

STAFF REPORT: ADMINISTRATION

REPORT TO: Finance & Administration
 Committee
MEETING DATE: June 21, 2011
REPORT NO.: A.11.08
SUBJECT: Civil Marriage Solemnization
 Services
PREPARED BY: Corrina Giles, Town Clerk

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report A.11.08, Civil Marriage Solemnization Services; and

THAT Council approves the Staff recommendation to offer Civil Marriage Solemnization Services for the Town of The Blue Mountains, subject to a further Staff Report detailing costs, fees and scheduling associated with such services.

B. Background

In 2004 the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, in an effort to enhance access to civil marriage services across Ontario in a timely and fiscally responsible manner, filed regulatory changes under the *Marriage Act* to provide municipal clerks the authority to perform civil marriages, as follows:

For the purposes of subsection 24 (1) of the Marriage Act, the clerk of a local municipality is authorized to solemnize marriages under the authority of a licence. O. Reg. 285/04, s. 1.

Since 2004 municipalities have had the option to offer civil marriages and to set fees to cover the cost of providing civil marriage services within the parameters outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The by-law would authorize the municipal clerk to solemnize marriages within the Province of Ontario.

While it is not incumbent upon the Town to provide this service, this initiative would be in keeping with the strategic plan and would provide an additional service to its citizens, at the same time generating additional municipal revenue.

The Blue Mountains provides many ideal picturesque settings for wedding ceremonies, including the new Town Hall and Council Chamber, along the Beaver River, Georgian Bay waterfront parks, Town owned recreational facilities, resorts and private properties. The exposure of The Blue Mountains to wedding guests would be an additional promotion that could generate a positive residual effect for the Town and its businesses.

The cost for the performance of civil marriage solemnization ranges in area municipalities from \$250 to \$350, and depends if the service is being conducted during normal business hours or if after hours.

It is proposed that if a service is conducted during normal business hours, the Town would receive the entire fee for the service. If a service is conducted outside normal business hours, it is proposed that the Town would receive \$100 of the fee to cover administrative costs for recording and process of marriage documents to the Registrar General's Office, and the Clerk would receive the balance of the fee for performing a service outside normal office hours.

The Clerk would be required to meet with the couple once or twice and is required to prepare the necessary documents, personalize ceremony details as per the couple's request, then solemnize the marriage at a location of the couple's choice.

The Clerk has recently attended the Civil Solemnization Training offered through the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers and has expressed an interest in performing civil marriages on behalf of the Town.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

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| Goal | Providing a strong, well managed municipal government |
| Action | Develop and encourage innovation and use of best practices by Council and Staff |

D. Environmental Impacts

None

E. Financial Impact

If approved by Council, a subsequent Report will be submitted by Staff that includes further details and a proposed fees and charges by-law.

If approved, there would be municipal revenue generated through fees and through possible rental of recreational facilities.

F. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

For more information, please contact:

Corrina Giles, Town Clerk
cgiles@thebluemountains.ca
32 Mill Street, Box 310
Thornbury, Ontario
N0H 2P0
Tel: 519-599-3131 ext 232
Fax: 519-599-7723