

Recommendation:

That the Clerk's Office-2023-04 report, dated February 21, 2023 regarding Marriage License and Civil Marriage Ceremonies be received; and

That the Township of Douro-Dummer provide the service of issuing Marriage Licenses, and that the Acting Clerk and Deputy Clerk be appointed as persons authorized to issue such licenses; and

That the Township of Douro-Dummer provide the service of solemnizing civil marriages, and that the Acting Clerk and Deputy Clerk, be authorized to solemnize civil marriages as provided in the Marriage Act; and

That staff be directed to bring back the corresponding By-laws to formalize the appointments and establish the fees.

Overview:

On September 24, 2004 the Province of Ontario announced changes to the regulation under the Marriage Act which authorized Municipal Clerks of local municipalities to perform civil marriages ceremonies. The Province stated the reason for this change as follows:

"Previously, only Judges and Justices of the Peace were allowed to solemnize civil marriages. Throughout recent years, these court officials have been directed to focus on their court related duties, thereby reducing access to the civil marriage service. In an effort to increase access to civil marriages in Ontario, the provincial government announced this regulatory amendment. Municipal Clerks are recognized and accountable public servants with knowledge of marriage licenses and the administrative procedures, which would make them effective officiators."

To date the Township of Douro-Dummer has not participated in the issuing of marriage licenses nor does the Township offer the services of performing civil ceremonies.

Municipalities are not required to offer this service although some of our neighbouring municipalities chose to perform civil ceremonies and/or issue marriage licenses.

There is a cost associated to purchasing the licenses from the Province but the municipal fees for licenses and ceremonies are established by each individual municipality by By-law. A review of area municipalities who offer these services revealed a variation in the cost for marriage license and the performing of civil ceremonies, during and outside of regular business hours.

The legislation authorizing Municipal Clerks to perform civil marriage ceremonies is in effect. However, the person(s) who officiates at a wedding must complete a marriage register for each ceremony and the Office of the Registrar General will not issue a

marriage register to a Municipal Clerk unless the Municipal Council passes a By-law or resolution authorizing the Clerk to conduct these ceremonies.

Conclusion:

This initiative will offer additional services to our residents as well as generate additional revenue for the Township.

Financial Impact:

If Council determines it is appropriate to offer this service, the recommended fees would be as follows:

Marriage License	\$130.00 (payable to the municipality)
Civil Ceremony (Regular Business Hours)	\$350.00 (payable to the municipality)
Civil Ceremony	\$350.00 (\$100.00 payable to the municipality) (\$250.00 payable to the officiant)
Rehearsal (if requested)	\$50.00 (payable to the officiant)
Mileage Rate	As set by the municipality (outside of the Township of Douro-Dummer boundaries only)

The upfront cost to the municipality for the purchase of the licenses will be recovered from the purchaser when the license is issued.

As there was no line item established in the 2023 Budget, the Corporate Services Department will absorb the initial cost of the license purchase with the expectation That the service will generate revenue for 2023 and subsequent years.

The solemnizing of civil marriages requires no financial contribution from the Township although will generate revenue.

Staff will present the corresponding By-laws at an upcoming Council meeting to ensure the appointments of staff and the fees are established.