



MEDIA RELEASE

The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

TOWN OF FORT ERIE – OPERATIONAL REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED BY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 24, 2012

At the January 23, 2012 Council-in-Committee meeting, the presentation by Western Management Consultants on the Town's Operational Review was well received by all members of Council. The Consultant, David Berger, presented his findings in a power point presentation that included benchmarking and 25 specific recommendations for process improvements.

The purpose of the review was to assess the day to day operations, operational structure, current staff and service levels within each department with the objective to identify departmental strengths, area(s) where there may be opportunities for improvement, with an emphasis on practical solutions.

In October, 2011 Council received the Consultant's preliminary findings and, following a debriefing, requested that the Consultant present the report in a public forum.

The summary of findings included:

- The Town of Fort Erie staffing levels used to conduct the business of the Town appear to be as efficient or better when compared to the benchmarked municipalities;
- There is an opportunity to build stronger relationships between staff and Council, improving trust and in turn, staff morale;
- There were no glaring inefficiencies found; however, the consultant did highlight some areas where a review of work processes could lead to additional time for staff to complete other duties or enhance services delivered;
- The limited staffing in human resources/health and safety was also confirmed and while there may be initial staffing costs the risks associated with not having additional human resource staff was greater, based on recent Ministry of Labour workplace audits of other municipalities;
- Better governance appears to hold the greatest opportunity for improvement and has the potential to increase the number of key operational decisions being made by the Town and decrease the amount of time and effort to make them.

As a very simple summary of his findings, based on extensive operational review work completed for many municipal and private industry clients, Mr. Berger offered "this is a lean and mean Town".

"Every change in Council seems to bring about the question of staffing levels and efficiencies, including when I first entered municipal politics", stated Mayor Doug Martin. "With time you come to realize that we have a lot of great people working their magic day in and day out. I also look forward to working with my fellow Councillors to improve Council-staff relations and building on all of the positives that our Town has to offer".

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Acting CAO, Ron Tripp once again noted, “Western Management has completed a very thorough and objective review of all Town services. Their work has validated the value of the services provided by Town staff and provides valuable insight for on-going efficiency and customer service improvements. I have already begun working with staff on the implementation of the Consultant’s recommendations”.

Council members requested two amendments to the Administrative Report adopting the Consultant’s recommendations, being, that staff provide Council with a quarterly “report card” on the implementation of the report and that the Consultant and CAO, as well as members of Council, prioritize the recommendations in order to provide direction to staff moving forward.

The Consultant’s presentation and audio of the Council meeting can be found on the Town’s website at www.forterie.on.ca.

- 30 -

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