



Infrastructure Services Staff Report

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Report Title: Increase Staffing Request – Operations Project Supervisor
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Reviewed By: Jared Puppe, Director of Infrastructure Services
Final Review: Chief Administrative Officer

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Township of Woolwich, considering Report IS17-2024 respecting Increase Staffing Request – Operations Project Supervisor

1. Approve a pre-budget request to add a full-time position as an Operations Project Supervisor to the Infrastructure Services Department; and,
2. Authorize the full annual salary and all-in cost impacts of up to \$122,732 be included in the 2025 proposed budget with 70% funded from the Infrastructure Services Operating Budget and 15% from each of the Water and Wastewater Operating Budgets.

Background:

Woolwich Township is one of the fastest growing municipalities in the Region of Waterloo and has experienced significant infrastructure expansions throughout many of its communities over the past three decades. The most notable expansions have occurred in the communities of: Breslau, Elmira, Maryhill and St. Jacobs. This growth has added considerably to Woolwich's road system, sidewalk network, stormwater management facilities, boulevard tree inventory, traffic signage, water distribution, wastewater collection systems as well as vehicle fleet requirements.

These growth pressures, along with ongoing legislative requirements such as: the Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways (MMS) Ontario Regulation (O.

Reg.) 239/02, Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure O.Reg. 588/17 and the Safe Drinking Water Act 2002, along with significant management related workloads and service delivery expectations are the principal reasons for the request for an additional staffing resource within the Operations section of the Infrastructure Services Department. In light of these increased pressures and responsibilities it is important that we ensure an appropriate number of supervisory staff are in the department to avoid any undue burdens being placed on the existing management complement within Operations.

Legislative requirements, growth pressures and increased demand for service delivery have put an undue strain on the current management structure within the Operations section. Currently, the Manager of Operations, the Roads Supervisor and Water / Wastewater Supervisor share all of the on-call duties and obligated winter patrol inspections. This equates to each needing to be available 17 weeks of the year. Further, it is highly unusual to utilize a Water / Wastewater Supervisor for road patrol as this is not a skill set that typically comes with the position and the Township has always needed to provide this type of training when on-boarding the Water / Wastewater Supervisor position. Of note, the Township has had nine different Water / Wastewater Supervisors over the past 12 years. This is largely due to the number of duties assigned to the position and the entire Operations management team in general.

In 2022 it was recognized, and endorsed by Council, to increase the frontline roads staffing complement from five unionized positions to nine to better align with legislation and help improve service delivery within the municipality. Despite this improvement in the Roads section, Woolwich is still behind its neighbouring municipalities with respect to internal frontline staff and the Township remains reliant on a number of contracted service providers to supplement its work force. These contracted services are selected through procurement procedures, which includes preparing and issuing tenders, acquiring quotes and oversight of the contracted work to ensure it meets the requirements of the contract documents. Contractors are also relied upon to fulfill minor needs of the department including, supply and delivery of required materials, fleet maintenance, supplement staff shortages for winter control as well as replacement or restoration of minor assets.

Based on the current staffing complement within the Operations section and to ensure that an appropriate span of control exists related to a number of factors, including: growth pressures, service delivery expectations and legislated obligations, the existing Operations management structure is in need of an additional supervisory position as the three existing management staff are over capacity. More time is needed to address the requirements of internal staff, which has affected management's ability to properly oversee contracted service providers and higher order maintenance and operation obligations, including roads, wastewater stations and fleet assets. This often requires working outside of regular business hours when management staff have the time to connect with contractors.

Comments:

The Operations section of the Infrastructure Services Department is seeking endorsement for an Operations Project Supervisor to help address the challenges faced by the existing Operations management team. Some of the more significant issues, duties and responsibilities that this position would help address include:

Reduction of Overtime and Work-Life Balance – A significant reason for this position is to assist in providing a better work-life balance for the three existing management staff within the Operations section. Employers face an ever-changing workforce, which has only become more challenging since coming out of the pandemic. It is a very competitive landscape with senior and mid-level management positions being highly sought after as many of these positions experienced retirements. Without proper long term succession planning employers face difficulties with the loss of experienced staff and systemic knowledge gaps to try to fill – the Township of Woolwich is not immune to these pressing issues. More and more employers struggle to compete for the same skilled workers but from a smaller talent pool. Appropriate remuneration is important, which now includes flexible work schedules, competitive wages and benefits as well as a work/life balance that better suits people’s lifestyles outside of the workplace. It has become increasingly important for this organization to assess its existing employee complement to ensure that we can meet these challenges with an emphasis on retention, continuing education, advancement opportunities and an appropriate staffing complement to avoid the realities of worker fatigue and burn-out.

This risk becomes much greater when organizations rely on a small group of workers to perform a vast array of duties without consideration for succession planning, improved span of organizational knowledge and balance. Woolwich has struggled in this area and have experienced the effects of this issue firsthand on more than one occasion. In such an unfortunate event, the employee and employer are greatly impacted. Far too often a specific skill set and knowledge is contained to an individual and is not shared broadly simply due to a lack of personnel resourcing and succession planning. Currently, the Township relies on only three individuals to take part in an on-call rotation that requires each of them to be available 24 hours a day for a minimum of 17 weeks a year. They are required to be the first point of contact for frontline unionized staff working outside of regular hours and the Region of Waterloo’s Call Centre, which dispatches after hour requests received from residents within the Township.

During the winter season, mandated winter patrolling is also carried out solely by the three management staff. This places a considerable strain on these individuals as they are needed to be on a three week cycle. This translates into a minimum work week of 61 hours, which is an additional 21 hours per week over and above their regular 40 hour work week. Winter road patrols require management to be on the road system anywhere between 2:00 am and 4:00 am to determine if weather conditions necessitate frontline winter control staff to be called in. This is a legislated obligation under the MMS per O.Reg. 239/02 and is

stipulated to occur from October 1st until April 30th every year. This is in addition to their regular on-call requirements previously mentioned.

This new position would perform the mandated winter patrols as well as take part in the on-call rotation, which would better distribute these required duties across the management group, thereby helping reduce the burden placed on the current management staff. This additional position will provide much needed support and have a positive impact on reducing the amount of overtime currently being performed by the existing management staff. The reduction in overtime realized will be used to help offset the costs associated with this new position, which is discussed further in the Financial Impacts section.

Legislated Road Patrol – The MMS, through O.Reg. 239/02, requires municipalities to perform time sensitive inspections. These crucial inspections play a direct role in helping to mitigate municipalities' exposure to risk and claims. Currently, the process is paper based and the Township is reliant on a part-time contracted position and the use of a personal vehicle to perform these duties. Given the importance of these patrols, the contemplated growth and the ever increasing risk that municipalities face, more than a part-time contracted position is warranted to address risks and to modernize the process.

Further, as part of Woolwich's asset management plan, condition assessments of the Township's road network has been contracted out since 2009 and there is a concerted effort to bring this valuable knowledge internally. To successfully do this it requires inspections from both engineering staff and operations staff. Having a full-time Operations Project Supervisor, who will already be completing road inspections, will provide an added benefit of performance and condition ratings of the road system from an operations perspective, which is not something that currently exists in the Township.

Fleet Management – Manage and schedule regular preventative maintenance of the Infrastructure Services Fleet used by both road maintenance staff and water/wastewater staff. The current replacement value of the Infrastructure Services Department's fleet is over \$7.5 million. This position will also be involved with procurement for replacement vehicles and additions to the current fleet. Other responsibilities would include, managing compliance needs specific to legislation governing commercial vehicles, such as CVORs.

Material Management – Manage and procure; aggregates and materials used for water/wastewater/storm infrastructure repair and replacement, the winter sand and salt, the recycled asphalt product (RAP) used for shoulder maintenance, aggregates used for gravel road repair

Winter Contractor Management – Manage and oversee; the sidewalk snow clearing program for Elmira and the other small settlements, the Parking lot snow clearing program as well as the dead ends and cul-de-sac roadway snow clearing.

Summer Contractor Management – Manage and oversee; the gravel overlay program, the dust suppressant application program, the catchbasin and oil grit separator cleaning program, the rural ditch re-establishment program, the surface treatment and padding

program, roadway line painting program, hot mix asphalt repairs, the boulevard tree replacement program as well as manage contracted forestry needs for large tree removals.

Claims for Damages – Investigate and compile information for the Waterloo Region Municipalities Insurance Pool (WRMIP) for the defense of claims against the Township of Woolwich related to the MMS O.Reg. 239/02 thresholds. Due to the large amount of information required to be gathered, there are often delays associated with providing this data.

Water Utility Contractors– Manage and oversee; the water valve replacement program, the water meter installation/replacement program as well as assist with water billing investigations associated with meter reads.

Wastewater Utility Contractors – Manage and Oversee; the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) survey program contractor, Wastewater Pumping Station contractors involved in building maintenance including snow removal, wet well cleaning contractors and industrial electricians for the repair and/or replacement of the automated control systems.

This important staffing position will have an immediate positive impact on the existing management complement in the Operations section by reducing the required overtime associated with legislated obligations primarily around road inspections and seasonal road patrols. This position will also help improve external and internal response times associated with public inquiries, on-call duties, contractor oversight, inspections and improved risk management through reduced liability exposure.

Interdepartmental Impacts:

None

Financial Impacts:

Funding for this new full-time position is largely contained within the existing Infrastructure Services, Water and Wastewater Operating Budgets. In keeping with the current funding structure, it is proposed that the Operations Project Supervisor position will be funded from the Infrastructure Services Operating Budget (70%), the Water Operating Budget (15%) and the Wastewater Operating Budget (15%).

The funding already contained within the existing operating budgets are to be redistributed to support the position's creation. The existing contracted part-time staffing position is paid an hourly rate plus a mileage reimbursement allowance totaling \$33,763 annually. Existing Operations management staff provides coverage seven days a week and receive overtime rates based on the Employment Standards Act. This equates to an approximate cost savings of \$35,951, which is based on 15 hours per week for an average of 25 weeks at overtime rates. This is an estimated savings based on a three year average of overtime performed. The overtime costs that are currently being paid out to the existing management staff will be reallocated to the Operations Project Supervisor position. This funding

reallocation coupled with the part-time contract costs provide \$69,714 of already allocated funding to help support the increased staffing request.

Based on similar roles within the Township, the Operations Project Supervisor would be in Level 5 on the salary grid; however, due to the position residing in the Operations section a base 40 hour work week is required. This equates to a 2024 annual salary range of \$87,865 (\$100,765 all-in costs) to \$109,832 (\$122,732 all-in costs). The current operating budgets already account for over 56% of the top end all-in costs of the salary range and over 69% of the lower end salary range.

Community Strategic Plan Impacts:

Adding an Operations Project Supervisor to the Infrastructure Services department supports the Township of Woolwich's strategic direction by prioritizing *"cost effective and efficient resource allocation to support long-term planning and investments in infrastructure that will improve the quality of life for all community members"*.

Conclusion:

Staff are seeking Council's endorsement for the recruitment of an Operations Project Supervisor to improve the structure of the Operations section within the Infrastructure Services Department. This position is crucial in reducing the span of control and burden placed on the existing Manager of Operations, Roads Supervisor and Water / Wastewater Supervisor, which in turn will reduce the amount of overtime currently required by the management staff, improve the overall management structure and provide some much needed staffing resiliency within the Department.

Attachments:

None