

Increase in remuneration for council

Ward & Uptigrove Consulting and Human Resources (W&U) has recommended council consider an increase to overall council remuneration to meet the market average based on a comparative review of relative market data. The firm's recommendation would see councillor's salaries raised from the current \$8,000 annually to just under \$12,500; deputy mayor raised from \$9,000 per year to \$14,711; and the mayor's remuneration increased to \$20,874 from its current \$12,000 per year. W&U reminded council that equitable compensation for the responsibilities, duties, and services councillors perform and provide as representatives of the town, is not only essential, but a best practice as it attracts and retains interest in council positions.

Speaking to the consulting firm via conference call at the August 25th council meeting, Councillors asked for further background information on how the figures were determined. The firm explained that the seven municipalities chosen by council, based on comparable size and services offered to Shelburne, were used as comparators. Salaries were compared by position for all municipalities from their 2012 Statements of Council Remuneration and Expenses, and an average arrived at as a fair representation of an appropriate recommendation of remuneration for Shelburne Councillors. The comparators included the Towns of Mono, Perth, Espanola, Minden Hills, Stirling-Rawdon, Aylmer, and Hanover.

The firm suggested council may want to phase in the adjustment over the next four year term considering the significant gap between current council remuneration and market averages. They also recommended council consider indexing up by the annual Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) provided to the staff of Shelburne to ensure remuneration does not lag behind market. W&U recommended a market study in remuneration be conducted every four years to ensure council compensation was equitable. The firm did not recommend any changes to council benefits as those offered meet or exceed the majority of comparators in this study. By-law #38/2014 providing payment of the recommended remuneration, as of December 2014, passed first reading at Council Monday evening.

Concerning Dufferin Wind Power's ongoing construction of transmission lines beneath the Dufferin County rail bed that runs through the west end of Shelburne, Jennifer Willoughby Deputy Clerk of Shelburne says the company is currently about eight weeks behind schedule. After reviewing engineering submissions from S. Burnett & Associates, it appears the original construction time-line through Shelburne was four weeks with construction commencing June 9th. They are currently on their 12th week of work within Shelburne limits.

Council was asked whether there was concern about transmission pole holes for above ground lines which will be installed just outside of the town limits. The question referenced the Ministry of Environment's concerns in Melancthon for the possibility of surface water traveling into fractured bedrock through caissons and/or bore holes for the utility poles. Councillor Tom Egan noted that frac-outs had been a major concern for council during DWPI's construction through Shelburne and that there had been extensive documentation done by the town engineer, Stephen Burnett. Mayor Crewson, who had a pecuniary interest was not in the Council Chambers, but Deputy Mayor Ken Bennington commented that at this point council was just dealing with DWPI issues in the town boundaries, but that it was certainly worth discussing.

Dufferin Wind Power transmission lines to carry power from turbines in Melancthon will run underground through Shelburne from the 4th Line of Melancthon on the north west to approximately 30 feet outside of the town boundaries in the south, says council. A letter directed to the Township of Melancthon states that Dufferin Wind Power has been approached by the MOE regarding Melancthon utility poles and asked to come up with a methodology and implementation plan to prevent the transmission of surface water down to and/or into the limestone bedrock formation in those potentially vulnerable locations.

On the issue of municipal elections, Mayor Crewson spoke in some detail about the possible repercussions of campaign material in town sponsored events like the Fiddle Parade. The town solicitor has advised that the guide for municipal elections states that ineligible contributors to campaigns include events supported by the municipality such as the Fiddle Parade, and that if a complaint goes to the Compliance Audit Committee it can be submitted to the courts and result in heavy fines and penalties including the candidate involved being deemed ineligible to run in subsequent elections.

The next scheduled council meeting for the Town of Shelburne is September 8th at 7 p.m.

By Marni Walsh