

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Finance, Budget & Information Technology & Transformation

Information Technology & Transformation

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Catherine Fitzgerald, Director, Information Technology & Transformation

Date: September 21, 2020

Subject: Electronic Records Management System – Corporate Assessment

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve an Electronic Records Management System – Corporate Assessment, funded through the existing Capital Budget allocated for Electronic Records Management.

Background

[The 2021 Budget Opportunities for 0% Report](#) was received by Council on August 10, 2020. Council approved further analysis of proposed items related to service delivery to efficiently provide quality core services to Chatham-Kent residents and achieve a 2021 Budget target of 0%. The report recommended that detailed reports be brought back to Council for final approval prior to the 2021 Budget deliberations.

On December 2, 2019, Council approved the submission of an [Expression of Interest for the Municipal Modernization Program](#) relating to the Electronic Records Management Project – Corporate Assessment. Eligible projects under Intake 1 were reviews of municipal service delivery expenditures by independent third-party reviewers. Unfortunately, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent was not successful in the application for funding under the Municipal Modernization Program Intake 1.

The proposed Electronic Records Management – Corporate Assessment project proposed in the expression of interest was a review of municipal service delivery expenditures by an independent third-party reviewer for the purpose of finding savings and efficiencies. The engagement would result in a report by the independent third-party reviewer that provides specific and actionable recommendations for cost savings and improved efficiencies.

Due to the time constraints under the grant process, the Municipality had proceeded with a Request for Proposal process, subject to grant approval from the Province. When the Municipality was unsuccessful, the Request for Proposal process was cancelled.

Comments

In 2017, Administration completed a Records Management Service Review. It was apparent at that time the Municipality required a records management strategy. A cross-departmental team completed the review and reported back to the Executive Management Team in October, 2017.

The Service Review identified gaps and focused administration to take a comprehensive, integrated approach to managing information in all formats across the organization. Due to modern technology, electronically stored information continues to grow exponentially. It is believed that 50% electronic data growth occurs each year. The Municipality needs to look at strategies to manage the electronic records and documents.

It is recognized that one corporate vision is necessary but such implementation takes time to research. An assessment would provide a long-term strategy relating to policy, process and guidelines needed for our organization. An overall electronic record management strategy and implementation starts at an estimated \$2 million for an organization the size and complexity of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

In addition, to better prepare for an electronic records management strategy, Council approved \$200,000 in the 2018 and 2019 capital budgets, in anticipation of a corporate vision of moving towards an electronic records management strategy. The 2020 \$200,000 capital budget request was declined by Council due to the budget pressures related to Provincial downloads.

By implementing such a strategy, the Municipality will grow its records management program, which will mean:

- Departments can provide better services to the public
- New and current staff can efficiently find the information they need to make decisions
- Documents are easily located, shared and used through a good practice of information classification and governance
- Legislated requirements will be met and exceeded
- The information needed is available in the event of an emergency
- Corporate memory and history are preserved
- A stronger foundation for open government at the Municipality
- An effective plan for effectively managing one of the Municipality's important assets: information.

The work from home environment under the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the inefficiencies with paper records, documents and case files. Electronic management of information is identified as a solution for the corporation to more efficiently manage and access information for both staff and residents.

The recommendation in this report would initiate a procurement process to select a vendor for this assessment. This assessment would provide step one to the overall goal of Electronic Records Management for the organization.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

- Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- People and Culture:
Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community
- Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

- Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

The Executive Management Team discussed 2021 Budget Opportunities for 0% budget target and have identified this project as high potential for efficiencies.

The Director, Municipal Governance/Clerk provided information relating to the requirement of Corporate Document and Records Management.

Financial Implications

The Electronic Records Management System – Corporate Assessment would be funded through the existing Capital Budget for an Electronic Records Management System.

The implementation of a proper documents and record management system will allow staff to more efficiently process and store information creating financial efficiencies when fully operational. It is expected that it would take approximately 18 – 24 months before any savings could be realized.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

Gord Quinton, MBA, CPA, CGA
Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Judy Smith
Director, Municipal Governance/Clerk

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