

January 31, 2023

Re: Third Party Review—Implementation of Organization Review Recommendations

The Municipality of West Elgin applied and was granted funds under the Municipal Modernization Fund – Intake 1 in late 2019. This grant monies were used to conduct an independent third-party Organizational Review of Municipal Operations, and Robert J. Bryce was retained to conduct the Review. A Report was prepared by Mr. Bryce and presented to West Elgin Council on January 23, 2020, outlining 35 recommendations. This report formed the basis of applications for subsequent Municipal Modernization Fund Grants (Intake 2 and Intake 3) to support the implementation of the recommendations that related specifically to digitization and use of technology.

In 2020 Staff used the Ontario Invests – Municipal Modernization Grant Intake 2 funds and staff were able to purchase the PayWorks to automate the payroll system and CityWide to manage the Asset Management requirements.

In 2022 staff received the Ontario Invests – Municipal Modernization Grant Intake 3 – Implementation for the Service Modernization and Digital Transformation Project. This project undertook the digitization of records and automation of routine business processes, to realize efficiencies in time and resources.

Projects Funded Thru Municipal Modernization Grants

<u>Intake Number</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Amount of Funds</u>
Intake 1	Organizational and Service Delivery Review	\$20,000.00
Intake 2	Modernization of Asset Tracking, Payroll and Timesheet Processes	\$79,200.00
Intake 3	Service Modernization and Digital Transformation Project	\$132,288.00

The CAO/Treasurer and the Clerk have prepared a Summary Report that addresses the 35 recommendations and outlines the use of technology to generate efficiencies, supported by Intake 2 and Intake 3 grant allocations. Each recommendation that was fulfilled through the use of Municipal

Modernization Grant funds has been indicated within the report. The Summary Report also highlights future use of the acquired technology in targeted areas.

The Intake 2 and Intake 3 funds have been used to automate routine processes in Laserfiche and expand the use of CityWide Application, resulting in improved quality and efficiencies in staff resourcing and processing time.

Efficiencies achieved through the use of Payworks and Laserfiche have been accounted for by the CAO/Treasurer as follows:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Eliminated Full-Time Position	\$ 68,784.56	\$ 68,784.56	\$ 68,784.56
Laserfiche AP workflow	\$ 9,000.00		
Pay equity review		\$ 25,000.00	
Third party review		\$ 2,500.00	
Payworks - Service Fee	\$ 9,128.58	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Payworks - Punch clocks	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Savings	\$ 35,655.98	\$ 31,284.56	\$ 58,784.56

The Summary Report demonstrates the benefits derived in conducting the Organizational and Service Deliver Review (Intake 1); specifically, providing focus on key areas for modernization and enhanced service delivery for the Municipality. The allocated funds (Intake 2 and Intake 3) have been used to implement the recommendations or progress towards full implementation in the go-forward work plan.

Regards,



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Final Report on Municipality of West Elgin Modernization Grants

January 2023.

Background

The Municipality of West Elgin applied and was granted funds under the Municipal Modernization Fund – Intake 1 in late 2019. This grant was for conducting an independent third-party Organizational Review of Municipal Operations For this report West Elgin Council retained the services of Robert J. Bryce and was presented to West Elgin Council on January 23, 2020. The report provided at total of 35 recommendations which has been used as the basis for applying for subsequent Municipal Modernization Fund Grants to implement the recommendations. This update will provide a response to each recommendation as to its current status and the outcome of this recommendation.

Some of the recommendations have been fulfilled through subsequent applications to the Municipal Modernization Fund through Intake 2 and 3. Each recommendation that was fulfilled thru the use of Municipal Modernization Grant funds will be indicated within the report.

Projects Funded Thru Municipal Modernization Grants

<u>Intake Number</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Amount of Funds</u>
Intake 1	Organizational and Service Delivery Review	\$20,000.00
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Communication

1. Commence Regular Team Meetings

There are weekly Senior Management Team meetings and development meetings between the departments to ensure everyone is on the same page and discuss work that crosses departments.

Staff and the public have benefited from increased communication between the departments.

2. Develop and Implement Internal Communication Strategy

While there has been no formal written communication strategy produced by Senior Management, there has been an increase focus on communicating with staff thru face to face and technology.

The re-designed office allows for regular casual meetings between the staff, regardless of their location as the kitchenette area is shared by all staff. An effort has been made to take new employees around to be introduced to all staff face to face on their first day of work as part of the on-boarding process.

Using the electronic pay stubs to provide bulletins and Zoom to allow for all staff to join meetings, regardless of their location, ensures that information flows freely .

Regular staff meetings were started in all departments. This allows for open communication for each member of staff as to what they are working on, what projects require some assistance and provides information to the other staff as to what is happening.

3. Develop and Implement an External Communication Strategy

Similar to the Internal Communication Strategy, there has been no formal written document, there has been a concerted effort to ensure that the public is informed. Communication with the residents is generally a priority and a struggle for all Municipal governments, especially for smaller municipalities, with no need for a dedicated communications staff. The organizational review identified the benefit for a communications strategy, expanding of social media and website presence as well as utilizing website as a community information portal. A number of new policies and procedures have been put into place to ensure that public messaging is done consistently as well as taking advantage of all cost-effective tools available.

Council and staff adopted Hybrid meetings to allow staff and the public to have access to Council meetings, no matter if they can attend in person or not. The Council meetings are broadcasted live and recorded and placed on the municipal website and linked to the Council Highlights after the meeting. This is done to allow members of the public who may work during the daytime meetings to view what was discussed at the meeting. Council Highlights are sent internally as well as published on the municipal website and social media. The purchase of the equipment for the hybrid meetings was taken out of the Ontario Invests - Municipal Modernization Grant.

Staff used funds from the Ontario Invests - Municipal Modernization Grant to purchase the electronic signs that are in both villages, Rodney and West Lorne. These signs have proven to be a great asset for communicating with the public and the community in general has embraced use of these signs for events.

Staff have also utilized the partnership with the City of London Municipal Recycling Facility (MRF) to roll out the Recycle Coach Application. This App was provided at no charge to the partners in the MRF and provides emergency updates and other information both about the garbage and recycling collection but other municipal events or emergencies.

The expanded ways to communicate with the residents have been helpful, along with Facebook, website and direct mail outs as part of billing cycles have all been utilized to ensure that residents are up to date with the Municipal information.

4. Expand Social Media Presence and Promote Website as Community Information Portal

Staff have worked hard to make sure the public is aware of the functionality of the new website. This website allows for submissions of events to the website by the residents as well as having the public sign up for notifications that are posted to the website. Advertising has been done in mail out and across social media to get residents to sign up for information or to submit information that is then broadcasted to the residents who sign up for information. As listed in the above section, information is being sent out over multiple platforms so that residents can be as informed as possible.

Staff have worked with community groups to develop forms for signing up to their events as well as for some of the smaller groups to have pages on the website that are dedicated to them (Lawn bowlers) where they are able to post information exclusively to the dedicated webpage.

With the use of Intake 3 grant funds, the full implementation of the Laserfiche software will also provide a more fulsome experience on the website, with a community portal to submit applications and review older documents, such as by-laws and permits. This is being worked on as part of the Records Digitization Project and will continue into 2024. Currently, the most frequently used applications are in the process of being developed in the business process within Laserfiche and will then be made public facing on the website to kick off the processes.

Human Resources

5. Establish Regular and Timely Review of Corporate Policies and Processes

Staff have made a concerted effort to look at the policies each year. The CAO/Treasurer has reviewed the policies annually and there have been a number of new policies enacted and others amended. On average the Municipality has reviewed and brought forward to Council 7 policies a year for updates or as new policies.

6. Establish Regular and Timely Review of Job Descriptions

CAO/Treasurer and other management have been going thru job descriptions with staff as time allows. A consultant has been retained to train the staff about writing effective job descriptions and so those that need tweaking and or a full revamp will be tackled in early 2023.

7. Formalize an Onboarding Program for New Hires

A new hire package was created which contains policies and forms required for new hires. Health and Safety programs are also bundled together and assigned to employees as they come on board.

8. Create and Maintain an Employee Handbook

Due to the pandemic this has not yet been accomplished.

9. Formalize Succession Planning and Enhance Cross Training

Staff are routinely cross trained in other jobs to ensure the continuity of services to the public. As part of the third-party review of this report, succession planning and cross training is being undertaken.

10. Review Provision of Group Health Care Benefits

West Elgin formally joined the Elgin Group Benefit program in 2021. This allows West Elgin to leverage the group buying discounts of the rest of the County for benefit coverage and still provide group health care benefits customized to West Elgin staff. In joining this program the Municipality has been able to mitigate insurance increases seen across the sector.

11. Implement a Performance Management Program that is Coaching Focused

A new performance review form has been developed and used in the annual performance reviews for all staff. This form lists goals and achievements and allows for coaching on items achieved and not quite mastered. The Performance Management Program will be reviewed once the third-party compensation review is completed and job descriptions are up to date.

12. Plan for Employee Absences and Leaves

A staff calendar has been developed to ensure that all staff have access to who is away from the office and who isn't. This allows for better planning of staff absences due to vacations.

13. Share Team Successes and Challenges

This is an ongoing process.

14. Proactively Build Teamwork and Organizational Culture –

Staff are being recognized for extra efforts and work well done by giving them “shout-outs”, providing them with lunch celebrations, employee get togethers (summer picnic) and simple gesture of being thankful.

15. Soft Skills Training

Employees are being encouraged to sign up for development courses and webinars. This training requires employees to recognize the need to improve their performance and how it affects their day-to-day work. Staff have access to OSG online training portal and training is assigned based on roll within the municipality, including supervisor training, AODA training and customer service training.

Organizational Structure – CAO and Clerk

16. Reduce CAO Span of Control

The CAO/Treasurer has been appointed permanently and is working to off load responsibilities to appropriate staff. Revisions are being made to support changing workforce and service levels.

17. Assess Work for Appropriate Match

Jobs and workloads have been reviewed and reassessed during the past 3 years. Some positions have altered and been combined. Payroll has been outsourced to a third-party software system and duties reassigned at retirements and new staff hired. There has been turnover in staff and workloads and tasks are being reassessed regularly as job vacancies happen.

18. Expand Use of Technology with Existing Software

Staff have been maximizing the use of the Website Technology and have expanded into purchases of new software, such as Laserfiche, PayWorks and CityWide.

In 2020 Staff used the Ontario Invests – Municipal Modernization Grant Intake 2 staff were able to purchase the PayWorks to automate the payroll system and CityWide to manage the Asset

Management requirements. PayWorks allows for reduced paperwork as time sheets and printed paystubs. Citywide software use has been expanded into a public portal for service requests, by-law enforcement complaints, work orders, and with the Modernization Grant – Intake 3 funds will be further utilizing this product for Capital Budgeting and Forecasting.

In 2021 staff used the Ontario Invests - Municipal Modernization Grant to purchase Laserfiche Cloud Software. This is an enterprise content management system that allows for the storage, retrieval and management of documents as well automation of routine business functions.

In 2022 staff received the Ontario Invests – Municipal Modernization Grant Intake 3 – Implementation for the Service Modernization and Digital Transformation Project. This project undertook the digitization of records, automation of routine business processes, to realize efficiencies in time and money. The automation of the Accounts Payable Processing System from beginning to the end of the process has now taken place. This Business Process Automation, includes the scanning, filing and processing of all accounts payable invoices into a centralized records management system, populating meta data for search functions and keeping detailed records on the approvals process. The automation notifies staff of approvals required, and moves the documents through the approval system seamlessly, without the threat of lost paper. In the end there are detailed records of the approval of Accounts Payables and integration into the financial system, Keystone. Phase II of this project included the automation of the approvals from the signing authorities, both staff and council. This process allows for a final review of invoice coding and approval to pay the invoices. Staff are now emailed their invoices and reminders and these can be coded and approved from anywhere with internet connection. No longer do office staff have to track down outside staff to approve bills, nor do staff who work off site have to come into the office weekly to approve bills. Staff have found that processing the bills through this system is efficient with the drop down selections, with descriptions of the accounts as well as the reminders are welcome to ensure that invoices are paid in a timely manner.

Staff have begun the process of creating forms and business processes for the website through Laserfiche. These forms for public processes such as rezoning and applying for an entrance permit, will save staff time and through direct automation of the process and filing of the paperwork in the appropriate folders within the TOMRRMS System.

Laserfiche records management system was built to act more as search tool for the average user. The main interface is a home screen where the average user can input information in a search function and through the use of meta data all relevant documents can be found. The “backend” of Laserfiche as a records management system is handled mainly by the Clerks department and they are responsible for the scanning of documents and inputting of the metadata. A temporary staff member was hired to assist in the scanning and inputting of files into Laserfiche. While this has been a time consuming exercise to get the documents in, the detailed meta data and retention schedules will allow for better records management moving forward.

Organizational Structure – Utilities

19. Assess Need for Additional Resources for SMART Meter Installation

This project has been delayed due to the pandemic, however it will be considered in the upcoming year.

20. Formally Address OCWA Personnel and Equipment Concerns upon Renewal of Agreement

The renewal of the OCWA agreement has been completed with updated language.

Organizational Structure – Bylaw Enforcement, Drainage, Planning and Building

21. Develop Succession Plan for By-law Enforcement Officer Position

Initially the By-law Enforcement Officer position was posted externally, with no qualified applicants. In the end a third-party contractor was sought, with Tenet Security Group being the chosen contractor. This contract began in September of 2022 with up to 14 hours a week of services being provided.

22. Assess Opportunities to Expand Software Applications in Building Department

The Building department is now using the Cloudpermit Software, which allows for online permit submissions and easier review of the submitted drawings. Staff are working on e-transfers for payments and future uses of technology.

23. Upgrade Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping

This project is being lead by the County of Elgin as a county wide initiative to upgrade the GIS mapping.

Organizational Structure – PGTP

24. Assess Feasibility of Current PGTP Business Model

With the pandemic and the uncertainty around trailer parks, this has not been completed at this time.

Organizational Structure – Finance

25. Assess Work for Appropriate Match

Due to staff turnover, this is an ongoing process. This will be looked at in detail as part of the third party compensation review process.

26. Assess Opportunities to Expand Utilization of Existing and New Software Applications

Payworks payroll system was brought on board for the first pay cycle of 2022 and the Laserfiche automation of the Accounts Payable business process has provided efficiencies in staff time and allowed for redistribution of work loads. Staff are working on automation of more finance business processes. CityWide Application being utilized for multiple departments and public facing submissions.

27. Assess Feasibility of Current Service Ontario Business Model

Service Ontario business model when the report was written included one full time staff member who worked 35 hours a week and no back up. An assessment was done and in order to prevent loss of taxpayer money to support a full-time office, the hours were reduced to 20 hours a week as of January 2020. The hours being Monday and Tuesday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and Wednesday's 8:30 am to 1:30 pm with a half hour closure for lunch each day. During the pandemic when the Municipal office was closed for public access, the Service Ontario Office was closed. When it re-opened later in May of 2020, the hours were adjusted to Tuesday, Wednesday and half a day Thursday to avoid the required closures on Mondays for Statutory Holidays. While the pandemic has made assessing the feasibility challenging so a full review has yet to be completed.

Organizational Structure – Parks and Recreation

28. Assess Opportunities to Implement Technology

Under the new structure of Operations & Community Services, policies and practices have been standardized across the departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation and Utilities. This includes the use of CityWide to respond and track requests for service, maintain assets and track staff works.

29. Establish Proactive Programming to Drive Increased Utilization of Recreation Facilities

A Recreation Coordinator was hired in 2020, however during the pandemic recreation programming was virtually nonexistent. Now that the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, the facilities have returned to regular use. The facilities are booked quite regularly with a number of programs run by others as well as municipal programs. Further assessment of Recreation will be completed in early 2023, with a post COVID programming survey as part of the new term of the Recreation Committee.

30. Revisit Recreation Centre Fee Schedule

The Municipality has instituted pay for use for drop-in programs of \$2 to assist with building maintenance and rental fees have been clarified for user groups. The fees are looked at annually as part of the Fees and Charges By-law Review.

31. Establish and Efficiently Manage Hours of Operation of Arena

A new Ice User Policy was developed in 2021 and requires the pre-payment of ice times and that users submit ice time requests in August to allow for the development of an appropriate staffing schedule.

32. Consider Partnerships and Other Revenue Sources

Staff have partnered with ReactNow Training to offer a number of training courses, where residents pay the municipality, and we host the training and pay a fee to the trainer. These have proven popular. More opportunities like this are being explored regularly with the hopes of building a network of programs run by residents with the Municipality providing the space and assisting in collection of the fees.

Staff have also secured sponsorship for all public skating dates this winter, with a wait list to sponsor more skates as they become available. A similar plan will be followed for public swimming at the pool as well.

Organizational Structure –Public Works

33. Assess Opportunities to Expand Utilization of Existing and New Software Applications

Staff are now using the CityWide program for asset and time management. This program tracks the work assigned and completed as part of the asset management system. Citywide software implementation is on going. So far, we were able to implement Asset Manager, Service Order and Work Order modules. We started the project with a lot of assumptions and risks. We assumed that our information and resources will be consistent and available to provide required data. Unfortunately, with a limited staff availability, we tried to mitigate by ensuring multiple resources are available and up-to-date and able to make decisions. There is considerable work required to meet the Asset Management regulation deadline. Our plan is to provide training to the new staff and focus on additional asset categories not identified, implementation of a risk framework and lifecycle framework and merge multiple asset listings.

34. Consider Development and Sense of Ownership by Assigning Equipment to Individual Operators

It is not a feasible option to have a direct assignment for equipment, however where there is a possibility of choice, this is taken into consideration.

35. Establish Use of Visual Aids

Public Works Supervisor has developed a handbook for new employees which provides visual aids for routes and other tasks. Staff are trained using tools that meet AODA requirements and ensure inclusion for all levels of ability.

Work Plan 2023-2025

Item	Status	Projected Completion Date
Employee Handbook	In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies are being reviewed and updated regularly • On boarding package created 	End of 2023
Job Description Review	In progress	End of 2023
Laserfiche	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation thru Business Process creation within Laserfiche will be a continuous project to find efficiencies thru automation of routine processes • Scanning of old documents is approximately 75% complete • Uploading of documents into Laserfiche and applying metadata delayed do to staff redeployment in other areas • Automation of frequently used public forms process has started and is approximately 50% complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP phase 1& 2 workflow completed • Additional workflows to be created on an ongoing basis
CityWide Application	In Progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging the already purchased software of CityWide for Capital Budget Forecast and Annual Capital Budget • Build Capital Asset Database 	2024
SMART water meter installations	Ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transponders have been shipped and first routes set to be installed in first quarter of 2023. 	Rural Routes to be completed by end of 2023 and urban routes to be completed in 2024 and 2025
PGTP Business Model Review	Ongoing	End of 2024
Recreation Programming Review	Early Stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With new Council Term Recreation Committee is not yet running 	2023

Summary – Ontario Municipal Modernization Grant – Intake 3

Ontario Municipal Modernization Grant, intake 3 application and successful grant award was based on the Organizational Review completed by Robert Bryce Consulting in 2020. The grant was awarded for The Municipality of West Elgin Service Modernization and Digital Transformation Project, which encompassed the use of technology to modernize and find efficiencies through automation of routine business processes in Laserfiche, and to purchase software to find efficiencies in the creation and management of the Municipal Budget. Budgeting software that was originally proposed was not purchased, due to a realization that CityWide, which the Municipality already owned and was using for Asset Management, Route Patrols, Work Orders and Service Requests, had modules that can assist. Other municipality's that had purchased the proposed software have ceased using it. Through leveraging CityWide Asset Management and Work Orders, staff can create and maintain an up-to-date Capital Forecast and Capital Budgets annually. More work needs to be done within CityWide to ensure all aspects are up to date and are utilized to the fullest potential. Monies allotted towards the purchase of specific budgeting software are being redirected towards the final implementation of all aspects of CityWide application.