

Correction: increase in remuneration recommended for council

Last week, the above headline was changed during the editing process, mistakenly reflecting that an increase in remuneration had passed at Shelburne Council. This was not the case. Ward & Uptigrove Consulting and Human Resources (W&U) conducted a comparative review of relative market data and recommended Council consider an increase to overall Council remuneration based on the market average. The firm's recommendation would see Councillor's salaries raised from the current \$8000 annually to just under \$12,500; Deputy Mayor raised from \$9000 per year to \$14,711; and the Mayor's remuneration increased to \$20,874 from its current \$12,000 per year just to meet the average salary in the current market.

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. Shelburne Council has not had an adjustment to remuneration since March 2005; that adjustment followed the same process which Council is following currently.

By-law #38-2014, providing for payment of the recommended remuneration, passed only the first reading at Council Monday, August 25th. Deputy Clerk of the Town of Shelburne, Jennifer Willoughby says, "Council's intentions are to give second and third readings to the By-law after the election," which takes place October 27. There is no requirement under the Municipal Act to hold a public meeting, but the Deputy Clerk reminds residents that "all council meetings are open to the public should they wish to attend." The By-law must pass 2nd and 3rd readings before being adopted, giving the public plenty of time to participate in the process, including debating councillor compensation during the election weeks that lay ahead. "It is my intent," says Mayor Crewson, "that the new council will approve, amend, or reject the third reading of the by-law. Obviously I take my direction from council, so it is what council wants, but I want third reading to be left for the new council."

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 Town of Shelburne website provides meeting times and dates as well as specific agenda items for all Council meetings: www.townofshelburne.on.ca or call 519-925-2600.

By Marni Walsh