

Recommendation:

That the Building Department-2022-10 report, dated June 7th, 2022 regarding Building Department volume and staffing levels be received; and

That Council authorization the creation of one (1) full-time permanent Building Official / By-law Enforcement Officer position and one (1) full-time contract Building Official / By-law Enforcement / Permit Technician for a one (1) year period with the understanding that the Building Department continues to operate on complete cost recovery.

Overview:

The Building Code Act and its regulation, the Ontario Building Code, is enacted by the Provincial government and implemented at the local municipal level. The purpose of this legislation is to promote the safety and accessibility of buildings that are constructed, renovated and modified. Building Officials promote the health and safety of buildings for property owners and also to the benefit of all members of the public.

Through the Building Code Act:

"The council of each municipality shall appoint a chief building official and such inspectors as are necessary for the enforcement of this Act in the areas in which the municipality has jurisdiction."

The Douro-Dummer Building Department full-time staff complement currently consists of a Chief Building Official, one Building Official / By-law Enforcement Officer and one Administrative Assistant position. The Administrative Assistant position is a new position that was created and filled late February, 2022 and uses the title of Building Administrator.

The reality is that our current staffing levels are insufficient to effectively administer and enforce the Building Code Act. There are a wide variety of reasons to speculate for the increases to the volume of applications being processed and with the future being unpredictable, it is appropriate to review our current position and workload.

Historical permit volumes for the municipality indicated a level of stability from 2010 to 2017. In the years since 2017, the permit volume has effectively doubled on average and in 2021 the construction value was nearly triple the previous values. This indicates that not only are we issuing more permits, but the permits are larger and more complex than before and subsequently creating need for additional inspections.

As of May 31, 2022, the Township currently has over 1000 permits that are active. If the remaining work for these permits is considered, this is equivalent to roughly 2 years of full time work just to inspect and manage these open permits, which does not include the volume of new permits being issued and inspected.

As of the end of May 2022, we have surpassed the average volume of the entirety of one pre-2018 year.

I have prepared new a customer service policy and workflows for internal measures that we are working to implement, but without appropriate staffing levels to handle this volume, it would be unfair to our customers to implement a benchmark that we is unachievable. Not only does this put unnecessary stress on our existing staff but this could expose the municipality to liability (for failing to meet implemented policy directives).

Although permit volume is a stable benchmark to utilize, there are a variety of other metrics that demonstrate workloads have drastically increased. In 2019, I personally responded to and received approximately 5600 emails. In 2021, this number grew to 9700. This represents an increase of 70% of inquires/correspondence using this method alone, for only one staff member.

To put the 9700 emails into perspective, if one were to assume that each email requires a mere 10 minutes of time on average (some emails can take more than an hour, some are under a minute), this is 1600 hours that I spent last year reading and responding to emails, which is more hours than I am available in the office for. In 2022, this correspondence volume is anticipated to be reduced for the CBO with Council's previous approval of the full-time administrative position.

Further to our regular and routine work, the May 21, 2022 wind storm has caused a significant surge in volume for permits, we are anticipating more than an additional 100 permits just related to these repairs.

These references are not including any analysis of the other duties that this department is responsible for, including by-law enforcement.

To move forward, based on our current situation and outstanding permit volumes, it is recommended that Council consider the following staffing resources for the department to effectively administer and enforce the Building Code Act:

- 1x Chief Building Official
- 2x Building Official / By-law Enforcement Officer
- 1x Building Official I / By-law Enforcement Officer / Permit Technician – Contract
- 1x Building Administrator

The expectation is the two new positions to be created and filled, would be done on the basis that the department continues to operate on complete cost recovery. It is anticipated that the one Building Official / By-law Enforcement Officer permanent position would be maintained in perpetuity. This would compliment our current Building Official, allowing for one to be primarily field inspection, and the other being primarily office, to do plans examination and provide technical information to the public. The

other contract position would be posted for a one-year term, which would be needed now to handle the volume (including storm related permits), but the flexibility to eliminate this position after one year could be appropriate.

Conclusion:

With an increase of volume in the last few years, coupled with our current open/outstanding permits, there is a sufficient volume needing appropriate staffing levels. Our current full-time staff level is 2 technical and 1 administrative, whereas the current necessary levels are 4 technical and 1 administrative. In order to provide effective service levels and efficient customer service, as well as properly administer and enforce the Building Code Act, the Municipality needs the appropriate staffing levels. This is not only for the benefit of our property owners, but a requirement for ensuring that buildings are safe and accessible for all members of the public.

Financial Impact:

While there is a cost to additional staffing levels, the Building Department operates on complete cost recovery, with the costs covered by building permit fees. The department has sufficient reserves to maintain these staffing positions should volume decrease in future years. Should volume continue to decrease, the contract position would be eliminated.

Strategic Plan Applicability:

To ensure and enable an effective and efficient municipal administration.

Sustainability Plan Applicability:

N/A

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Building Department Volume and Staffing Levels.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 1, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Martina Chait-Hartwig

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