TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON   REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO:	**Reeve Vincent and Members of Council**
PREPARED BY:	**Dwayne Evans, CAO**
DATE:	**09/07/2018**
SUBJECT:	**IT Services**
ATTACHMENTS:	Click here to enter text.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby receive the report of the CAO, dated July 9, 2018 regarding the procurement of IT services for information;

AND FURTHER, that Council authorizes an exception to Section 19.1 of the Procedural By-law to allow By-law No. 67-2018 to be passed at the July 9, 2018 Council meeting;

AND FURTHER, that Council authorizes the CAO to retain Richard Al to provide IT assistance on an as needed basis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Council is aware, the Clerk/Manager of IT has tendered his resignation. His last day is July 13, 2018. The probability of filling the Clerk/Manager of IT position as it currently exists is very unlikely because the required skill set for Clerk functions is significantly different than the required skill set for IT services. The two functions cannot continue to co-exist in one position.

As previously discussed, the CAO has agreed to assume the position of CAO/Clerk on an interim basis until future decisions regarding the Clerk/Manager of IT position have been made. For signing authority purposes, Barb Black, existing Administrative Assistant, has agreed to assume the role of Deputy Clerk on an interim basis. With respect to IT Services, staff sourced two local third party providers (Continuit and Microage Basics). These two providers have been onsite and have submitted cost proposals for Council's consideration.

Continuit and Microage Basics are reputable companies and know the municipal business. Both presently provide service to other municipalities. Continuit is a newer company based out of Goderich and well established in the local market.

Continuit's proposal includes a fixed monthly fee for all regular servicing and maintenance of the Township's server and workstations. Their hourly rate for onsite visits is also significantly lower ($65/hour compared to $99/hour) and they guarantee onsite services in 4 hours or less (one of their service technicians lives in Wingham). It is also recommended the CAO be authorized to retain the Clerk/Manager of IT incumbent to provide IT assistance on an as needed basis.

DISCUSSION

IT services are an integral part of municipal services. Down time needs to be minimal and ready access to technical assistance is important. North Huron's IT needs no longer warrant a dedicated full-time position and other existing staff do not have the required skill set to assume the IT function.

The Clerk/Manager of IT incumbent has offered to provide IT services on an as neede basis and when not in conflict with his new position. Most of North Huron's IT needs are during regular business hours.

IT service proposals were requested from Continuit and Microage Basics. Both provide IT services to local municipalities (they know the business) and employ a number of computer technicians who are easily accessible by phone. The computer technicians can also resolve IT problems through remote access. Below is an overview of the two proposals received.

Continuit has provided a quote of $2100 for level 3 servicing and maintenance of 12 servers and 60 workstations.   Level 3 servicing and maintenance includes patch management, security log monitoring, virus log monitoring, helpdesk remote access, maximum security, application deployment, computer clean up, application bandwidth monitoring, asset management/hardware warranty, edge device support, application blocking and remote access by staff to the municipality's servers. The monthly fee also includes assistance with server disaster recovery. Onsite visit requests which are not part of regular servicing and maintenance are billed at $65/hour and continuit guarantees a computer technician onsite within 4 hours. After hours onsite non-emergency requests and onsite visits on holidays are billed at $130/hour.

In their proposal, Microage Basics suggests they do actual billing for services required until they have a better understanding of the Township's requirements. Once they have a better understanding, they will recommend programs with more fixed costs which will allow for better budgeting. They also suggest implementing their M4 Essential Remote Monitoring for Servers and Workstations program (will be explained in more detail below). This will allow Microage Basics to take a more proactive approach to solving user problems and eliminate problems before they can affect users. M4 services would be billed monthly.

Microage Basics offers two levels of support plus the M4 services. The first level of support is standard and includes installation, move, add and change services. The first level of support also includes hardware maintenance of workstations and printers. Level 1 support is billed at a rate $889/hour and is based on a technician working onsite during regular business hours. For projects or large installations, Microage Basics will provide a fixed price for labour.

The second level of support consists of advanced network services and includes security appliances, network routing, network administration (server software configuration and installation), hardware maintenance of services and network assessment and security audits. Level 2 support is billed at a rate of $99/hr and may include a premium rate for services that fall outside the scope of regular services (i.e., after hours, emergency response). Similar to Level 1, Microage Basics will provide a fixed price for labour for projects, installations and server based projects.

M4 Services involves taking corrective action before the problem occurs, or before users even notice it. M4 Services include remote server essential monitoring (i.e., 24/7 hardware and software monitoring, antivirus checks and updates, remote access services etc.) and Desktop Care Antivirus and Monitoring (i.e., hardware and software monitoring, antivirus software licence, patch management, remote access services, hardware/software change monitoring etc.). M4 Services are billed at a rate of $15 per server per month. Standard Desktop Care Antivirus and Monitoring services

are billed at a rate of $6.50 per workstation per month or the recommended Advanced Desktop Care including the Next Generation Antivirus at $9.50 per workstation. If North Huron selected the server service and the Advanced Desktop Care service, the monthly rate would be approximately $800/month. This would not include work completed at their hourly rate.

For a number of years, North Huron has operated with a single on-site IT support person. At present, the Clerk/Manager of IT is the only individual who can grant file access, change levels of permissions and limit authorizations. This creates security risks and leaves the municipality at risk for business continuity should this one individual not be available. By changing to a third party IT provider, there will be more than one IT support person available to assist.

With respect to hardware and software upgrade needs, evening access to municipal buildings will be required. Most, if not all buildings, have staff available during regular evening hours. For example, Town Hall is accessible during regularly scheduled Council meetings.

As Council is aware, software such as Legends and Brandt security has been purchased and is currently in use. Because of his expertise and skill set, the Clerk/Manager of IT incumbent has become the default technical support for software purchases. It is suggested the municipality should not be expending resources to support software purchases. On a going forward basis, staff will need to ensure that companies are able to provide the necessary technical support when purchasing software.

FINANCIAL IMPACT
As Council is aware, a municipal election assistant has been retained to assist the CAO/Clerk with the 2018 municipal election. This individual will be also assisting with other priority files. The agreed upon arrangement is that this individual will working 18-24 hours a week. Taking into consideration the current rate of pay and benefits of the existing Clerk/Manager of IT position and the costs associated with the municipal election assistant; it is projected the procurement of IT services will not negatively impact the 2018 budget. Future financial impacts will need to be considered during the 2019 budget process when Council considers the replacement position for the Clerk/Manager of IT position and continuation of the third party IT services.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS
As things currently stand, the restricted act provisions (lame duck) of the Municipal Act will apply to North Huron effective July 27, 2018. During this period, Council cannot hire or dismiss municipal officers. The position of Clerk is a municipal officer position and is appointed by By-law. The lame duck period does not prohibit Council from discussing and providing direction to staff regarding the replacement position for the Clerk/Manager of IT position. The lame duck provisions also do not prohibit the CAO from commencing the hiring process for the replacement position. If the replacement position is a municipal officer position, the new Council will need to appoint the individual By-law after taking office. If the replacement position is not a municipal officer position (i.e. does not require Council to appoint the individual by By-law), the CAO can exercise the authority granted by delegated authority by-law and fill the replacement position on a permanent basis during the restricted act period.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #4-That administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.

Dwayne Evans

Dwayne Evans, CAO