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## **Casual Employee Resourcing Strategy Information Report to Council**

Report Number: INFO-2022-16

Department(s): Office of the CAO - Human Resources/Community Services/Public Works Services

Author(s): Director, Human Resources; Commissioner, Community Services

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

### **Purpose**

This report is to provide Members of Council with a high level overview of the current attraction and retention issues relative to casual/seasonal/sessional staff and steps Administration is taking to address same.

### **Background**

As many of you have seen, the pandemic brought about many changes and impacted so many people on so many different levels. In some areas the impact is still evolving and we are seeing evidence of this in our attraction and retention efforts with casual/seasonal/sessional staff as we endeavour to once again deliver certain services to the community.

The Town's casual/seasonal/sessional (casual) employees were hard hit when services had to be suspended as a result of the pandemic. They were also impacted when we were able to start up some operations only to have to close them down again. While some were willing to undertake work at the vaccination clinics, many remained unable to secure alternate roles. Prior to the pandemic, the Town employed approximately 1100 employees, of which 460 were regular employees. Casual staff are employed in offices, aquatics, parks, facilities, and predominantly served the public. A large portion of our casuals were returning college or university students.

Times have shifted and as we reached out to secure casuals for our spring and summer needs we saw the impact of the pandemic and other evolving issues come to a head

with both a lack of applicants as well as a lack of experienced applicants. There are many reasons for this, such as:

- People are shying away from working with the public given the ongoing concern re COVID19.
- Parents do not want their children working directly with the public yet, given what we have just been through this past 2 years.
- College and university students are feeling less pressured to secure employment for the summer given they have spent the past 2 years studying virtually at home, thus reducing expenses significantly.
- College and university students know this is an employees' marketplace and they are waiting longer before making a decision as to what work they are going to do.
- College and university students are wanting to align their casual employment with their educational focus more than ever before.
- There are fewer people in the age brackets we normally draw on for the types of roles we have available and more people vying for their service.

The other side to the current dilemma, is the retention component. We are again seeing unprecedented departures of contracted casuals to take roles elsewhere. As you can appreciate, the cost in time and money is significant if you have a number of staff trained and they leave after only a few weeks. It also cost time and effort to undertake repeated recruitments, taking staff away from their day-to-day duties to screen applicants and conduct interviews. There is also increased workload for internal service providers such as HR, Finance and IT in onboarding staff repeatedly for positions. In addition, we are looking to maintain casuals into the Fall as much as possible while we undertake other efforts to improve our applicant pool.

As a result of the current circumstances a committee was formed within the Operational Leadership Team with support and guidance provided by the Commissioner, Community Services.

## **Discussion**

The Committee has identified three distinct employee groupings where we are currently encountering challenges to attract and retain candidates/staff. The three groupings are as follows:

1. Regular full-time employees
2. Contract employees with terms one year and over
3. Casual/seasonal/sessional (casual) employees

This report will focus on the grouping of Casual/seasonal/sessional (casual). The Committee will continue to review the other two areas and their associated challenges and will report to Council as necessary.

The Committee met and developed both some short term and long term strategies in order to move on this matter quickly. To do otherwise would negatively impact The Town’s ability to deliver on programming and maintain facilities in a manner that supports the programming deliverables.

At this time the Town has the capacity to meet planned service levels, however some areas are already operating at their limit. We need to proactively take action to ensure we can secure and retain the required casual/seasonal/sessional (casual) employees in an effort to avoid possible service level impacts in the months ahead. Strategies developed are both monetary and non-monetary, especially when you note the imminent change to the minimum wage. A few examples include:

- Revise the applicant intake process to reduce the number of steps
- Review the hiring policies and practices
- Increase efforts with other partners such as Job Skills Canada, etc.
- Develop a “positive referral” incentive
- Develop retention incentives
- Redevelop the brand and marketing strategy around working for local government

We have not provided in depth insight into elements of the foregoing as flexibility is required in order to focus our efforts on 4 key areas: Aquatics; Camps; Parks and Facility Services. This is a fast evolving response to what is not just a local issue, but rather one that will affect us all for some time to come.

## **Conclusion**

Immediate action is being taken to secure staff to provide the programming needed for a community finally emerging from a pandemic. Actions taken will be monitored to ascertain the level of success. As noted earlier, additional efforts are underway to try to head off a resourcing issue in the Fall.

This report is focused on casual employees, however the pandemic has also significantly impacted the Town’s ability to attract and retain regular full time employees and contracts one year and over. This, however, will be the subject of a separate report.

## **Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages**

This report supports the alignment of efforts to enable the Town to deliver on its commitment to the Community as provided for in the Strategic Plan.

## **Consultation**

The Committee members include the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jeff Payne – Commissioner, Community Services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mark Agnoletto – Director, Public Works Services</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Service – Director, Recreation &amp; Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristi Carlen – Strategic Business Leader</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike Mayes – Director, Financial Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonnie Munslow – Manager, Corporate Customer Service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynn Georgeff – Director, Human Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joan Shaw – HR – Total Rewards Program Specialist</li> </ul>

The Strategic Leadership Team was also consulted and is fully supportive of the various efforts identified.

## **Human Resource Considerations**

Nothing over and above what has been reported elsewhere in this report.

## **Budget Impact**

It is anticipated that the efforts undertaken to address the current casual resourcing issue can be accommodated in the current budget given the gaps that have occurred in being able to fill roles within the standard timelines. Should we not be able to accommodate the financial impact within existing resources, we will provide an update as appropriate.

## **Attachments**

None.

## **Contact**

If additional information is required, please contact the CAO, Commissioner, Community Services or the Director, Human Resources.

## **Approval**

K. Lynn Georgeff – Director, Human Resources

Jeff Payne – Commissioner, Community Services

Ian McDougal – Chief Administrative Officer