



The Corporation of the City of Elliot Lake

Staff Report

Report of the **Director of Public Works**
for the Consideration of Council

RE: The Addition of a funded Internship Position in the Plants Department

OBJECTIVE

To provide Mayor and Council with information on the addition of a funded Internship position in the Plants Department

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Staff report PL-01 dated October 5th, 2021 of the Director of Public Works be received;

AND THAT council approves the addition of an Operator in Training (1) year internship position in the Plants Department that is 50% funded through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and the municipal portion of salary and benefits of \$36,000 be approved as a 2022 operating expense from the User Pay – Water/Wastewater operating budgets.

Respectfully Submitted

Approved

Daryl Halloch
Director of Public Works

Daniel Gagnon
Chief Administrative Officer

October 5th , 2021

BACKGROUND

The City of Elliot Lake Plants department consists of a level 2 water treatment plant followed by a level 1 distribution system on the water side and a level 3 wastewater treatment plant followed by level 2 wastewater collection system. Plants staff are responsible for both the maintenance and operation of all 4 systems and must carry the appropriate licenses as stated in the Safe drinking water act under regulation 128 and 129 mandated by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. All operators in Elliot Lake must start out by writing a Ministry of Environment (Operator in Training exam) in all four subsystems that allows them to train under a higher licensed operator to achieve the mandatory amount of experience to challenge their level 1 exams. Regulation 128 and 129 of the Safe Drinking Water Act states that an Operator in training must have at least one year experience in each system (Water or Wastewater) to write and pass their level 1 exams and receive the license, which proves to be a timely process.

Currently the City of Elliot Lake Plants department is staffed with 4 licensed operators and 4 maintenance mechanics which handle the day to day operations and maintenance of all 4 systems all overseen by a Manager of Environmental Services

After further discussions with both the Manager of Environmental Services and the Manager of Human Resources, all parties agreed that a succession plan is needed to prevent short staffed situations. The department is also aware of a current operator looking to retire within the next year, which would find the department once again short staffed looking to recruit licensed operators to the area. After going over several options, it was decided upon to request approval from council for the addition of a 50% funded internship position in the department that would allow us to hire and train someone in the area interested in a career in the Water/Wastewater field.

ANALYSIS

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) offers a Northern Ontario Internship Program intended to strengthen Northern Ontario's competitive advantage and build economic capacity through attracting and retaining graduates in the North. The City of Elliot Lake, as a public sector organization in Northern Ontario, was eligible and has received approval for a conditional contribution of up to 50% of an intern's salary, to a maximum contribution of \$35,000.

Our application proposed a Plants Operator-in-Training internship under their priority economic sector of water technologies and services. The candidate for the position must be a university or college graduate, who has graduated in the last three years from a diploma or degree program and who is legally entitled to work in Canada. In addition, this position must provide the intern with first time employment in their field of study. Work must be provided for a 52-week internship period, which fit the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office requirement of one (1) year of operational experience for an Operator in Training to be eligible to write their Class 1 certification exam.

With CUPE Local 170's agreement to the Internship and the NOHFC funding, the Plants department is better positioned to attract and retain a candidate that wishes to develop a career in Water/Wastewater, with a possible opportunity for a full time permanent position in the near future.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Financial impact to the City would be the remaining salary and benefits of the internship position not covered by the NOHFC funding program which amounts to an estimated total of \$36,000. This can be budgeted for in the 2022 water/wastewater operation budget

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Investing in employees to fulfill succession plans created for each department

SUMMARY

Approving the addition of a funded internship position in the Plants department will allow the department to train an individual, at a reduced cost, with the ultimate goal to have them licensed in both the Water and Wastewater systems.