



Subject: Integrity Commissioner Appointment

Department: Corporate Services

Division: CPS

Report #: CPS-2024-050

Meeting Date: 2024-08-12

Recommendations

That report CPS-2024-050, Integrity Commissioner Appointment, be received; and

That Council pass a by-law appointing an Integrity Commissioner for a 5 year term commencing August 15, 2024.

Overview

Following a directive from Council on February 26, 2024, staff proceeded with a recruitment process to hire a new Integrity Commissioner in collaboration with the County of Dufferin and the Township of East Garafraxa. Principles Integrity, consisting of principles Mr. Jeffrey Abrams and Ms. Janice Atwood who bring over 35 years of extensive experience in municipal law, governance, and ethics, with a pragmatic, public interest-focused approach are being recommended to be appointed as Integrity Commissioner for the Town of Orangeville. Principles Integrity offers a lower fee structure than current services and a logical, verified approach to Integrity Commissioning services. The report recommends Council approval of the necessary by-law for their appointment.

Background

At its regular meeting on February 26, 2024, Council received [staff report CPS-2024-018](#) and directed staff to hire an Integrity Commissioner through a recruitment process as Orangeville's current Integrity Commissioner contract was coming to its end of term.

The Integrity Commissioner's role is to be responsible for administering the Councillor Code of Conduct by conducting investigations in an independent and neutral manner in accordance with the accountability and transparency provisions of the Municipal Act, 2001 and by providing advice to Council on the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.

All Dufferin County member municipalities were invited to participate in the recruitment process. The Town of Orangeville, County of Dufferin and Township of East Garafraxa were engaged in the process.

The recruitment ad asked candidates to provide the following:

- demonstrate an understanding of the role of a municipal integrity commissioner and experience in conducting investigations
- include a summary of their professional experience, which may be included by means of attaching a resume
- provide a service fee proposal for consideration

The recruitment advertisement was open for five (5) weeks and closed on Friday May 17, 2024. Promoted ads were placed on the AMCTO job board and LinkedIn.

Six (6) proposals were submitted, which was double the number of responses received through a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process held prior to the 2021 recruitment. Staff reviewed the proposal/resumes and held interviews with four (4) of the proponents on June 20, 2024. Interview questions were based on knowledge of role, confidentiality, capacity, training and value added.

Analysis/Current Situation

While all the proponents were suitably qualified, staff from all three participating municipalities are recommending Principles Integrity be appointed as their Integrity Commissioner. Principles Integrity is a partnership formed in 2017 to focus on the provision of Integrity Commissioner and municipal governance services through its two principals, Jeffrey A. Abrams and Janice Atwood.

Mr. Abrams and Ms. Atwood possess extensive knowledge and over 35 years of practical experience in municipal law, governance, procedure, and ethics, working with various levels of municipal and provincial governments. Their approach to providing advice as integrity commissioners is timely, pragmatic, and public interest-focused, based on their deep experience supporting municipal councillors and staff. They have significant expertise in conducting confidential investigations on sensitive and controversial matters, and are well-versed in administrative law, natural justice, fairness, due process, the law of evidence, and legislative interpretation.

Principles Integrity currently serves as Integrity Commissioner for over 60 municipalities (regions, counties, single tier, and lower tier) in Ontario. They have broad-based experience in the core functions of an integrity commissioner:

- Code and Policy Development
- Education and Training
- Confidential Binding Advice
- Solution Focused Complaint Investigation/Resolution

Corporate Implications

The current Integrity Commissioner Services Contract expires in August of 2024. The budget for Integrity Commissioner Services is allocated from within the Corporate Allocations – legal budget. In 2023, Integrity Commissioner fees totalled \$6558, however 2024 has already surpassed that amount. The amount fluctuates each year depending on the amount of code advice sought and the number and complexity of complaints received. Principles Integrity’s fee structure was the second lowest hourly cost of the proposals received and is lower than the current hourly fees incurred for Integrity Commissioner Services.

Conclusion

Principles Integrity is the recommended option by the staff who conducted the interviews from the County of Dufferin, Township of East Garafraxa and the Town of Orangeville. The County of Dufferin appointed Principles Integrity at their meeting held on July 11, 2024. Upon confirmation of appointment, staff will work with the Integrity Commissioner to update the Code of Conduct and schedule a refresher training as a joint initiative with participating municipalities to reduce costs and provide consistency for those members who sit on both County and Town Council.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Future-Readiness

Objective: Due Diligence – Confirm applicable governance and policy regimes.

Notice Provisions

Not Applicable.

Respectfully submitted,

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