



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Richard AI, Manager of Employee and Business Services/Deputy Clerk
DATE: 03/10/2016
SUBJECT: Records Management and Retention
ATTACHMENTS: None

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby receive the Manager of Employee and Business Services/Deputy Clerk's report regarding Records Management and Retention for information purposes;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs the Clerk to prepare a Records Management and Retention By-law to be included on the October 17, 2016 agenda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proper municipal records keeping is not only essential for effective day-to-day municipal operations but it is also a statutory requirement as defined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*:

- Section 254. (1) A municipality shall retain and preserve the records of the municipality and its local boards in a secure and accessible manner.
- Section 255. (1) Except as otherwise provided a record of a municipality or local board may only be destroyed in accordance with this section.
- Section 255. (2) Despite section 254, a record of a municipality or local board may be destroyed if a retention period for the record has been established under this section and,
 - The retention period has expired; or
 - The record is a copy of the original.

DISCUSSION

It is estimated that an approximate range of 25% - 40% of office worker time is spent searching for records. A staggering statistic but not unimaginable if we take into account the breadth of what is considered a record today. Records are typically thought simply as paper copies of documents although the actual definition is significantly more extensive. The word "Record" today includes not only those typical paper documents but also emails, digital files such as Microsoft Word documents, website content, amongst numerous other items.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (MFIPPA) requests depend heavily on a municipality's ability to locate records in a timely manner. In order to perform the task of locating records it is essential to have a system and processes in place.

The Township of North Huron, much like numerous other municipalities in Ontario currently classifies records based on The Ontario Municipal Records Management System (TOMRMS). TOMRMS defines a broad set of criteria for which the various types of municipal records are to be classified under. Each classification has a defined retention schedule associated based upon Provincial, Federal, and other legislative requirements.

The Township of North Huron currently subscribes to yearly retention schedule updates provided by The Information Professionals at a cost of \$300.00 per year, as is common practice for most municipalities using TOMRMS.

In the past, staff have been assigned to the task of implementing TOMRMS for the Township of North Huron however over the course of time as positions and responsibilities have changed, as well as through the loss of key staff, the implementation of TOMRMS had stalled. Although the implementation had stalled the importance and obligation of an effective records management system remained and has again come to the forefront through the plethora of structural changes associated with the North Huron – Morris Turnberry shared services project.

Under the direction of the Clerk and the CAO, the Manager of Employee and Business Services/Deputy Clerk has been working to update the TOMRMS manual, including associated retention schedules. In addition, work has been taking place with key staff in each department to ensure that records from each functional area of the organization are properly classified and stored in the appropriate manner for the correct retention length.

Previous records management implementation work included the use of Zasio Versatile Express to manage paper files. Versatile Express while rather simple in its functionality, does offer the basic requirements for managing the Township's paper documents. Management of the Township's digital files is a growing concern and one that staff are working to address through a potential partnership with Huron County to implement Laserfiche. More details on Laserfiche will be provided in a future report to Council.

A draft by-law along with updated retention schedules to replace the existing Records Management By-law 41-2010 has been provided to Municipal Auditor, Paul Seebach of Vodden, Bender and Seebach. Mr. Seebach has reviewed the draft by-law and provided his approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The annual records retention schedule update from The Information Professionals is \$300.00 per year plus applicable taxes. This is a budgeted expense and has been maintained since 2009.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Staff will be preparing a report to Council for a future meeting regarding the potential Huron County Laserfiche partnership details.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal # 4 – Our administration is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.

Business Services/Deputy Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon Chambers".

Sharon Chambers, CAO

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