



TOWN OF MINTO

DATE: June 19, 2017

REPORT TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Bill White, C.A.O. Clerk; Matt Lubbers Recreation
Services Manager, Al Carr Facilities Manager

SUBJECT: Central Booking Update

STRATEGIC PLAN:

12.7 Demonstrate innovation in all aspects of municipal business acknowledging the importance of training, succession planning, transparency, communication and team-based approaches to municipal operations.

BACKGROUND

The maternity leave in Recreation began in June. The Palmerston Lead Hand assumed new duties in the office, and an existing operator in Palmerston added duties in absence of the Lead Hand. A facilities operator is hired full time on a one year contract to backfill during this temporary promotion. Incidentally, the Harriston Lead Hand is off on a health matter resulting from Volunteer Fire Fighter activities at the June 23 flood. This has put added pressure on Facilities and Recreation during the busy events season. This may require an interim solution to service events and activities in Minto this year.

In January of the Town changed its facilities booking processes directing customer service to administrative staff in the Recreation Services Department at the municipal office. This was supported by improved web presence that allows customers to check arena, playing field and facility bookings on line, and to file a booking through Town office staff. Previously most bookings were through the two Lead Hands headquartered at the Palmerston and Harriston Arenas. Availability of these staff for administrative functions is limited by their primary focus on maintenance work and scheduling.

Central booking is designed to improve customer service by making available administrative staff 40 hours a week to those wanting to book facilities. Staff at the Town office finalize bookings and sign facility use agreements. Bookings are then coordinated with Facilities staff who schedule personnel to work the event, and liaise with users to ensure their needs are satisfied during their booking. Council asked for an update on the status of this initiative after six months.

The C.A.O. Clerk, Facilities Manager, Recreation Services Manager and Palmerston Lead Hand/ Recreation Assistant met June 13 to review the status of central booking and assess resource levels needed to properly provide central booking. This included discussion of succession planning issues as some staff can retire within five years or less. Staff is to be prepared for increased responsibility when change occurs in these Departments.

COMMENTS

Staff believes regular facility users and less frequent customers are finding central booking to their satisfaction. They appreciate being able to check facility and park availability on the Town website, and to communicate with administrative staff during regular office hours. There is some concern that service might be impacted due to reduced contact with Facilities staff, but so far good coordination between staff at the office and staff in the facilities resulted in few problems. Discussion with users will be on-going as staff moves through the summer season into winter ice booking. An upgrade to the on-line facility schedule will be brought forward at 2018 budget to enhance customer access through the website.

It is suggested staff continue to work under the current structure for another year to assess whether long term changes to the overall organization are necessary. Ideas such as splitting parks into a separate role from facilities, increasing access to on-line facility booking, reconsidering cemetery maintenance and similar can be looked at internally with a view to setting a suitable resource level.

Facilities staffing is challenged with new sites added to the Town inventory without any increase to resources. The Harriston Lion's Medical Clinic, Palmerston Railway Heritage Museum, Harriston Seniors Centre, Harriston Lawn Bowling, and the White's Junction Trail are examples of added responsibilities. This along with staff re-assignment during maternity leave and some health issues in the Department have stretched staff resources in this area. Staff is committed to work with the current structure and to re-evaluate in the New Year, but resources may be an issue in this area in the short and medium term.

The central booking function has resulted in more work at the Town office for existing personnel in Recreation Services. This summer there is added support from the temporary administrative staff hired in the C.A.O. Clerks Department, but this resource will not be available in September when a second maternity leave begins. In 2015-16 the C.A.O. Clerk's Department assumed front counter coverage and has been capably providing this service. Recreation, Building and Economic Development help backfill at the front from time to time, but this resource is limited, particularly with a pending leave in the Building Department and the busy construction season.

There have been initiatives through the County to work with Recreation Services to see if an after school program might be viable in Minto. There is new provincial support for this kind of program. While in its early stages, if Recreation Services does take on an added role with an after school program additional staff will be needed. This could be funded under the newly developed Provincial program but this must be confirmed. As this program develops, communication with Council will continue so resource decisions can be made.

At one time there was a part time administrative position providing direct customer service at the front counter. If Council wishes to continue this personal contact, re-instating this

position in 2018 budget should be considered. A full time position will be needed if building continues at the current levels being experienced. The Temporary Building Assistant will be hired with some building and planning background, if possible, which could be transitioned into something more permanent subject to budget, need, and Council approval.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee have discussed the need for a Parks, Recreation and Facilities Master Plan. Staff recommends the terms of reference for the study be brought forward for discussion in 2018, and that the study be completed by the next Council. That Master Plan will help set service levels in recreation and facilities and assist with staff planning and resource allocation.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Staffing changes are designed not to impact the 2017 budget once backfill and internal promotion is considered. Funding required for any new positions in 2018 could be offset, in part, from savings related to changes in Public Works. Major organizational changes could be considered by the next Council at 2019 budget deliberations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive the C.A.O. Clerk's, Facilities Manager and Recreation Services Manager June 19, 2017 report Central Booking Update, and requests a follow up report for the 2018 budget regarding staff resources in Facilities and Recreation Services Departments.

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