



City of
Peterborough

To: **Members of the General Committee**

From: **Cynthia Fletcher**
Commissioner Infrastructure and Planning Services

Meeting Date: **July 20, 2020**

Subject: **Report IPSBD20-003**
New By-law Enforcement Positions

Purpose

A report to recommend a new permanent By-law Enforcement Officer position and By-law Support and Complainants Officer position.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations dated July 20, 2020 of the Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services as follows:

- a) That two CUPE Local 126 permanent positions, By-law Enforcement Officer and By-law Support and Complaints Officer, be approved due to the ongoing increased workload within By-law Enforcement; and
- b) That the funds for 2020 cost of the two new positions be transferred from the Building Division Reserve.

Budget and Financial Implications

The total amount to fund both of these positions for the first year, including benefits is \$109,770. Assuming a September 1, 2020 start date, the amount for 2020 would be \$36,224. For 2020, this amount can be funded from a transfer from the Building Division Reserve. The uncommitted balance in the Building Division Reserve after this commitment is \$508,781. Funding for 2021 would be included in the 2021 Operating Budget.

Background

In October 2019, the Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services approved two contract positions for a 6 month term. The initial driver was an urgent Enforcement Services need for additional staff resources. The group had experienced increases in workload due to the implementation of the Licensed Rental Premises By-law, the Parks & Facilities By-law and the introduction of the on-line complaint portal. The team was unable to keep up with workload demands and a complaint and work backlog of almost 3 months quickly accumulated. Some Councillors were aware of this situation as it impacted service to constituents who called their ward Councillor.

Over the duration of the contract term, there have been many positive changes with regard to, not only, the efficiency and effectiveness of day-to-day operations, but also the overall completion of work and compliance with the By-laws under the responsibility of the Division. Further, the new administration function of a single intake process for building and by-law complaints and a verification of complaints before routing back to building inspectors has saved significant time for the Building Services group and greatly reduced enforcement issues “falling through the cracks”. With clearer role definition, Inspection staff can spend more time responding in the field rather than tied to administrative work.

The performance of the new complaints tracking program, utilizing these contract positions, in 2020 and compared to 2019 activity shows much improved results. In January to June of 2019, 553 complaints were received and logged into the complaints database (2019 ended as a record year for complaint intake). From January to June 2020, 592 complaints were received and logged. Even with the increase in complaints, the number of complaint files that were resolved and closed increased by 38% in the first half of 2020.

The current permanent staffing of Building and Enforcement Services does not have the capacity needed to adequately deal with the volume of complaints that are submitted each calendar year while also working to reduce the number of existing and active complaint files on record from previous years. Certain types of complaint files that move into complex enforcement procedures, including court prosecution, can take years to resolve and require ongoing attention. This means that at any given time, By-law enforcement staff are working with files that span a number of different years.

It has also come to the attention of Enforcement Services that, in the near future, additional staff resources and efforts in Property Standards may be needed to combat the ongoing, and potentially escalating, issue of bed bugs in our community. The new reality is we have a larger urban-area problem that will require staff attention to promote a healthy community for the rental sector.

Enforcement Services currently focuses on Property Standards Complaints, Building Complaints, Zoning Complaints, Business Licensing violations, Secondary Suite Conversion complaints, Rental Housing Unit Licensing and Property Maintenance Complaints due to capacity. The City has additional By-laws, and is usually contemplating others owing to constituent concerns, that could be monitored by this group if additional permanent resources were available. This request for staff brings the enforcement unit to a level able to contend with the current workload in a reasonable timeframe. Ongoing by-law development and enforcement requests are going to be contemplated in a full corporate review of by-law enforcement in the next few years. In many areas, By-laws are created and either program staff / contracted services are tasked with enforcement or the By-law is not consistently enforced (eg. Parks & Facilities, Urban Canopy / Tree, Parking, Anti-Idling By-laws). Outside of the by-laws currently being handled by Enforcement Services, other by-laws needing enforcement and more consistent attention will need to be part of the larger corporate review.

Summary

By establishing these two permanent positions, being a By-law Enforcement Officer and By-law Support and Complaints Officer, Building and Enforcement Services will be able to maintain performance at a level that keeps up with current workloads. The staff of Building and Enforcement Services has closely monitored the effectiveness of both of these positions over the term of the temporary contract and the positions are required to continue reducing the current backlog of open complaint files, provide staffing support with the increasing volume of complaint files and required enforcement and continue the one-window approach to complaint receipt and processing.

Submitted by,

Cynthia Fletcher
Commissioner of Infrastructure and Planning Services

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