

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL

OBJECTIVE

To provide Council with information re. the Municipal Modernization Grant Review Stream Program and the need to pass a bylaw to facilitate funding for a regional review with 4 neighbouring municipalities.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report of the Special Projects manager dated September 8th, 2021 be received;

AND THAT Council execute the agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to receive funding on behalf of the city of Elliot Lake and four neighbouring municipalities for the Municipal Modernization Review Stream Program.

Steve Antunes
Special Projects Manager



Daniel Gagnon
Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) launched a funding program called the Municipal Modernization Review Stream in the spring of 2021. The 100% provincial funding is designed to help municipalities improve / streamline service delivery and/or seek savings and efficiencies by collaborating.

The funding program comes at an opportune time, since the CAO/Clerks of several municipalities along the North Shore have been meeting regularly for approx. 3 years to improve communication and coordination on matters of mutual interest.

MMAH funding program excerpt:

The second intake will allow municipalities to benefit from provincial funding to conduct third party reviews as well as to implement projects to increase efficiency and effectiveness and lower costs in the longer term. I also want to encourage you to work with your neighbouring municipalities to find innovative joint projects that can benefit each of you. The government is excited to learn about your project applications that support the following priorities:

- Digital modernization
- Service integration
- Streamlined development approvals
- Shared services/alternative delivery models

Eligibility criteria:

A review stream project must be a review of municipal service delivery or administrative expenditures by an independent third-party reviewer for the purpose of finding savings and efficiencies.

- a review of service delivery and modernization opportunities; or
- a review of administrative processes to reduce costs.

ANALYSIS

After consultation with neighbouring communities, Elliot Lake took the lead and submitted an application on behalf of the City, the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers, the Municipality of Huron Shores, the Town of Blind River and the Town of Spanish.

The application was successful and the City of Elliot Lake will be the lead for the administrative processes surrounding the project (ie transfer payment agreement with Province, RFP and contracting the consulting firm and disbursing funds accordingly). The 5 municipalities will work together to select a firm and work with the firm throughout the exercise.



The review will provide a report outlining where efficiencies can be found and steps for implementation. The 5 municipalities have been discussing various concepts. The scope of the application includes a review of: IT, by-laws and bylaw enforcement, landfills, building services.

The expected outcome includes but is not limited to the realization of cost savings in the five municipalities by sharing knowledge, best practices and if deemed appropriate by sharing/outsourcing capacity and staff. It is not the expectation that that this study/report would lead to anything remotely close to amalgamation, simply a way that the communities can work together to achieve best pricing through economies of scale and elimination of duplication of work.

The 5 municipalities are not bound to follow the recommendations, but presumably if they are cogent and well researched they may very well be worth pursuing. If and when efficiencies require Council's input or approval, they will return to the Council table in due time.

The Transfer Payment Agreement must be submitted by September 20, 2021. The final report must be completed by January 31, 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The grant covers 100% of the study costs up to \$500,000. The grant does not cover the costs of staff time to administer the project.

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The recommend changes align with the following strategic goals:

- Optimize the Waste Management System
- Initiate the outreach to neighbouring communities to achieve common goals.
- Identify projects that require partnerships and the communities that will be impacted.
- Foster good relationships with neighbouring communities.
- Review and update by-laws, policies, and procedures
- Conduct service level and delivery review.

SUMMARY

Staff is recommending that Council enter into an agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to receive funding for the Municipal Modernization Review Stream Program to facilitate the regional review of cost savings and partnering opportunities.

