

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, APRIL 10, 2001

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION (BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 27, 2001)

Recommendation

The Budget Sub-Committee recommends:

That the following report of the Director of Corporate Communications, dated March 27, 2001, be received and referred to the Operational Review Committee.

Report of the Director of Corporate Communications

The Director of Corporate Communications recommends:

That this report be received for information.

Background

At the Budget Sub-Committee meeting of February 26, 2001, the above position was deferred pending completion of the Operational Review, and a review of all communications functions.

A question was raised at that time, as to why the position had been filled on a temporary basis, prior to budget approval.

The need for this position is to provide administrative (secretarial and clerical) support such as research, drafting written material, assisting on projects, telephone back-up, photocopying, faxing, filing, etc. so that I may be freed-up to carry out the responsibilities of my position. I found that doing all of the day-to-day office work myself was seriously limiting the extent to which I could move forward on projects. I also found the unpredictability of media inquiries and issue management resulted in extreme difficulties with time management when I am working alone.

In the summer, it became necessary to obtain such help if the day-to-day work and project work was to be managed. At about the same time, the Real Estate Division moved to the first floor, removing one shared reception/office support position from the City Manager and Deputy City Manager's Office. It is important that someone be present in a receptionist position in the office at all times.

The incumbent was hired in September, on a temporary basis, and paid for through the Hydro Budget, to help support several initiatives including the extensive communication issues related to the Hydro amalgamation. It was also intended to provide back-up administrative/receptionist support to the City Manager and Deputy City Manager during support staff absences.

In September 2000, the full-time position was placed in the 2001 budget, where it received scrutiny throughout the budget review process, including being highlighted in the Budget Presentation to Budget Sub-committee. Upon expiry of the temporary position in December, the 2001 budget had still not been approved; consequently the temporary position was extended to the completion of the budget and operational review processes.

Understanding that the communications and organizational reviews may take several months, it was decided to retain the temporary position until Council had made its decision for two reasons: to maintain service levels and to avoid the lay-off and potential loss of a good candidate.

Attached is a summary of the various projects and duties I have carried out in the past year for the Corporate Communications functions, including projects slated for 2001, as well as my Council Liaison duties. Without administrative support, it would be necessary to defer several of these projects or refer them to other departments.

It should be noted that the coordination of the "City Page" in The Liberal newspaper was assigned to the Corporate Communications Department, subject to staffing approval in the budget. It was my intention to have the assistant do the vast majority of this work, which involves gathering and reviewing the ads, formatting the page, providing and receiving proofs from departments, seeking out "filler" material, and liaising with The Liberal on a weekly basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Rosati
Chair
Budget Sub-Committee