



Staff Report

CAO

Report To: Council
Meeting Date: March 6, 2017
Report Number: FAF.17.36
Subject: Participating in Environmental Scan as basis to re-assess Grey County's Role re: Library Services
Prepared by: Troy Speck, CAO

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive report FAF.17.36 entitled "**Participating in Environmental Scan as basis to re-assess Grey County's Role re: Library Services**";

THAT Council direct Town Staff to participate in discussions with the County CAO, Kim Wingrove, aimed at determining whether there may be any role for the County in assisting lower tier municipal libraries to improve services and/or operational efficiencies;

AND THAT Council request and encourage the L.E. Shore Library Board to reconsider their position, and that the Board and its staff participate in discussions with the County CAO, Kim Wingrove, aimed at determining whether there may be any role for the County in assisting lower tier municipal libraries to improve services and/or operational efficiencies.

B. Overview

This report is intended to provide Council with additional information regarding the County's proposed environmental scan of library services across Grey County.

C. Background

On January 26, 2017, County CAO Kim Wingrove brought forward to County Council Report CAOR-CW-04-17. A copy of that report is attached as Appendix "A" to this report.

As a result of that report, County Council passed the following resolutions:

"THAT Report CAOR-CW-04-17 Reassessing Potential of Grey County Role in Provision of Library Services be received; and

THAT Council direct the CAO to prepare an updated environmental scan of library services and an assessment of the merits of proceeding with a more comprehensive library services project for Council's consideration in March 2017."

On February 1, 2017, Staff at Town of The Blue Mountains sought direction from Council regarding participating in the aforementioned environmental scan. At that time, The Blue Mountains Council directed that the Town staff report be received, and further directed:

THAT Council direct Staff to bring a further report to Council at the first available opportunity regarding the Grey County motion regarding provision of library services;

AND THAT, in the interim, Council direct staff not to provide information regarding library services pending further direction from Council.

This report is the “further report” Council requested.

As further background, on February 16, 2017, the Board for the L.E. Shore Library passed a resolution stating as follows:

THAT The Blue Mountains Public Library Board direct the CEO to formally respond to Grey County confirming that The Blue Mountains Public Library Board will not participate in future Grey County reviews regarding the provision of Library Services.

D. Analysis

It is our understanding that some concern has been expressed that, with this project, the County is attempting to take control of library services across the County. However, in report CAOR-CW-04-17, the County’s CAO makes it very clear that the goal of the exercise is to identify potential collaboration opportunities between municipalities:

“The proposed environmental scan would provide information to Council regarding current service delivery metrics across the county as well as any planned capital investments or service enhancements and note where there may be economies of scale or efficiencies to be gained through collaboration.”

County Report CAOR-CW-04-17, at p. 3

In response to inquiries from Town staff for more information, the County CAO responded in a February 3, 2017 e-mail (see attached to this report as Appendix “B”), and confirmed that her assignment is to speak with those who are providing library services including municipal staff, library board members and staff in Grey and neighbouring counties, SOLS representatives, etc. to understand the services they provide, services they are planning or would like to add, and their assessment of public demand. She intends to summarize all of the information and report back to her Council, ideally later this spring. She hopes the report will point out opportunities for the County to assist with improving service delivery and meeting public demand for library service. It will be up to County Council to determine whether they wish to pursue any of the options identified and whether they wish to set up a more formal project in that regard.

Further, at a County CAO's meeting on February 17, 2017, the County CAO reiterated that she has no mandate from her Council, other than to look at library services in Grey and neighbouring counties and try to identify whether there are any areas/roles for the County to provide support or do something to help other library services be more efficient.

In addition to all of the above, it should be highlighted that a key component of the Town's current strategic plan (see report section: "The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan", below) is direction from Council to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities with a view to identifying potential opportunities to improve services and/or create efficiencies. This Council direction has also been a component of previous strategic plans for the Town. Refusing to participate in the type of environmental scan now being considered by the County in this instance, would appear to fly in the face of these long-held principles of research and collaboration. Also, Council has recently requested that the County join the Town collaboratively in facilitated discussions aimed at addressing local concerns regarding the Town's share of the County levy. Asking to work collaboratively with the County in one instance, but refusing to do so in another, would appear to be sending mixed messages.

For all the reasons outlined above, it is recommended that the Town participate in the County's environmental scan. It is unfortunate that the Library Board has already chosen to forego any participation, apparently without the benefit of the additional information Council requested. Perhaps a Council resolution, requesting that the Board reconsider its position and participate in the environmental scan after all, might be well received.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal # 2 Engage our Community and Partners – we will continue to build our partnerships with others within the municipality and beyond

Objective: Strengthen Partnerships

Action: Work collaboratively with other levels of government and municipalities and private partnership to seek opportunities to share information, services and equipment in an effort to maintain and improve service levels and reduce costs.

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence

Objective: Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

Action: Engage the County in discussion of road maintenance responsibilities and a reduced County levy or increased County capital expenditure in The Blue Mountains

F. Environmental Impacts

N/A

G. Financial Impact

Unknown

H. In consultation with

Shawn Everitt, Director of Community Services

Kim Wingrove, County CAO

I. Attached

1. Appendix "A" – County Report CAOR-CW-04-17;
2. Appendix "B" - Feb. 3, 2017 e-mail from Kim Wingrove to Shawn Everitt

Respectfully Submitted,

Troy Speck

Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:
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519-599-3131 extension 234



Committee Report

Report CAOR-CW-04-17

To: Warden Barfoot and Members of Grey County Council
From: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Meeting Date: January 26, 2017
Subject: Reassessing Potential of Grey County Role in Provision of Library Services
Status:

Recommendation(s)

THAT Report CAOR-CW-04-17 Reassessing Potential of Grey County Role in Provision of Library Services be received; and

THAT Council direct the CAO to prepare an updated environmental scan of library services and an assessment of the merits of proceeding with a more comprehensive library services project for Council's consideration in March 2017.

Background

In Ontario, the Public Libraries Act provides for the provision of universal access to public library services for residents. The Ministry of Culture has responsibility for the Public Libraries Act and provides programs and support for libraries under the Southern Ontario Library Service. Public libraries are created by municipal bylaws and governed by public library boards.

There are a number of governance models for library services operating across the province. An individual municipality can establish its own board as have Hanover, West Grey, Town of the Blue Mountains, Meaford, Southgate and Grey Highlands. A municipality can contract with another library board to provide library services for their residents. Municipalities can agree to provide services jointly under a union library board as have Owen Sound, Chatsworth and Georgian Bluffs. Many Counties provide library services to some or all of their member municipalities, either alone or jointly with another County. Perth County has local library boards and an incorporated nonprofit

organization Perth County Information Network that provides for a shared library management system or ILS.

There has been a long standing interest in exploring the costs and benefits of a county-wide public library system in Grey County. Since 2011, the question of a greater role for Grey County in providing library services has been discussed on three different occasions.

In 2014 when the question was last in front of Council, resolution CC34-14 recommending that the County not proceed with a county library feasibility study was passed. As noted in report CAOR-CS-01-14, without a compelling vision for service improvements and the support of all parties, e.g. member municipalities, library boards and library staff, the study was unlikely to be successful in developing a model for county library services that could be implemented. County Council encouraged local municipal councils and their library boards to work together towards a shared integrated information management partnership to improve the scope of and access to library services available to residents across the county.

According to the Ontario Public Library Statistics, in 2015 there were 30,486 active library cardholders from a population of 48,012 households in Grey County. Total operating expenditures for library services in Grey County totaled \$4.35M with \$192,532 (4%) contributed from the province and the remainder of the funds coming from municipal resources. Compared with the figures from 2010, operating expenditures have risen 22% while there has been an 11% decline in active cardholders. More research would be required to understand the factors contributing to these trends.

Library Services Continue to Evolve

The Ministry of Culture published *Third Generation Public Libraries* in 2008 which laid out the vision for libraries in the future.

"Public libraries of the future will be catalysts and leaders in community-based economic development. They will have a strategic role in knowledge-intensive industries like digital media. They will also be mainstays of community-based cultural planning and development. The amount of information available will grow, and much of it will be of questionable value and accuracy. Public libraries will play an increasingly significant role in the literacies of the twenty-first century that enable people to select, assess and use the information that will best meet their needs. As the number of technology devices increases, libraries will enable increased equality of access and participation and help people create and exchange new content. One of the ways libraries will do this is by collaborating, within the library sector and beyond, to develop stronger networks."

The 2014 provincial budget provided \$10M over three years in the Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund to assist libraries in moving towards this vision. Unfortunately, the deadline for applications has passed. Our neighbouring counties of Wellington and Simcoe used provincial funding to support the purchase of internet hotspots that they could lend out to patrons who lacked access to internet capability at home. In some communities, libraries have become hosts to Maker Spaces, Digital Media Labs, Digital Learning Centres, Self-Publishing Centres, Recording Studios and host leading edge technology like 3D printers.

The City of Pickering was one of the communities who, along with Grey County that was recently selected as one of the world's Smart21 Communities of 2017. The selection process focused heavily on Pickering Public Library's contribution to creating a smart community through access to technology and skills training.

The proposed environmental scan would provide information to Council regarding current service delivery metrics across the county as well as any planned capital investments or service enhancements and note where there may be economies of scale or efficiencies to be gained through collaboration.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

There are no legal or financial considerations with the recommendation as drafted. The proposed environmental scan and preliminary assessment could be completed by the Chief Administrative Officer with assistance from County staff and the participation of library services stakeholders.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Library Services and supporting digital literacy and connectivity is part of Goal 1, Growing the Grey County Economy. The evaluation of a potential role for the County in library services contributes to Goal 3. Excellence in Governance and Service.

Attachments

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Wingrove
Chief Administrative Officer

From: Wingrove, Kim [mailto:Kim.Wingrove@grey.ca]
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2017 9:01 AM
To: Shawn Everitt <severitt@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: RE: Provision of library Services

Appendix B

Hi Shawn. Thanks for your note. I hope I can help to clarify the intent of the County's library discussions.

The amended resolution that was passed reads:

**CW-10-17 Moved by: Councillor Clumpus Seconded by: Councillor Burley
That Report CAOR-CW-04-17 Reassessing Potential of Grey County Role in Provision of Library Services be received; and
That Council direct the CAO to prepare an updated environmental scan of library services and an assessment of the merits of proceeding with a more comprehensive library services project for Council's consideration.**

My assignment is to speak with those who are providing library services including municipal staff, library board members and staff in Grey and neighbouring Counties, SOLS reps, etc. and understand the services they are providing, services they are planning or would like to add and their assessment of public demand. Also, Perth County has gone to tender for a new ILS and I will speak to them about their experience with their not for profit corporation and with that procurement.

I intend to summarize the information gathered and bring a report back to Council (maybe in May?). At this point, I believe the report will point out opportunities for the County to assist with improving service delivery and meeting public demand for a seamless library service if/where they exist. It will be up to Council to determine whether they wish to pursue any of these options and set up a more formal project.

Happy to answer any other questions.

Kim Wingrove
Chief Administrative Officer
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