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To: Mayor and Council

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RE: Records Management Plan

AIM

To provide the Mayor and Council information to recommend and establish a Records Management Plan to include electronic records and accessible documents.

BACKGROUND

The *Municipal Act, 2001* (the “Act”) outlines the requirements for a municipal records retention program. Section 254 (1) provides that: a municipality shall retain and preserve the records of a municipality and its local boards in a secure and accessible manner, and if a local board is a local board of more than one municipality, the affected municipalities are jointly responsible for complying with this subsection.

Section 254 (9) addresses the requirement to retain records in a secure and accessible manner: accessible manner means that the records can be retrieved within a reasonable time and that the records are in a format that allows the content of the records to be readily ascertained by a person inspecting the records.

Additionally, recent legislation changes require that municipalities take measures to preserve records in accordance with applicable rules.¹ These same changes also make it an offense to willfully destroy records with the intent to deny access to records. Upon conviction, a fine of up to \$5,000 may be levied.

The Ontario Municipal Records Management System (“TOMRMS”) is a centralized classification system, used by 250 municipalities across Ontario to assist with the ongoing legislative obligation to preserve municipal records. Locally, this software is used by the City of Windsor, the County of Essex, and the Town of Tecumseh. The Town of LaSalle will be implementing in 2017 and the Town of Leamington is currently investigating its use.

¹The *Public Sector and MP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* is the legislation which amended the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*

A record is any record of information however recorded, whether in printed form, on film, by electronic means or otherwise and includes documents such as, correspondence, memoranda, video/audio recordings, diagrams, pictures, etc.² A sound records management program enables the municipality to: i) maintain control over this valuable corporate asset through its lifecycle (creation, active use, inactive use, and destruction or archival preservation); ii) comply with legislation, and iii) support governmental accountability and transparency initiatives.

By-law 93-2003 establishes the retention periods for the Town's records. The current record management system has not been reviewed or revised since its inception 10 years ago. It was only recently, that the by-law was amended to permit the electronic destruction of Town records once the retention schedule expires.³

DISCUSSION

The Corporate Services department is responsible for the Town's records and extensive research has been undertaken to review and improve upon the current system. As mentioned above, By-law 93-2003 has not undergone a comprehensive review since inception.

The Town uses Laserfiche to manage the corporation's electronic files. Unfortunately, there is no uniform process to store records and each department employs its own individual filing system. This causes issues around the retrieval, tracking and duplication of records. Given the lack of clear guidelines most staff find the Laserfiche system challenging.

The Records Management Plan proposed below is designed to share information amongst departments while securing sensitive information within departments. It is expected that this plan will improve efficiency in record retrieval, increase staff searching capabilities through proper indexing, and provide protection and support in litigation.

As part of the review, Administration is recommending the purchase of TOMRMS. This software is a file classification system that works in conjunction with Laserfiche. It can index files through department headings, document type, subtype, search parameters and security options. This ease of use program allows the user to reduce search time through the ability to add searchable words, retention periods, and notify users the types of records to file in a specific heading. These additional tools will increase employee collaboration and workflow efficiency across the organization. Furthermore, this software provides annual updates on any legislation changes which is a feature that is not offered through Laserfiche.

² *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,*

³ Town of Kingsville By-law 89-2016

The Records Management Plan proposed is as follows:

Phase One (6-8 months):

1. Performing file inventories in Laserfiche. Currently, we have two office support staff working one day a week towards compiling an inventory of all records in Laserfiche. Preliminary findings indicate the majority of documents need to be rescanned or destroyed.
2. Perform destruction of documents through the Town's retention schedules and record destruction (4 to 6 months).
3. Develop a new standard operating procedure for destruction of electronic records.

Phase Two: System Upgrade (1-1.5 years)

1. Purchase software and installation- TOMRMS. All information received to date indicates that TOMRMS is compatible with Laserfiche. For paper records TAB labeling software will allow for electronic and paper documents to coordinate.
2. Develop a new Records Retention By-law to reflect the needs of administration and current legislation.
3. Create Records Management Team- Individuals will be trained and be experts with TOMRMS. It is intended that the team will meet on a monthly basis during this phase, and as necessary thereafter, to discuss success and to derive solutions to challenges that they have encountered.

Phase Three: Implementation of New Records Management System (1.5 - 2 years)

1. Train all staff on TOMRMS and Laserfiche changes
2. Inventory the vault and physical files to coordinate with TOMRMS classification.
3. Address any ongoing issues that arise during implementation.

Phase Four: Maintain and Update Records Management System (On-going)

1. Once the system is operating successfully an evaluation will be conducted by the Director of Corporate Services and the Deputy Clerk – Administrative Services to ensure continued success of the system.

Records Management is an ongoing process which must be controlled for both quality and accuracy. Records must be protected from premature destruction, managed in an efficient and cost effective manner and be easily retrieved when needed.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Encourage leadership and management that will provide direction and resources required to achieve our mission.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The financial implication for this plan is as follows:

Phase One: No financial implications

Phase Two: The financial investment is \$10,000 for software upgrades

Phase Three: Annual Maintenance fee for TOMRMS is \$300

CONSULTATIONS

The Senior Management Team

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives this report regarding the Records Management Plan and considers the request for \$10,000 to move forward with the Plan at an upcoming budget meeting.

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