both health and safety and emergency management.

The summer student will share the cubicles with the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Emergency Planning Coordinator. Both Coordinators participate in the compressed work program. The Emergency Planning Coordinator currently participates in the Telecommute Program and the Health and Safety Coordinator can participate in the Telecommute Program from May to September. The summer student will also have days out of office to conduct field visits at operational sites. There should be no impact on the office space of other departments.

Recruitment will commence in December of each year in alignment with recruitment of other County summer students. The HSEP Department has a corporate summer student orientation week. The student will participate in the orientation. The Health and Safety Coordinator and Emergency Planning Coordinator will provide continuous on the job mentoring throughout the summer.

The student will be responsible for the following duties:

- Reviewing health and safety policies; researching legislation for revisions and updates.
- Working with Health and Safety Coordinator to update the Risk Assessments/Workplace Hazards.
- Assisting with training and orientation to schedule trainer and room bookings, RSVP lists for training, photocopy training material.
- Assisting the Wellness Committee with scheduling, Jostle postings, promotional material.
- Auditing compliance for Joint Health and Safety Committees.
- Assisting with the health and safety initiative in drafting Safety Talks, distributing communications to other departments.
- Indexing filing injury reports.
- Working with the Emergency Planning Coordinator to update the Emergency Plan.
- Working with Emergency Planning Coordinator to design emergency exercises, perform Hazard Identification Risk Analysis.
- Assisting in the development and implementation of Emergency Preparedness for Public Education.
- Updating document compliance for AODA.

Serving as Customer Service Representative back-up.



## **Financial Impact**

The County's summer student program typically runs from May 1 to August 31.

Funding is available but not guaranteed through the Canada Summer Jobs Service Canada (Federal funding program) under HR Policy 4.19.5 Summer Students.

The unfunded 2022 salary pay for summer students is \$9,716. (\$17.35/hour; 35 hours/week; 16 weeks per year). Summer students are now entitled to OMERS benefits.

The potential set-up cost for IT equipment is \$1,300 inclusive of a laptop, Microsoft 365 license and Adobe Pro license. There will be no impact for office space because the student will share office space with the Health and Safety Coordinator and Emergency Planning Coordinator.

There will be no impact for training and travel. Training will be covered as part of the HSEP Department orientation costs. Travel to County facilities to attend meetings, conducting training will be required. The cost will fall within the HSEP Department operational budget.

The summer student is responsible for the cost of Safety footwear. The County will supply all other PPE within the HSEP operational budget with no impact to the existing 2023 budget proposal.

Total Financial Impact: \$13,185 + \$1,300 = \$14,485

## **Risk Considerations**

Although not an inherent risk, the County continues to face challenges with attracting qualified staff for our unique, blended positions such as the Health Safety Emergency Risk Manager position. Introducing a student position to mentor in a blended portfolio will assist with alleviating future recruitment challenges and reducing the risk of positions being left vacant for extended periods of time.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

Through the HSEP Department existing support to member municipalities, the summer student functions provide additional health safety emergency planning support to all municipalities and townships within the community.

## **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. This is a request for a new temporary position within the HSEP department. The recruitment for the HSEP Manager position gave the opportunity to introduce the proposal for mentor a student under both portfolios.

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# 2023 Business Plan & Budget

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## Legislative Services

### 2022 Accomplishments

#### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Managed and supported 10\* County Council meetings (9 regular and 1 special) in the 2022 calendar year, in compliance with legislation (January-September).
- Managed and supported 48\* County Standing Committee meetings, including statutory public meetings, in compliance with legislation (January-September).
- Ensured accountability and transparency per the legislated Acts and the Corporation's values.
- Researched legislation to ensure by-laws and policies were presented to Council for timely adoption and enactment.
- Drafted reports and by-law regarding Restricted Acts of Council – "Lame Duck" Period (for the Municipal Election).
- Designated 'Head' by Council (through by-law) to oversee and process Freedom of Information (FOI) requests under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) and ensured compliance.
  - Developed internal tracking system for FOI requests.
  - Submitted annual report to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. Assisted staff with reports and follow up regarding Privacy Breaches.
- Maintained high levels of customer service for the public including document commissioning (Commissioner of Oaths services) and routine disclosure requests.
- Monitored annual days of recognition for Proclamations.
- Administered Flag Policy for local/provincial/national events and recognitions.
- Supported the Northumberland County Housing Corporation Board of Directors' meetings and the Agriculture Advisory Group meetings.
- Communicated Council decisions to the public, member municipalities, Provincial and Federal partners, other stakeholders, and the media.
- Liaised between the community and County staff, and between the community and the member municipalities to assist their navigation of government services.
- Acted as Corporate Signing Authority for various departments.
- Acted as Signing Authority for Plans of Subdivision under the *Planning Act*.
- Held Statutory Public Meetings per the relevant Acts, regarding Land Use Planning.
- Researched software and consulted with IT staff regarding equipment purchases to facilitate full hybrid meetings for Council and Standing Committees.

- Researched and recommended revisions to the Procedural By-law to include electronic participation and hybrid meeting procedures.
- Implemented hybrid meetings for Council and Standing Committees, when safe to do so, allowing full in-person and virtual participation of Council, staff, the public and media.
- Researched and recommended Closed Meeting Policy which was adopted by Council. The Closed Meeting Policy provides Council Members and staff with guidelines and information regarding the statutory requirements and best practices associated with Northumberland County Council and Committee meetings that are closed to the Public, as per the *Municipal Act*.
- Maintained the publicly available 'Declarations of Interest' Registry on the County website (per the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*), as well as all information relating to the Standing Committees and Council meetings.
- Liaised with the County's Integrity Commissioner and Closed Meeting Investigator; there were no investigations in 2022.
- Reviewed Terms of Reference documents for the six Standing Committees, and recommended revisions that were adopted by Council.

\* Council and Committee meeting numbers based on information at time of writing this document.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Provided new user and refresher training of eScribe software for County staff, acted as the lead trouble-shooter for issues, and provided staff with updates.
- Created and maintained the official Council and Standing Committee records of the municipality (Minutes, By-laws, Agendas), as well as the records for the Northumberland County Housing Corporation.
- Provided procedural advice and guidance to Council Members, County staff (including the Senior Management Team), the public, and community stakeholders.
- Provided comprehensive information to Committee and Council Chairs, to ensure professional and efficient meetings.
- Prepared for retirement of current Manager of Legislative Services / Clerk, including transitional activities associated with appointment from the Deputy Clerk role to the Manager position.
- Onboarded and trained new Deputy Clerk.
- Formed new partnership with Loyalist College Paralegal Program and hosted student for Co-op placement.
- Participated in meetings and consulted with Clerk colleagues at Member Municipalities, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus municipalities, as well as across Ontario.
- Participated in training and development courses and conferences, including: 2022 ROMA Conference, AMCTO Annual Conference.

- Prepared and facilitated multi-step plan for the new Council orientation sessions and Inaugural meeting.

## 2023 Service Objectives & Initiatives

The County's Legislative Services division delivers open and accessible government by ensuring that independent and impartial statutory and regulatory services provided in an effective and customer focused manner.

### Legislative Services includes:

- Access and Privacy – administration of *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Council and Committee management and support
- Commissioner of Oaths Services
- Corporate signatory for County departments
- Freedom of Information / Privacy Breaches – manage and oversee requests and reports
- Northumberland County Housing Corporation – support for Board of Directors
- Agriculture Advisory Group – support for Board
- Policy Development and Review
- Records Management – Council, Standing Committees
- Planning – Statutory Meetings and Signing Authority for Plans of Subdivision under the Planning Act

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Maintain exemplary levels of customer service to the public, community stakeholders, and internal staff, including prompt responses to enquiries, assistance to access information and records, policy and process interpretation
- Ensure full accountability and transparency, in compliance with legislated Acts.
- Ensure all requirements for hybrid meetings are fulfilled and staff have the necessary supports.
- Assist the Northumberland County Housing Corporation transition to hybrid meetings.
- Engage and educate the public regarding the essential programs and services delivered by the County.
- Recommend Closed Captioning software to enhance the public's accessibility to Council and Committee meetings.
- Joint Council meeting with Alderville First Nation Band Council.

### Leadership in Change

- Research, create and execute comprehensive Council orientation for 2022-2026 term of Council.

- Onboard newly elected Councillors and educate them on key legislative matters, the County Governance structure, policies, procedures, Code of Conduct, etc.
- Coordinate and facilitate Council orientation for member municipal Councillors to educate them about County programs and services.
- Transition of Deputy Clerk to Manager of Legislative Services / Clerk position, and ongoing training and development for Manager of Legislative Services / Clerk and Deputy Clerk.
- Work with the Municipal Solicitor to plan a comprehensive review of County By-laws.
  - Develop Standard Operating Procedure to repeal / amend by-laws.
  - Implement internal by-law tracking document.
  - Educate staff and provide assistance to staff regarding drafting new and existing by-laws.
- Recommend a Legislative Services Summer Student position to assist with projects.
- Review, research and update policies, per their schedules, or as required.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures for Legislative Services processes, to ensure efficient and smooth business continuity.
- Implement project tracking / management system.
- Attend 2023 AMCTO Conference.

## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Leadership in Change

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the entire Procedural By-law and make recommendations to Council.
- Continue comprehensive review of County By-laws to easily identify those that have been repealed or amended; providing a resource for staff and the public.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures for Legislative Services processes.
- Continue to be a best practice leader and advocate for municipal governance processes, and champion accountability and transparency.
- Assess needs and recommend two Legislative Services Specialist positions (2024, 2028) to address staffing deficiencies, and assist with critical and legislated responsibilities within the Legislative Services area.



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## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Summer Student, Legislative Services

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the issue paper is to request a permanent, seasonal summer student position to assist Legislative Services (Corporate Services department).

#### **Background**

The Legislative Services division of the Corporate Services Department consists of two staff – a Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk and a Deputy Clerk. They perform the statutory duties that are assigned to the Clerk’s role, ensuring legislative compliance to meet the requirements of the *Municipal Act*, the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians Act*, the *Planning Act*, the Council Procedural By-law, the Council Code of Conduct, Corporate Policies, and other related Acts and Regulations.

Legislative Services must facilitate the public process, ensuring fair, open and accountable practices for open and closed session meetings with transparency and professional integrity.

The Clerk must record, without note or comment, all resolutions, decisions and other proceedings of the Council, and record votes when required.

The Clerk must record and maintain the official Council and Committee records, including: agendas, minutes, resolutions, by-laws, recorded votes, disclosures of interest, and other proceedings, and ensure open and transparent public access to meetings, documents and information.

The Clerk is the designated ‘Head’ for the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and maintains the annual records of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to the County, provides guidance to staff re: administration and compliance issues, and ensures that the legislative requirements of the Act are followed.



Legislative Services must ensure that the Corporation and Council comply with various By-laws including (but not limited to):

- Council Remuneration By-law
- Provision of Notice Policy By-law
- Fees and Charges By-law
- Procurement By-law

Legislative Services must ensure that Northumberland County has an appointed Integrity Commissioner (I.C.), as prescribed in the *Municipal Act*. Staff are the primary liaison between the County and the I.C.

Legislative Services staff commission documents through the swearing of affidavits, as per the *Commissioner for Taking Affidavits Act* (Oaths and Affirmations).

Legislative Services staff provide services to Council, the public, external organizations and staff during regular business hours, after-hours when required, and in the event of an emergency.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Facilitate timely communications between Council, the public, and County staff.
- Provide procedural advice to Council and the senior management team, in accordance with the *Municipal Act* and the Procedural By-law.
- Provide support for the Northumberland County Housing Corporation Board of Directors.
- Provide full support for the County's six (6) Standing Committees and County Council, including meeting preparations, agendas, minutes, resolutions, by-laws, proclamations, etc., using eSCRIBE software.
- Train and support eSCRIBE users.
- Conduct research to draft new policies and update existing policies.
- Research and write reports and presentations for Committees and Council, and assist staff with same.
- Proactively review and recommend changes to the Procedural By-law, as required.
- Research legislative changes and provide advice to Council and staff.
- Respond to a wide variety of enquiries from the public, municipalities, community stakeholders and other levels of government.
- Prepare and monitor the Clerk Department budget.
- Maintain and update County website re: Council, Committees and Public Notices as required.
- Provide guidance to staff and Council regarding items that qualify to take place in Closed Session and ensure compliance with the *Municipal Act*.
- Assist delegations who wish to address Committees and Council.



- Commission documents for the public (*Commissioner for Taking Affidavits Act*).
- Seek out efficiencies and best practices to provide enhanced services to the public and staff.
- Monitor media regarding municipal, provincial and federal issues, and matters that impact the Northumberland County community.
- Cultivate positive, beneficial relationships with all external and internal customers.

Per the Northumberland County 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Mission Statement, staff strive “To be a best practices leader of County government and a collaborative partner with our member municipalities and community partners”. This Issue Paper proposal aligns with the priority of “Leadership in Excellence”. A summer student position would assist staff in our efforts to provide timely, excellent services.

Ideally the successful candidates will show interest in public service and governance, and staff will highlight the municipal opportunities that students can consider when mapping their career paths.

## Consultation/Options

Legislative Services staff reviewed the corporation’s information regarding ‘Business Case for Additional Staffing Request for Additional Funding’.

A permanent, seasonal summer student will bring value to Legislative Services, specifically in terms of special projects and research needs.

Currently, the Legislative Services staff meet the ongoing operational needs to ensure transparent and accountable Standing Committee meetings and Council meetings. It also responds to the needs of its external stakeholders (residents, businesses, community groups, the seven member municipalities, other Ontario municipalities, the Provincial and Federal governments), and its internal stakeholders (Council Members and County staff). However, due to being under-staffed vis a vis the work volume and responsibilities, some projects and tasks are severely delayed, or, simply do not get done.

The summer student will share the workspace of the Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk, and may also use the County’s meeting rooms at 555 Courthouse Road, when available. There should be no impact to other departments’ office space needs.

Recruitment will commence in December of each year; this aligns with recruitment of other County summer students. The County offers a summer student orientation week, and if approved, this student will participate in that orientation.



The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will provide ongoing mentoring throughout the employment period.

The student will be responsible for the following duties:

- Undertake special projects under the Clerk's supervision.
- Collect data and research various topics that will assist Legislative Services in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Assist with record management and maintenance.
- Assist with the many tasks associated with the monthly Standing Committees and Council Meetings.

## **Financial Impact**

The County's summer student program typically runs from May 1 to August 31.

Funding is available but not guaranteed through the Canada Summer Jobs Service Canada (Federal funding program) under HR Policy 4.19.5 Summer Students.

The unfunded 2022 salary pay for summer students is \$9,716.

The potential set-up cost for IT equipment is \$1,300 inclusive of a laptop, Microsoft 365 license and Adobe Pro license.

There is no financial impact for training or travel. Training will be covered as part of the corporation's orientation costs, and Legislative Services' staff time.

Total Financial Impact: \$14,485 (salary and IT equipment).

## **Risk Considerations**

Many municipal government employees in specialized roles such as those found within Legislative Services have retired in recent years, and this trend will continue and increase in the coming years. It is difficult to attract qualified staff for this critical area of the corporation. Introducing college and university students to the municipal world through this opportunity should prove to be beneficial for Northumberland County, as well as those individuals who are contemplating their career choices.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

There are no direct impacts to Member Municipalities.



## **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

No. Given the staffing changes in this area in 2022, this is an optimal time to introduce a permanent, seasonal Summer Student position into the Legislative Services area of the Corporate Services Department.

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## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Closed Captioning Software

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Issue Paper is to request funding to obtain closed captioning software for web-streamed Committee and Council meetings.

#### **Background**

In August 2022, Northumberland County adopted a new hybrid meeting format for Standing Committees and Council meetings. A hybrid meeting is a meeting that is held in a physical location (i.e. Council Chambers) with an added virtual component. Members of the public may attend meetings in-person or virtually; this ensures transparency, increases convenience, and provides easy-to-access formats.

eScribe is the County's meeting management software. It records and live-streams meetings on the County's website. Currently, meeting recordings are not posted to the County's website for later viewing as they do not meet the accessibility legislation, per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and its Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR). Thus, Standing Committees and Council meeting recordings are only available upon request.

To satisfy the requirement under the IASR, closed captioning is required for pre-recorded videos. However, the legislation does not currently require closed captioning for live-streamed meetings.

Automated closed captioning displays the text of spoken content in real time, within a video. This improves accessibility for audiences with impaired hearing. When a viewer watches a live-streamed or recorded meeting, the text will automatically appear on the screen below the video.

Closed captions are generated using artificial intelligence, and there may be inaccurate spelling or interpretations of words, depending on the speaker's speed, accent, and/or enunciation and pronunciation.



Many Ontario municipalities offer live automated closed captioning to their Committee and Council meetings as an accessibility feature. The accessible meeting recordings are then posted to the municipalities' website, which can be accessed by the public at any time.

The County's meeting management software, eScribe, offers automated closed-captioning for meetings that are live-streamed through their Video Manager platform. eScribe will require information from staff that will help train the system by teaching it words that may not be easily recognizable, such as proper names of people or places that are unique to our organization. Once fully implemented, eScribe's closed captioning software will have 95-96% accuracy.

## Consultation/Options

Staff recommend that the County purchase eScribe's closed captioning software for use during Standing Committees and Council meetings.

### **Option 1      Purchase eScribe's Closed Captioning Software**

- Provide automated closed captioning of live web-streamed Committee and Council meetings.
- Post recorded web-streamed Committee and Council meetings with live closed captioning on the County's website.

### **Option 2      Maintain Status Quo**

- Continue to live-stream Committee and Council meetings on the County website without live closed captioning.
- Meeting recordings will not be available on the website; they will be available only upon request.

## Financial Impact

eScribe quoted a price of \$13,145 (plus HST) per year, plus a onetime setup fee of \$2,700 (plus HST), for closed-captioning services, for a total of \$16,124 in 2023. The quoted annual price of \$13,145 is subject to an annual increase of 5% each year.

## Risk Considerations

Purchasing the closed captioning service through the County's eScribe contract adheres to the County's Purchasing By-Law. In 2020, Northumberland County issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for electronic meeting management software, and eScribe was the successful proponent. The County followed the established, competitive procurement process, and has an existing contract with eScribe. The County's Purchasing By-law outlines circumstances for non-standard



procurement, including “To ensure compatibility with existing goods and products, to recognize exclusive rights, such as exclusive licenses, copyright and patent rights or to maintain specialized products that must be maintained by the manufacturer or its representative”.

### **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

Closed captioning services would increase the accessibility of the County’s Standing Committee and Council meetings, by enhancing comprehension and providing text in addition to the audio, which will aid viewers who have impaired hearing.

### **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: NO**

Closed captioning software was not included in the 2022 Long Term Plan because staff were still assessing the eScribe modules to determine the County’s specific needs and what services could meet those needs.

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# 2023 Business Plan & Budget

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## Natural Heritage Service

### Prior Year Accomplishments

#### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Performed 10 Weed Control Act inspections
- Administered 16 permits and 27 site inspections Forest Conservation By-Law permits (August 2022)
- Released and awarded Conifer Harvest Tender for 2022
- Successfully Completed Internal EOMF surveillance audit

#### Sustainable Growth

- Implementing Forest Master Plan
- Maintained five parking lots
- Continued implementation of the 5-year Silvicultural Operations Plan and the 20-year timber supply plan.
- Implemented 5-year Post-Harvest Treatment Plan
- Continued Natural and Cultural Heritage surveys in County Forest including:
  - Breeding birds
  - Mottled Duskywing with University of Guelph and Willowbeach Field Naturalists
  - Frog populations
  - Common Nighthawk
  - Other species at-risk
  - New Jersey Tea
  - Invasive species
  - Wildlife cameras
  - Trail records
- Conducted Special management zones inventories
- Participated in ON Butterfly SAR Recovery team discussions
- Participated in Hemlock Woolly Adelgid working group discussions
- Managed 143.55 ha of conifer plantations through timber harvest operations
- Tree marked 547 hardwood trees for Oak Shelterwood treatment in NCF
- Tree marked 4889 trees for conifer plantation harvest
- Identified one Forest Black Bear Den

- Identified three forest raptor nests
- Prepared 9 detailed prescriptions for 2021-2022 Conifer Harvest
- Inventoried 560 ha of county forest for post-harvest treatments
- Completed 212 forest resource inventory surveys
- Completed 39 Post-Harvest surveys
- Completed 310 Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Surveys
- Completed 14 Black Ash Surveys
- Completed post-harvest restoration on 25.6 ha of County Forest
- Removed 262 Native Poplar in post-harvest restoration
- Removed 270 Invasive Scotch Pine for pre-harvest treatment
- Completed Hemlock Matrix for composed compartments in County Forest
- Applied burlap to 263 trees for Gypsy Moth Caterpillar Control
- Exterminated over 3000 Gypsy Moth Caterpillars
- Completed Mortality Studies in 4 permanent growth plots
- Completed 10 Plots for Gypsy Moth monitoring
- Tested new Bioherbicide on 242 European Buckthorn in NCF
- Performed canopy drone surveys to gauge effects of the 2021 Gypsy Moth outbreak on tree health and mortality across the County Forest
- Implemented an invasive species monitoring and control protocol
- Treated approximately 130 acres of County Forest natural areas for invasive plant species including Dog-strangling Vine, Garlic Mustard, Spotted Knapweed, Wild Parsnip, Scots Pine, European White Poplar, Manitoba Maple, Multiflora Rose, and Common Buckthorn
- Continued and initiated active ecological restoration across approximately 130 acres of County Forest sensitive ecosystems
- Planted native plants strategically in ecological restoration sites
- Planned and performed two prescribed burns totaling 53 acres (a 42 acre and an 11 acre burn) to promote valuable oak regeneration, reduce uncontrolled forest fire hazards and restore rare fire-dependent ecosystems
- Continued deer browsing surveys in hunting-permitted areas of the County Forest to gauge effects of the deer population on reforestation
- Updated and modified the Conifer Harvest Start-Up Meeting protocol
- Continued treatment of Dog-Strangling Vine, Garlic Mustard, and Black Locust in Beagle Club Road area
- Maintained Forest Stewardship Council® Certification under the Eastern Ontario Model Forest's certificate
- Continued large-scale removal of hazard trees from forest roads
- Inspected of 525 km of trails, brushed more than 100km of trail, pruned more than 70km of trail

- Inventoried signage throughout County Forest
- Trail repair:
  - Graded three parking lots
  - Graded 20km of trail
- Continued work on implementing the Emerald Ash Borer Strategy for Northumberland County in conjunction with the Roads Department
- Distributed 20,000 trees across Northumberland County with the assistance of the Lower Trent Conservation Authority through the Emerald Ash Borer Replacement Program.
- Administered 16 Forest Conservation By-Law harvest permits (August 2022)

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Continued the Volunteer Trail inspector program
- Connected with municipalities regarding Noxious weeds and their location and best management practices
- Worked with the FAC to raise awareness of recreation and natural heritage conservation
- Hosted three hikes in collaboration with the Early On program
- Discussed collaborations with local municipalities and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority
- Continued Volunteer Initiative program in collaboration with Sir Sandford Fleming Forestry Program
- Collaborated with Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority on tree marking operations within the Northumberland County Forest
- Assisted Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority with Storm Damage Clean up
- Assisted Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority with Supervision of Salvage Operations

### **Leadership in Change**

- Learning and development and training that staff completed were:
  - Trail Management
  - Construction of a demonstration pollinator garden with native plant species at the Woodland Trails parking lot to promote the use of native plants in private/public gardens
  - Invasive Species
  - Volunteer Management
  - Health and Safety Training
  - Ontario Trail Council Risk and Liability Working Group
  - Part of the LEAN Ambassador Program

- Tree Marking Training
- Society of American Foresters National Convention
- Seed Collectors Certification
- Working at Heights Training
- Introduction to Scaling
- Invasive Species Forum
- Excavator Certification
- Bulldozer Certification
- Skidsteer Certification

## 2023 Service Objectives & Initiatives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Continue Weed Control Act and Forest Conservation By-Law administration and enforcement duties
- Continue general enforcement duties within the forest especially with respect to non-motorized trail openings and closings
- Implement the Forest Master Plan
- Evaluate the existing County Forest Scout Camp property for the future
- Evaluate granting opportunities that align with Natural heritage needs
- Conduct a financial reserve review

### Sustainable Growth

- Employ summer students for forestry, trail, and ecological work
- Continue hazard tree management
- Continue to implement signage and recreational trail standards
- Implement the Forest Master Plan
- Implementation of Silvicultural Operations Plan
- Continue collecting data on natural and cultural heritage (ex. species-at-risk, farmstead locations)
- Continue Implementation of 5-year Conifer Harvest Schedule
- Continue implementation of Silvicultural Operations Plan including establishment of Permanent Survey Plots
- Ensure appropriate enforcement in Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 times
- Continue stewardship in areas of conservation value including habitat restoration
- Continue administration and enforcement of the County Forest Conservation By-Law
- Continue Woodland and Savannah management drawing on best practices from the United States and Canada

- Evaluate boundary, safety and liability issues within the Forest including along the County owned Hydro line properties
- Discuss ownership and enforcement issues with the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
- Review Forest Use Bylaw
- Complete wildlife and target species inventory and monitoring protocol

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Continue developing volunteer program with pilots in Trail Monitoring and Tree Marking and Natural Heritage
- Evaluate needs/opportunities for new trails, rerouting of existing trails
- Worked with the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand to update the management agreement with respect to the Forest
- Continue improving the safety and recreational experience of County Forest Trails through regulatory signage, interpretive signage, mapping, and brochures
- Continue public engagement through surveys
- Continue collaboration with Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and other organizations to share resources and experiences.
- Increased FN communication participation in forest management/ community engagement
- Host the Community Forest Manager and Forest Bylaw Officers annual meeting
- Update volunteer plan, continue to host volunteer opportunities
- Review community consultation process
- Prepare an outreach and education strategy

### **Leadership in Change**

- Attend Forests Ontario Annual Meeting
- Attend Natural Areas Association webinars
- Attend Community Forest Meeting
- Attend CIF Training Workshops
- Attend Forest Gene Conservation Training Workshops
- Attend Invasive species training/workshop
- Be the best practices leader with respect to science, stewardship, and management of the Forest
- Promote natural heritage within the County
- Work with Rice Lake Plains partners to share information and expertise
- Collaborate with First Nations

## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Improve outreach of invasive species and develop strategies.
- Pursue opportunities for forest and natural area economic development initiatives that benefit the economy and the environment such as the Scout Camp redevelopment
- Explore options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Act on options in Forest Management Plan for economic potential while protecting and maintain the health and biodiversity of the Forest
- Apply for grants that match Natural Heritage criteria and direction
- Undertake an economic impact assessment of Northumberland County's natural heritage assets and infrastructure with a specific focus on the County Forest

### Sustainable Growth

- Continue implementation of high-level plans such as the Silvicultural Operations Plan
- Implement the asset management strategy including raising awareness of natural assets and natural capital which the forest provides.
- Seek to grow the Forest land base and generate revenue from that land through the harvest of renewal resources
- Consider other revenue generating opportunities that will not negatively affect conservation of the County Forest (e.g., carbon market, sponsorship, and gifts)
- Maintain and foster multi-agency partnerships, developing new partnerships where possible and enhancing current partnerships
- Seek opportunities for sharing services between Natural Heritage and other County departments as well as member municipalities and partner organizations.
- Grow awareness of Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage, through internal and external communication
- Work with fire departments and emergency personal to maintain a high level of safety consideration for the forest, including the establishment of emergency numbers for trailhead parking lots.
- Support and foster the development of volunteer and supportive organizations
- Pursue opportunities for research programs that would inform forest management and highlight the ecological value of the Forest through all levels of education
- Improve understanding of forest use through refined trail user counters and satisfaction surveys.
- Carry out ecological conservation and restoration activities that meet targets identified in plans (e.g., plantings, herbicidal treatments, prescribed burns, invasive treatments, pre- and post-harvest treatments)

- Ensure staff are using the most up to date GIS and mapping products and devices
- Explore GIS opportunities to provide users the ability to report issues within the forest and access trail mapping
- Work with Roads department to further the Emerald Ash Plan Implementation in the eastern part of the County
- Carry out surveys in areas where there are issues associated with liabilities and safety with the Forest and rectify these issues
- Ensure appropriate staffing for all aspects of Natural Heritage work
- Evaluate properties as they become available for increasing the size of the County Forest
- Implement Updated Forest Resource Inventory (FRI) Surveys in all Forest Compartments
- Update Forest Compartment Boundaries
- Explore options for use of the property formerly known as the Scout Camp
- Seek opportunities to raise awareness of the County Forest, its natural capital, the management activities, recreation, culture, species, and habitats present.
- Update Forest use Bylaws
- Complete a community strategy for Natural Heritage
- Complete a fire risk and fuel hazard management strategy
- Complete an Integrated Pest management strategy
- Complete a Restoration Plan for the Forest
- Evaluate new technologies with respect to surveys, GIS, and monitoring
- Complete wildlife habitat modelling
- Review off leash dog use
- Complete operational plans for recreation, forestry, and ecology elements
- Complete desired future mapping

### **Thriving & Inclusive Communities**

- Foster programs that provide Forest-based opportunities for the public, particularly programs that remove barriers to accessing the Forest including social and economic barriers
- Continually re-evaluate potential recreational opportunities such as new trails that will not negatively affect conservation of the County Forest's natural and cultural heritage
- Continually collaboration with Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and other municipalities with respect to outreach, shared equipment, forestry, and recreation opportunities
- Undertake an economic impact assessment of Northumberland County's natural heritage assets and infrastructure with a specific focus on the County Forest
- Prepare indigenous community cultural heritage and values document in collaboration with Alderville First Nation



## **Leadership in Change**

- Ensure that employees have opportunities for learning, development and networking and Natural Heritage is a best practices leader
- Continually improve procedures that ensure workplace safety
- Maintain participation on committees such as the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative and Eastern Ontario Model Forest's Certification Working Group
- Ensure staff are using the best technology to be the most efficient in their job duties

## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Purchase a Forestry Mower

#### **Purpose**

To purchase a forestry mower that is a specialized piece of equipment that will be used for restoration, trail maintenance, invasive species removal and forest management and stewardship.

#### **Background**

Northumberland County Forest is a 2,235 hectares (5,524 acres) forest that provides users with ecological services, forestry resources, and recreational opportunities. The County began acquiring land for the Forest in 1924 in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to stabilize and restore lands.

Natural Heritage within Corporate Services manages the Northumberland County Forest which includes forestry, ecological and recreation work within the Forest and Weed Bylaw and Tree Conservation Bylaw within Northumberland. Staff within the section include the Natural Heritage Manager, the Forestry Technician, the Forest Trails Coordinator, and the Green Infrastructure Technician.

County Natural Heritage staff use various tools and techniques to manage the County Forest. For recreation, this includes students brushing the trail side using a brush saw and a three wheeled trail mower. Because of the fast-growing trailside vegetation, and requirement to meet trail standards, ensuring that all trailside vegetation is addressed can be challenging. Trail maintenance provides a safe visitor experience with better site lines and reduces ticks by removing overhanging vegetation. Often trail cutting requires a rotating cutting schedule that is continuous, finishing areas, then returning to the same area. At times this is a challenge to complete.

For forestry, pre- and post-harvest is an important component of managing the natural heritage of the County Forest. Pre harvest work involves assessing the potential seed crop and existing vegetation to ensure a biodiverse and health forest. The same is done post-harvest.

For restoration of Special Management zones, invasive species removal, species at risk work, habitat management is necessary. This is done using a diverse range of tools, including brush saws. While effective for rough terrain or small trails, they are less effective over large areas and areas with larger



diameter saplings. This is the same for pre and post work done in conjunction with harvesting to ensure a healthy and diverse forest.

Staff submitted a grant application for this equipment to the RTO8 Tourism Relief Fund in 2022 but were unsuccessful due to the County having received RTO8 money previously.

Forestry mowers are the recommended option for stewardship within similar habitats in the United States. Their rotating blades can remove woody vegetation up to 7 inches in diameter. The forestry mowers head are attached to the front of a skid steer.

## Consultation/Options

The following options were considered:

1) Not do the work.

In not doing the work, invasive species will continue to grow and unique species and habitats that are globally important will disappear from the County Forest. Without ecological work being completed in the Forest, the quality of the habitats will suffer. The risk and liability associated with choosing this option would be extremely high. Ensuring that the trails are maintained to our trail standards and overhanging vegetation including poison ivy are brushed is essential. A forestry mower will ensure efficiency in trail maintenance, forest maintenance and environmental stewardship within the County Forest.

2) Contract the services

Land clearing services, using a forestry mower are available for hire. Generally, these have been used by developers to clear large areas, so they are costly to contract. County Roads staff have a flail mower on a tractor, but this is too large to fit through the trail system or into the Special Management zones. Staff have been trained on small bulldozer use and are familiar with species within the forest. Full removal of species in an area is not necessary, and the contractor would need to weave and target species and areas. Staff have expertise in the forest and with tree and understory species identification. Regular and ongoing, targeted work with respect to Forestry, Ecology and Trail maintenance is required within the Forest. This is most economically and best done with staff through the purchase of a forestry mower. There are limited contractors available with a forestry mower. The cost for a contracted service is over \$3,800 per day (pre covid figure). Anticipated Natural Heritage forestry mower work through a contractor would be approximately \$85,000 per year.

3) Purchase a Forestry Mower



This is the recommended option that will increase efficiency and management within the County Forest.

A forestry mower would allow both sides of the trail to be mowed, allowing for one pass, increasing efficiency, and allowing students and staff to get into other harder to reach narrower trails and more often.

A forestry mower would move the forest regeneration, pre and post forestry harvest, ahead faster than brush saw work over large acreage. Thereby increasing the health and biodiversity of the forest.

A forest mower would effectively and efficiently maintain and enhance Special Management zones thereby maintaining and enhancing the habitat and assisting the unique species that are dependent on this habitat.

## **Financial Impact**

Staff propose the purchase of the forestry mower be through the levy. Cost of rental of a skid steer that a mower would be attached to, would be absorbed in the approved Natural Heritage Budget. The cost of the mower based on a preliminary quote is \$25,000.

## **Risk Considerations**

Currently summer students help to maintain the trail edge and invasive species within special management zones. Having a machine, that will cover larger trails and easier to reach areas, will allow for students to be deployed in other areas for high priority actions. A forestry mower will help maintain and enhance more habitats in the County Forest than using brush saws. Increasing ecological, trail maintenance and forestry requirements with respect to stewardship requires this specialized equipment to manage the Forest efficiently and effectively.

The tallgrass, savanna and woodland habitat and the unique species that depend on them require monitoring and stewardship. Some of the species at risk are governed by legislation that addresses their habitat needs. It is important to ensure this habitat is managed appropriately with respect to the legislation and Recovery Strategies. A Forest mower will assist in managing and maintaining these habitats and species.



## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

All residents of Northumberland County benefit from having a healthy County Forest that managed and well stewarded.

## **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

This purchase was not included in the 2022 long term plan. Staff have been using students and other techniques for ecological habitat maintenance and enhancement and trail maintenance. Based on research and results within the United States in similar habitats, this is the most effective and efficient machine to address forestry, ecology, and trail maintenance needs, while maintaining our levels of service and Species at Risk habitat maintenance requirements.



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## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Seasonal Technician

#### **Purpose**

To create a Seasonal Technical position from April to October (31 weeks) within Natural Heritage in the Corporate Services Department, that will assist with forestry, recreation and perform ecological management and stewardship of Northumberland County Forest. This position will be the day-to-day supervision of summer students from May to August.

#### **Background**

Northumberland County Forest is a 2,235 hectares (5,524 acres) forest that provides users with ecological services, forestry resources, and recreational opportunities. The County began acquiring land for the Forest in 1924 in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to stabilize and restore lands.

Natural Heritage within Corporate Services manages the Northumberland County Forest which includes forestry, ecological and recreation work within the Forest and Weed Bylaw and Tree Conservation Bylaw within Northumberland. Staff within the section include the Natural Heritage Manager, the Forestry Technician, the Forest Trails Coordinator, and the Green Infrastructure Technician. A maximum of four summer students from May to August are used to complete recreation, ecological and forestry work. Students are carrying out recreation, ecological and forest stewardship work in occurrence to our Forest Management Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for the Forest. These students rotate on a weekly basis with staff, who are often are pulled away for core office needs, which results in safety and lack of supervision for that time, or a reorganization of schedules and a re-deployment of staff from other planned core activities to supervise. Neither option is ideal.

In 2021, the Trail Coordinator took an acting assignment as the Natural Heritage Manager. One of the returning students was modified to a Seasonal Lead Hand. Based on this experience, the value of a Seasonal position was shown. The Seasonal Lead Hand allowed staff to provide timely responses to high priority issues that came up, while the supervised students focused on core summer activities in a safe efficient manner. It is an uncommon situation in Natural Heritage that students return multiple years and therefore would not have experience in the



work or be able to be in a supervisory position. Therefore, modifying a student position into a supervisor would generally not work as they need to be onboarded earlier than May to familiarize them with work requirements and the supervision duties.

## Consultation/Options

The following options were considered:

1) Not change the existing structure

Staff have core duties that are time sensitive. This can include Tree Conservation Bylaw, Weed Bylaw or office or field work. This necessitates the students conducting field work on their own. Having a designated Seasonal position that is with the students for the summer will ensure efficiency, safety, and supervision. Not having one would increase the exposure to risk.

2) Hire an additional permanent full time position Technician

This option would be ideal and there is enough work for this position, but in the short term the Seasonal position would be the more economical approach to this issue. As the workload continues, staff would bring forward the full-time position as needed.

3) Hire a Seasonal Technician

This is the recommended option as it will ensure direct supervision for students throughout the entire summer and will be onboarded prior to the students onboarding. In April the Technician would undergo training to ensure they were prepared for the work and for supervision of the students. In conjunction with this they would be working on forestry, recreation, and ecology work with staff. Many of the highest priority work actions take place in April at the start of the field season and in late August to October. This position would be essential to moving forward these tasks in conjunction with permanent full-time staff, thus ensuring Lean efficiency and maintaining levels of service within the Forest.

Tasks to be completed for this position include but are not limited to:

Recreation

- Trail maintenance, including brushing and trail repair
- Trail and signage monitoring
- Garbage collection
- Recreation site survey of visitors
- Volunteer and student supervision



## Forest

- Assist Forestry staff with tree marking. This will allow us to tender the timber harvest earlier, which will draw bidders prior to them booking other sites. Potentially resulting in a better price for our wood.
- Plot establishment and inventory
- Invasive species monitoring – Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Oak Wilt, Spongy Moth
- Post harvest surveys
- Assist with hazard tree removal within Forest
- Assist with invasive buckthorn treatment
- Assist with review of Roads Pratt Road pit property
- Collect data and review research to develop a plan for post harvest restoration of forestry sites. This would be incorporated in future grants
- Stump treatments of Red Pine in areas of pocket decline
- Forest Resource Inventory collection in Plantation and Mixed Deciduous Forest
- Maintenance of Forestry equipment
- Assist with polygons mapping and documentation of new sub-compartments within NCF
- Data input into Natural Heritage inventory files
- Reporting back to staff on technical webinars
- Flagging trails for upcoming Conifer Harvest Operations

## Ecology

- Invasive species treatment including brush sawing and chemical treatments across the Forest
- Preparation for 2023 prescribed burns
- Site preparation of 2023 prescribed burn sites and 2024 prescribed burn planning
- Ecology research on best practices
- Invasives species inventory
- Vegetation habitat mapping and ELC compartment project, habitat monitoring
- Deer browsing monitoring data collection (AVID)
- Assistance with data collection and plot establishment
- Wildlife camera monitoring
- Outreach and awareness for Oaktober
- Pollinator Garden and tree planting



- Native seed collecting and preparation
- Species at-risk inventory
- Volunteer and student supervision

## **Financial Impact**

Staff has consulted with Human Resources and the estimated financial expense for this position, including benefits and employer costs. It is anticipated that the position would be within the Grade B on the non-union salary grid with salary and employer costs at \$33,729, based on 31 weeks per year. To fund this new seasonal position, staff proposes using the levy.

## **Risk Considerations**

As core staff are pulled away from student management and supervision regularly, having a dedicated supervisor is important and lowers risk, ensuring a safe working environment. This position will be of significant value during one of the busiest times in Natural Heritage, April and September and October when weather conditions are optimal for work in the forest and many key timely stewardship activities occur. Without a Seasonal position, levels of service, and efficiency would be impacted.

From a Lean perspective, having a Seasonal position will allow staff to efficiently address high priority timely items that require immediate attention, including core actives such as Weed and Conservation Bylaw site visits and administration

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

All residents of Northumberland County benefit from having a healthy well stewarded County Forest that is restored, inventoried, managed, and monitored, along with a successful County wide Weed Bylaw and Tree Conservation program.

## **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

The position was not noted in the 2022 long term plan. In 2021, the Trail Coordinator took an acting assignment as the Natural Heritage Manager. One of the returning students was



changed to a Lead Hand. Based on this experience, the value of a Seasonal position was demonstrated in response time, efficiency, and supervision. Generally, students don't return year after year to the position, so having a modified summer student would not work. The position requires onboarding and training with regards to the work and supervision.

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## 2023 Business Plan & Budget

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### NCAM

#### Prior Year Accomplishments

##### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Successful application to FedDev Ontario Community Revitalization Fund for \$566,250 towards multi-use greenspace on Northumberland County campus as part of the GPL/NCAM redevelopment.
- Successful application to Museum Assistance Program – Indigenous Heritage stream for \$397,300 for development of Ojibwe language exhibit in main gallery in new NCAM.

##### Sustainable Growth

- Hosted one Fleming College Museum Management and Curatorship intern and one Mohawk College placement student.
- As of August 31, 2022:
  - NCAM received and processed 163 research inquiries from across Northumberland County, Canada, and internationally
  - NCAM hosted 84 visitors onsite
  - NCAM accessioned 8 new collections; 2 accruals and reviewed and catalogued 3 significant collections for future donation

##### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- e wiindmaagzijig, (Indigenous Advisory Circle) continues to provide guidance to lead the development of NCAM's inaugural exhibitions in the new the NCAM. E wiindmaagzijig is made up of Indigenous experts in the fields of academia and language revitalization, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and representatives from Williams Treaty First Nations.
- NCAM staff participated in public programming events – Digitization Day at Brighton Public Library, interviews with Word on the Hills and Northumberland Festival of Arts
- NCAM staff presented to Lakeshore Genealogical Society and Willow Beach Field Naturalists Society.

##### Leadership in Change

- Developed plan to ensure continued preservation and accessibility of Port Hope Archives' collection in collaboration with Port Hope Archives and Municipality of Port Hope.

## 2023 Service Objectives & Initiatives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Continue to work with Grant Writer to research and apply for grant/funding opportunities for capital projects, exhibitions, programs, and services to reduce dependency on levy funding.
- Implement sponsorship funding program to support exhibition development and public program initiatives.

### Sustainable Growth

- Continue to develop detailed design for inaugural exhibitions in new NCAM in collaboration with e wiindmaagzjig and exhibit designers, Entro Communications Inc.
- Continue to collaborate with GPL/NCAM re-development team to ensure functional design of NCAM, and inclusion of necessary specialized equipment.
- Continue to review staffing levels and functions and develop recommendations considering current and future needs.
- Propose one part-time Community Engagement Officer position for NCAM in 2023 to promote NCAM's services and fundraising initiatives.
- Continue improving awareness and accessibility of NCAM's collections by inputting collections data and digital files in collections management software.
- Continue fostering relationships with post-secondary programs related to information management, archives, and museum practice to support student mentorship (Durham College, Mohawk College, Fleming College, Algonquin College, and University of Toronto).
- Prepare for relocation of entire NCAM collection to new facility.

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Continue building relationships and strengthening partnerships with local Indigenous communities to ensure accurate and authentic representation in exhibition narratives.
- Continue to strengthen staff understanding and awareness of local Indigenous heritage and how we may support cross-cultural learning in our communities through workshops and consultations with members of Williams Treaty First Nations.
- Engage with communities through participation in local history fairs, exhibitions, public events, and speaking engagements.
- Host 2023 Archives Association of Ontario conference in Cobourg.

### Leadership in Change

- Evaluate NCAM's policies and strategic plan to represent industry best practices in archives and museums

## Long Term Plan & Strategic Objectives

### Economic Prosperity & Innovation

- Continue to research grant/funding opportunities for capital projects/programs/services to reduce dependency on taxation/levy.
- Collaborate with Grant Writer to identify and pursue funding opportunities in alignment with NCAM projects/mandate (CMOG (Canadian Museum Operating Grant, MAP (Museum Assistance Program), CCSF (Canada Cultural Spaces Fund), etc.
- Solicit fundraising support and inspire estate planning/charitable giving/private donations to increase revenue and the size/diversity of the artefact collection.
- Research alternative methods of revenue for NCAM.
- Consider opportunities for community partnerships, shared services etc.

### Sustainable Growth

- Review and evaluate the NCAM collection to identify gaps or underrepresented stories and identify materials for deaccession which do not meet NCAM's mandate
- Grow division structure and staffing complement to support preparations for transition to the new facility and sustain enhanced operations at a new, municipal archives and museum facility
- Consider partnership opportunities with diverse program streams that can support digital initiatives of information management and archives (GIS, Computer Programming etc.).
- Collaborate with heritage institutions to begin building online collections consortium

### Thriving & Inclusive Communities

- Continue creating partnership guidelines/agreement templates for working with local/regional partners (E.g. objectives, selection criteria, joint activities, mutual recognition, measures of success, collections management, etc.)
- Continue to conduct client research to understand the needs and expectations of our stakeholders
- Provide collaborative, innovative, participatory education and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Continue building relationships with Indigenous community representatives to support Indigenous related programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.
- Continue building relationships with local elementary, secondary and post-secondary teaching staff to foster awareness of the Archives & Museum as a resource to support their learning objectives.
- Collaborate with GPL Life Enrichment team to build resident focused programming plan for new NCAM facility.



- Work with GPL Life Enrichment Team to develop and support oral history program with residents.
- Seek opportunities to engage with our communities across Northumberland County to build visibility and trust amongst our stakeholders.
- Co-create temporary exhibitions in new NCAM facility with local archives, museums, galleries and libraries.
- Maximize benefits of new technologies to engage with the public, enable public access to collections, programs and resources, and create immersive and dynamic experiences for onsite and online visitors.
- Implement a comprehensive marketing plan.
- Identify/engage with strategic marketing partners to conduct market research, identify visitor interests, tailor marketing materials/programs, plan joint promotions, and take advantage of County-wide advertising opportunities.
- Improve use of tourism-centered marketing and multi-platform marketing tools to enhance awareness of NCAM as a cultural destination and first-class research facility.
- Provide curriculum focused resources online for teachers/educator grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12.

### **Leadership in Change**

- Develop multi-platform public engagement protocol to improve community engagement in shaping Archival and Museum exhibitions and programs.
- Develop unique opportunities for citizens to contribute knowledge and skills to the Archives & Museum's activities.
- Formalize the volunteer program in order to support NCAM in meeting business plan goals in areas of digital access and collections management, visitor services, and program delivery.
- Continue improving accessibility of collection through enriched data and digitization initiatives.
- Consider the Archives and Museums' potential roles in sustainability initiatives through collections, as information resources, as communicators, as educators, as facilitators, as activists and advocates, and as users of natural resources.
- Partner with IT to begin development of digital preservation strategy in alignment with corporate digital strategy.
- Draft disaster preparedness policy and procedure; collaborate with HSEP team to test rigor of plan.

## 2023 Issue Paper

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### Part-time Community Engagement Officer

#### **Purpose**

To request the creation of a part-time contract position in the Northumberland County Archives and Museum department (NCAM) to generate digital and social media content, virtual programming, and public engagement opportunities aimed at building community awareness with NCAM's brand and services and supporting sustainable fundraising and sponsorship campaigns.

#### **Background**

The Northumberland County Archives and Museum (NCAM) collects, cares for and provides access to archival materials and artefacts that represent the stories of the people, places and development of Northumberland County. NCAM's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan established four objectives to lead NCAM's activities:

1. Prepare for a sustainable future
2. Enhance collections stewardship and accessibility
3. Build community partnerships and engagement
4. Develop community-centric exhibitions and programming

As construction progresses at the new NCAM facility and public interest in the project and NCAM's activities grow, the need for consistent, informative communications and public engagement has increased. So too has the imperative for fundraising and sponsorship initiatives to support the opening activities of the new facility including permanent and temporary inaugural exhibitions. Fundraising and sponsor relationship building are key objectives for NCAM staff and require additional resources and support to be successful, while still managing NCAM's core services. Projecting a strong brand, building community awareness, and recognizing NCAM supporters, will help to strengthen the funding base and the sustainability and impact of NCAM's operations.

Northumberland County's Capital Projects Communications Officer has identified improvements that should be made to NCAM's communications strategy to improve brand awareness, increase public awareness of NCAM's current services, collections, and activities and promote what the future of NCAM will bring to Northumberland. These improvements are



anticipated to make a positive impact on public awareness, public trust and excitement about NCAM and improve NCAM's ability to fulfill its mandate and secure private sponsorships to help finance NCAM's exhibitions and programming.

NCAM services will be enhanced in the new facility to include expanded research hours, permanent and rotating temporary exhibitions for visitors to explore and public programming for students, adults, seniors and families. Attendance projections for the first year of opening anticipate an increase of attendance by 200%, or approximately 5000 visitors across the first year.

NCAM's current staffing levels include one permanent full time Archivist, one permanent full time Curator, one Summer Student (16-week contract), as well as post-secondary interns and weekly volunteers.

Social media and digital content development has been primarily overseen by the Curator, however, staff capacity limits NCAM's ability to create and share content consistently – a core driver for successful public engagement and brand awareness.

In summer 2022 a Fleming College Museum Management and Curatorship program intern developed digital content and managed NCAM's Facebook account over a full-time 14 week placement. As a part of this work, the intern researched and digitized collection items to highlight and creatively engage with the community – a core aim within NCAM's Strategic Plan.

The success of this pilot was seen in consistently high metrics for post impressions, post reach and post engagement; even more remarkably, patrons noticed and praised NCAM's efforts to share the collection. Awareness of NCAM through Facebook even inspired individuals to offer to donate materials. It also resulted in improved collections information and imagery that can be referenced by future researchers, and used for programming, exhibitions, and sponsorship and fundraising opportunities. This work taken on by a dedicated staff person had a hugely positive impact on staff productivity and connectedness with community.

## **Consultation/Options**

The Community Engagement Officer would generate digital and social media content, virtual programming, and public engagement opportunities aimed at building community awareness with NCAM's brand and services to support and align with NCAM's mandate and sustainable fundraising and sponsorship campaigns. They would fulfill an integral role in fostering sponsor relations and building sponsor and funder recognition programs leading up to and following the launch of the new facility.



This role is intended to expand into a visitor services position following the launch of the new NCAM. At that time, the role would be responsible for greeting and engaging with visitors, responding to and actioning in-person, telephone and electronic inquiries, processing transactions, managing NCAM's social media account(s), promoting NCAM programs and destinations throughout the County, and serving as an administrative and operational support for NCAM's public engagement programs.

Hiring a Community Engagement Officer at this time helps ensure the organization can deliver services community members and funders expect and in alignment with intentions of the County People Plan, develops the expertise to effectively meet the operational and financial needs of an enhanced cultural facility.

Duties of this position would include:

- executing digital content and social media efforts aimed at building brand awareness and public engagement with NCAM's collections, exhibitions, and programming
- assisting in the building of sustainable long-term fundraising and sponsorship campaigns, fostering sponsor relations and building sponsor and funder recognition programs through digital content and public engagement opportunities
- using analytic tools to monitor success of social media/web content and implement communication strategies accordingly
- acting as the voice of NCAM on multiple content and social media platforms
- collaborating with Communications team to develop/execute communications plan for new NCAM
- digitizing NCAM's collection for use in publications, social media and collections database
- supporting archival and curatorial functions through communications, actioning online inquiries, research and digitization
- assisting in the building of virtual programming
- participating in and representing NCAM at public engagement opportunities in the community of Northumberland

## **Financial Impact**

The Community Engagement Officer would be positioned at Level B on the non-union salary grid. Annual costs for a part-time 18-hour position would be \$36,000 inclusive of statutory deductions, vacation pay and OMERS. If the position is hired mid-end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, the financial impact in 2023 will be \$18,000. The position may be fulfilled via a part-time contract or part-time permanent position. As a vital role for the operations of NCAM, it is recommended



that the position is assigned as a permanent position to support long term needs of the role and employee retention.

## **Risk Considerations**

As construction progresses on the new site, now is the time to tap into public interest to establish brand recognition and expand the discussion beyond the new building to highlight the services and activities that NCAM currently offers and engage the public in the journey and excitement of a new community archives and museum.

NCAM is actively seeking sponsorships and donors to finance enhanced projects and activities at the new facility. It is imperative that NCAM presents a multi-platform professional brand image that tells a compelling narrative and is connected to the community we serve.

## **Impacts to Member Municipalities/Partners**

The Community Engagement Officer will fulfill an important role not only as an ambassador for NCAM, but for the history and culture of member municipalities, organizations and businesses across Northumberland County and how it relates to their current activities.

## **Included in 2022 Long Term Plan: YES/NO**

Yes.