Staff Report
Planning and Development Services – Building

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: April 21, 2020
Report Number: PDS.20.38
Subject: Permit & Inspection Assistant 24-month Contract
Prepared by: Tim Murawsky, CBO, Manager Building Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.20.38, entitled “Permit & Inspection Assistant 24-month Contract”;

AND THAT Council direct staff to proceed with Option 4 as outlined in PDS.20.38

B. Overview

During the initial budget deliberations related to Budget 2020, staff requested Council to approve the conversion of the current Permit & Inspections Assistant contract to position to a full-time permanent position. The basis of this was captured in the associated Budget Addition sheet and was largely based on the continued need for assistance in scheduling inspections and other associated duties for the Building Division. Council has requested that all budget addition, projects and plans valued over $50,000 should come back to Council for further consideration. While the administrative efficiencies with retaining this role remain, the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the building industry are not yet fully understood. However, the current contract expires in May 2020. As such, staff are bringing this report forward to ensure stability remains within this position.

Options or Solution Analysis

1. Status Quo. The Town would continue operating with the existing 24-month contract position until the contract expires in May 2020.

2. Extend the current contract position for another 12 months.

3. Extend the current contract position for another 18 months.

4. Extend the current contract position for another 24 months.
C. **Background**

Currently the Building Department is staffed with an administrative staff consisting of an Administrative Assistant for Building and Development Engineering Services with shared services between the Building Services Division and Engineering Services Division, a Building and Zoning Co-Ordinator, and a 24-month contract position for Permit and Inspections Assistant. The current 24-month contract for the Permit and Inspections Assistant expires in May 2020.

The Building Services Division would like to extend the existing 24-month Permit and Inspection Assistant contract position for an additional 24 months, effective upon the expiry of the existing contract.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19 and its associated restrictions, the Town of the Blue Mountains continued to experience significant growth of residential subdivisions, the redevelopment of existing buildings and the increase in commercial activity. Building growth in the Town was projected to continue well beyond 2022, based on the number of developments that were existing, under construction or being proposed. As a direct result of the added developments, the Building Services Division is experiencing significant increases in the number of building permit applications for the construction of new buildings, renovations, decks, accessory buildings and sewage systems. Despite the restrictions imposed by the Province to help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, Building staff continue to receive a significant volume of work through building permit applications and the review of associated plans. While no new building permits are being issued in accordance with the Provincial Order that came into effect at 11:59pm April 4, 2020, at the time of writing this report, inspections continue to occur with the appropriate health and safety precautions in place, on unoccupied and vacated structures provided the construction work meets the terms of the Provincial Order. More information on Building Services activities and business continuance is available at [https://www.thebluemountains.ca/covid-19.cfm](https://www.thebluemountains.ca/covid-19.cfm)

Building activity increases the demand on staff time for the intake of permit applications, permit issuance and scheduling inspections. The Ontario Building Code requires municipal building department administrative staff to issue a formal response to applicants within 2 days of receipt of a permit application, to confirm whether the application is complete or if more information is required. Historically, permit applications have placed a strain on meeting this timeline, resulting in the creation of this position. Continuing this 24-month contract roll will provide stability within the Building Services Division to continue to meet the current and future demands placed on the division.

D. **Analysis**

The extension of the 24-month contract position will assist the Building Services Division in retaining experienced and qualified staff for an extended length of time.

Option 1 has no additional costs to the town. Department operating expenses would decrease at the end of the contract in May 2020. The loss of this position is of significant concern since it
would increase the workload on existing staff members and cause response times to be greater than the Building Code legislated timelines.

Option 2 and Option 3 maintain similar annual expenses as Option 4 but provides less staff stability in a role that is required to assist the department in meeting its legislated timeline requirements. Furthermore, continuance with the position will be extremely important if the pace of building picks up after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Based on the volume of applications being received at this time, there is little evidence of a reduction in desire for building activity. However, it is acknowledged that the longer current pandemic restrictions are in place for an extended period of time, or if restrictions get tighter, impacts on the building and development industry may occur.

Option 4 would maintain similar expenses as occurred in 2019 and enable the Building Services Division to operate within the legislated timelines and provide a continuing level of service expected from the building community.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #1 To Be an Employer of Choice
Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

None

G. Financial Impact

The extension of the current contract another 24 months to May 2022 would result in no additional annual operating expenses relative to 2019 costs. The Building Reserve Fund can support this position if current revenues are not sufficient.

H. In Consultation With

Jennifer Moreau, Director of Human Resources
Ruth Prince, Director of Finance & IT
Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required.
Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Murawsky
cbo@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

1. None

Respectfully submitted,

______________________________
Tim Murawsky
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Nathan Westendorp, RPP, MCIP
Director of Planning and Development Services

For more information, please contact:
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