



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Finance and Labour Relations Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Mayor Ritsma, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Henderson, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Dave Bush - Director of Human Resources

To watch the Committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgement

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Adoption of Addenda to the Finance and Labour Relations Agenda

Motion by

THAT the Addenda to the Finance and Labour Relations Committee Agenda dated January 9, 2024, be added to the agenda as printed.

4. Treasurer Update

The Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer to provide an update on the draft 2025 Budget.

5. Hearing of Deputations and Presentations

None scheduled.

6. Reports

6.1 United Way Request to Waive Facility Fees (FIN25-001)

4 - 5

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "United Way Request to Waive Facility Fees" (FIN25-001), be received;

AND THAT direction be provided regarding the facility rental fee waiver request in the amount of \$875 for use of the Agriplex fieldhouse on March 15, 2025.

6.2 Infrastructure Services Supporting Information for 2025 Draft Budget Deliberations (FIN25-002)

6 - 9

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Infrastructure Services Supporting Information for 2025 Draft Budget Deliberations" (FIN25-002), be received for information.

6.3 Building and Planning Services Backflow Prevention Additional Information (FIN25-003)

10 - 14

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Building and Planning Services Backflow Prevention Additional Information" (FIN25-003), be received for information.

7. **Draft 2025 Budget Deliberations**
8. **Adjournment to In-camera Session - 6:30 p.m.**

Motion by

THAT the meeting adjourn to an In-camera Session to discuss:

4.1 Confidential Verbal Update of the Chief Administrative Officer with respect to a Shared Services Agreement (CM-25-01) - Litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the municipality or local board (section 239.(2)(e)); Advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege including communications necessary for that purpose (section 239.(2)(f)); and A position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board (section 239.(2)(k)).

9. **Draft 2025 Budget Deliberations Continued**
10. **Upcoming Budget Meeting**

To be considered by Committee.

11. **Adjournment**

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 9, 2025
To: Finance & Labour Relations Committee
From: Tim Wolfe, Director of Community Services
Report Number: FIN25-001
Attachments: None

Title: United Way Request to Waive Facility Fees

Objective: To consider the request to waive fees for use of the Agriplex fieldhouse on March 15, 2025, for a United Way fundraising pickleball tournament.

Background: The United Way have witnessed a growing demand for support in every area that they serve within our community. Increases in food insecurity, homelessness, and intimate partner violence underscore the urgent need for action. The United Way plays a pivotal role in funding services through local organizations, reaching over 26,000 individuals across Stratford and across Huron and Perth counties each year.

The upcoming Pickleball Tournament will raise funds to support essential local initiatives, including the Urgent Needs Fund and the Stratford Connection Centre. The Connection Centre provides a vital drop-in space for individuals experiencing homelessness, offering trauma-informed care, substance use support, and mental health counseling. Last year alone, the centre served 312 individuals in need.

Stratford Pickleball Association in partnership with the Chairs of United Way Campaign are seeking the support of the City of Stratford to donate the courts to ensure that the event can maximize the proceeds for the United Way. With an ever-increasing demand for all programs in our community, events such as these help to get the campaign over the finish line.

Analysis: Historically, requests of this nature were assessed through the Community Grants program as staff do not have authority to waive fees. This is still the case, however, for tracking purposes, fee waivers are now tracked through the facility budgets.

The estimated revenues that would be waived for the tournament is \$875.

Should the Committee and Council wish to support this request, there is no tax levy impact, rather the impact is measured in lost revenues due to reduced court availability for fee-paying users.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

If approved the financial impact is as noted above, with reduced revenues by \$875.00. HST does not apply in the case of fee waiver entries.

Insurance considerations:

The facility user will be required to purchase facility user insurance or provide coverage naming the City as additional insured of not less than Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000).

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together for Greater Impact

This report aligns with this priority as the waiving of the fees would assist the United Way in serving those in need within the community. The City is a funding supporter of the United Way for many years.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "United Way Request to Waive Facility Fees" (FIN25-001), be received;

AND THAT direction be provided regarding the facility rental fee waiver request in the amount of \$875 for use of the Agriplex fieldhouse on March 15, 2025.

Prepared by: Tim Wolfe, Director of Community Services

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 9, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Committee
From: Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure Services
Report Number: FIN25-002
Attachments: None

Title: Infrastructure Services Supporting Information for 2025 Draft Budget Deliberations

Objective: To provide Council with information regarding inquiries related to the expansion initiative recommended in the draft 2025 budget for Communications Coordinator and Community Energy Liaison positions, as well as additional information around Fleet operations.

Background: At the December 9, 2024 Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting deliberating the 2025 Draft Budget, a question arose regarding the feasibility of combining the recommended expansion initiative of Communications Coordinator that of Community Energy Liaison, or creating a joint communication position from the proposed Communications Coordinator initiative.

Further, questions arose around Fleet operations that are addressed in this report as well.

Analysis:

Communication Coordinator vs Community Energy Liaison

Combining the roles of Climate Coordinator and Communications Coordinator offers some potential benefits as well as challenges. Creating a new position that integrates these roles furthers support for both effective Corporate communication and climate action initiatives.

Each of the roles requires specific knowledge and a specialized skillset. Corporate communications requires a generalized knowledge of all municipal programs to perform comprehensive communication strategy roll-outs, while climate-related programs emphasize communication strategies to inform stakeholders, foster community engagement, and build support. Corporate communications demand proficiency in

crafting and delivering effective messages to reach a broad subset of the City's residents, while climate coordination involves technical expertise in sustainability. Finding the right combination of education and experience and attempting to balance the diversity of these responsibilities are likely to stretch resources thin and lead to challenges in prioritizing communications for the City's many priorities. Additionally, the combined workload will limit the ability to focus deeply on either area with the risk that neither area has the expected outcomes.

Staff maintain that both proposed expansions are necessary to meet the City's strategic priorities. A shared position would not effectively meet service expectations, and if a single position must be prioritized, Corporate Communications should take precedence. Corporate Communication is arguably the municipality's most vital function, enabling the rapid delivery of clear, comprehensive information to residents. This fosters trust, keeps the community well-informed, and empowers residents to engage with and respond to services and emerging situations.

If Council proceeds with only one combined position, Staff will look to revamp the position description reducing the scope of duties and responsibilities both within Corporate Communications and Climate Action roles. A title of Community Engagement Coordinator could be considered. This role could meet some (but not all) of the required corporate communications objectives and some (but not all) of the required Climate Action objectives which are outlined in both expansion initiative documents provided in the draft budget. The position would reside within the CAO's office and remain under the direction of the CAO.

To ensure that the prioritized position objectives can be met for both Corporate Communications and Climate Action initiatives, Staff will monitor the deliverables achieved and not achieved. If the position cannot adequately address these goals, Staff may make recommendations mid-year as to the focus of the position.

Green Municipal Fund (GMF)

After reviewing the funding application requirements, the funding is specifically targeted toward climate adaptation strategies. Staff contacted the Federation of Canadian Municipalities regarding the GMF and the possibility of including a shared service. The response received indicated that one or multiple Staff may be utilized to further Climate Adaptations strategies, indicating there is flexibility on how the funds may be utilized.

If the GMF funding application is successful, and Council does not proceed with the dedicated Community Energy Liaison position, Staff would recommend proceeding with consultant services to achieve requirements outlined by funding.

Staff Recommendation – Communication Coordinator and Community Energy Liaison

That Council approve both expansion initiatives – for Corporate Communications Coordinator and a Community Energy Liaison.

Fleet Expansion Initiative - Cargo Van Options and Pricing

In response to Council questions Staff reviewed pricing and operational considerations into the fleet options for the proposed Plumber and Electrician positions.

Pickup Truck with Cap

- Estimated Costs - \$85,000
- Estimated Lifetime Fuel Costs - ~\$40,000

Gasoline Cargo Van

- Estimated Costs - \$80,000
- Estimated Lifetime Fuel Costs - ~\$40,000

Electric Cargo Van

- Estimated Costs - \$95,000
- Estimated Lifetime Electricity Costs - ~\$5,000

The City's first fully electric fleet vehicle, a cargo van acquired in 2024 was for the Environmental Services division earlier this year. With a gasoline-powered cargo van also in use, direct comparisons can be made. The fuel and electricity estimates provided above are based on actual observations from the Environmental Services division.

Staff Recommendation

That Council approve electric Cargo Van expansions (2) for the Plumber and the Electrician positions, if approved.

Fleet Services – Fleet Utilization

Light duty vehicle sharing internally has proven effective over the past year but has been primarily limited within individual departments. Staff have initiated efforts to develop a fleet-sharing system that would enhance cross-departmental access to the fleet. The goal is to optimize fleet utilization and address gaps in fleet availability, particularly if the proposed acquisitions are not approved in the current budget cycle.

Financial Implications: As this report is prepared for supplemental information, there are no direct financial implications.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Enhance our Infrastructure

Fleet services are crucial for delivering municipal services efficiently. All departments require Fleet to provide services, and a well-maintained fleet ensures services are timely, and reliable. Fleet supports public safety, infrastructure maintenance, and community programs. Effective fleet management reduces costs, minimizes downtime, and enhances the overall quality of services provided to residents.

Work Together For Greater Impact

Effective corporate communication and collaboration are vital for a municipality to function efficiently and foster community trust. Clear, consistent and timely messaging ensures residents are informed, engaged, and able to access services. Working together across departments and with the public strengthens decision-making, promotes transparency, and builds a united community focused on shared goals.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Travel and Transport

Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.

Material and Products

Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.

Zero Waste

Reducing consumption, reusing and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Infrastructure Services Supporting Information for 2025 Draft Budget Deliberations" (FIN25-002), be received for information.

Prepared by: Taylor Crinklaw, Director of Infrastructure Services

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 9, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Committee
From: Adam Betteridge, Director of Building and Planning Services
Report Number: FIN25-003
Attachments: None.

Title: Building and Planning Services Backflow Prevention Additional Information

Objective: To provide additional contextual information to Council for the 2025 Budget deliberations, particularly the Expansion Initiatives for additional by-law enforcement positions recommended by the Building and Planning Services Department.

Background: At the December 9 budget meeting, and after considering various questions raised regarding the draft 2025 budget items, the following motion, among others, was made:

THAT the Backflow Prevention officer be referred to staff to provide an overview of the backflow prevention program.

In addition, much of the discussion around the additional by-law enforcement positions is based on the ability of Administrative Monetary Penalties, or "AMPs", to achieve greater compliance with City By-laws, but also to gain additional revenues from properties that are in non-compliance with By-laws. Following the information on the backflow prevention program, commentary will be provided on the City's ability to generate revenues through AMPs.

Analysis: Cross Connection By-law 50-2004 was implemented in March 2004 after an incident where soaps from a car wash entered Stratford's municipal water supply, posing a significant risk to public health. The by-law was adopted to provide a framework for the safe supply of water by requiring backflow prevention devices (BFDs) at sites where potential contamination hazards exist. These sites are generally commercial, industrial, and institutional sites, but also include multi-residential properties, and residential properties with lawn irrigation systems.

Since its inception, the program has grown significantly. At the start of 2024, there were approximately 450 properties on the Cross Connection Program list undergoing

testing. However, following a comprehensive audit of existing records and other potential properties in the City, it was determined that over approximately 900 properties now require monitoring, testing, or enforcement under the program.

The audit revealed several critical issues:

- Many properties with BFDs had not undergone testing in years.
- Testing records were incomplete or inaccurate, with missing information about devices installed on properties.
- BFDs were being replaced or installed without acquiring the necessary permits (the permit fee is \$130.00 per device).
- The Cross Connection Program list was outdated, with properties and devices not being adequately tracked.

These deficiencies are largely attributed to insufficient staffing resources. By-law Officers currently tasked with managing the program also handle all other by-law complaints and enforcement across the City, and this lack of dedicated attention has prevented the program from being run as it should, exposing the City to potential risks to its water supply and associated liabilities. More information is provided later in this report regarding insufficient staffing resources.

To ensure the program's effectiveness and to address current gaps, the duties of a dedicated Backflow Prevention Officer are to include:

- Cross-referencing test results and surveys with property records to ensure all devices (ranging from 1–70 per property) are accounted for, functioning properly, and are compliant with backflow prevention standards. Without this activity, gaps in record-keeping may leave untested devices undetected, posing a potential risk to water quality.
- Updating and maintaining the Cross Connection Program list to ensure an accurate inventory of properties and devices with BFDs. An outdated list undermines the City's ability to ensure proper compliance, track overdue testing, or identify properties requiring immediate attention.
- Ensuring permits are obtained for replaced or newly installed BFDs and issuing permits where required. Currently, some devices are being replaced or installed without permits, resulting in lost revenue for the City and no assurance that installations meet safety standards.
- Conducting on-site inspections for newly installed or replaced BFDs to confirm compliance with permits and CSA standards. These inspections are critical for verifying the proper installation and operation of devices, safeguarding the integrity of the water supply.
- Enforcing compliance by issuing orders, water shut-offs, and penalties such as late filing fees (\$100.00) or charges under the Provincial Offences Act when necessary. As the City begins implementation of Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs), enforcement capabilities should improve, allowing for quicker

resolution of non-compliance and less reliance on time-intensive court proceedings.

- Collaborating with other City departments and divisions (Building, Engineering, and Environmental Services – Water Divisions) to address backflow prevention requirements during new subdivision and infrastructure developments, including installations for temporary water bypasses during roadwork. Proper coordination ensures that compliance with backflow prevention standards is integrated into project planning from the start.
- Liaising with plumbing contractors to ensure installations meet CSA standards and providing technical expertise to contractors and property owners as needed. A lack of clear communication or oversight can lead to installations that do not meet the necessary safety standards.
- Issuing monthly reminder notices to over 75 properties due for testing to ensure timely compliance. Without consistent notifications, properties may inadvertently neglect their obligations, further delaying necessary testing.

None of these tasks are being conducted to the level required due to competing demands on existing staff who also handle all other by-law complaints and enforcement across the City. This lack of dedicated attention has left key elements of the Cross Connection Program under-addressed, including untested devices, incomplete records, and unpermitted installations. While the City continues to meet its overall obligations under By-law 50-2004, gaps in the program's administration increase the likelihood of non-compliance and diminish the ability to proactively mitigate risks to the municipal water system.

A dedicated Backflow Prevention Officer would ensure these important functions are carried out consistently and effectively, protecting the City's water supply, improving compliance with applicable standards, and safeguarding public health.

As noted earlier, insufficient staffing resources on the by-law enforcement front is the reason why additional positions, including a Supervisor of By-law and one additional By-law Enforcement Officer, have been identified as critical to the City's delivery of by-law enforcement overall. The City's by-law enforcement team currently consists of two dedicated officers, supplemented by a grant-funded Community Safety and Wellbeing By-law Officer. However, this staffing level is inadequate to meet the increasing demands of the community, including growing workloads, reporting and legislative requirements and the need for proactive enforcement measures.

To assess the adequacy of the City's by-law enforcement resources, a comparative analysis of similar municipalities was conducted. This analysis revealed that Stratford's by-law enforcement staffing levels, when measured as full-time equivalents (FTEs) per 1,000 residents, are significantly lower than what is typical in comparable small-to-mid-sized cities; generally, half the number of officers as what would be seen in other cities. This data underscores the need for additional staffing to ensure the City can continue to deliver timely and effective by-law enforcement/compliance services.

Lastly, the findings also confirmed that many other municipalities have adopted a by-law compliance supervisor or manager role, typically filled by an experienced by-law professional, rather than having by-law functions directly overseen by the Chief Building Official, Clerk, or similar positions.

Risk Considerations

- Failure to maintain an effective Cross Connection Program poses significant risks to the municipal water supply, with potential contamination affecting residents and businesses.
- Lost revenue from unissued permits and fines reduces the City's ability to recover current and future program costs. Non-compliance may also result in costs to the City for remedial actions.
- Inadequate management of the program could erode public trust and confidence in the City's ability to maintain essential infrastructure.

Summary

In consultation with Building, Engineering, and Environmental Services Divisions, the Building and Planning Services Director recommends for the Cross Connection Program to operate effectively and as originally set out by Council following the 2004 car wash incident, that a dedicated Backflow Prevention Officer is needed to address current and growing gaps in enforcement, record-keeping, and compliance. This position would also enhance public health, mitigate risks, and generate revenue through proper permitting and enforcement.

Administrative Monetary Penalties, or "AMPs"

The effectiveness of a right-sized By-law Division will be further benefitted once an AMPs program is implemented (AMPs cannot be effectively implemented with current staffing levels).

Once the required staffing is in place, implementing the AMP program is expected to take several months as processes, technology, and training are developed. Although precise revenue and cost implications are challenging to predict, the program is anticipated to generate meaningful revenue through penalties and licensing fees, particularly in areas such as short-term rental and bed-and-breakfast compliance. Initial projections suggest that first-year gross revenues from these sources alone could cover much of the program's operational costs, with potential surpluses depending on compliance levels and enforcement efforts.

The annual costs of running the program, in addition to the staffing (supervisor of by-law and additional by-law officer) will include administrative functions and necessary technology. The AMP program offers an opportunity to enhance the by-law enforcement service while creating a system that is both efficient and financially sustainable. As the program is rolled out, Staff will continue to evaluate its performance and adapt operational strategies to ensure its long-term success.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget: This report is for informational purposes relating to the 2025 budget deliberations so there are no financial implications to the current year operating budget to be reported because of this report.

Financial impact on future year operating budget: Given this report is for informational purposes relating to the 2025 budget deliberations, any decision made will affect future year operating budgets.

Insurance considerations: Insurance considerations for the Cross Connection Program include increased liability risks to the City in the event of water contamination due to non-compliance with backflow prevention requirements. Proper administration of the program, including regular testing and enforcement, reduces the likelihood of claims related to negligence or damages caused by water supply issues. Establishing a dedicated Backflow Prevention Officer would further mitigate these risks by ensuring program compliance and addressing gaps proactively.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Enhance our Infrastructure

This report aligns with this priority as investing in our infrastructure is to support the community's overall well-being.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Land and Nature

Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Building and Planning Services Backflow Prevention Additional Information" (FIN25-003), be received for information.

Prepared by: Adam Betteridge, Director of Building and Planning Services

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer