

January – December 2003

CORPORATION
OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF AUGUSTA



Improvements in Service

Submitted to:
Reeve and Council
Township of Augusta

Submitted by:
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Executive Summary

The purpose of section 300 of the Municipal Act is that (a) improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of services by the municipality and its local boards; and (b) barriers identified by the municipality and its local boards to achieving improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of services by them. To this end, the Municipal Act also mandates that each Municipality provide notice to the public and that the Minister may designate the form and manner by which this is done. To date, the Minister has not regulated this.

This is the first year report (2003) prepared by the CAO of the Township of Augusta for the Reeve and Council as well as, the general public. The report describes the improvements that the Township has taken over the past year to the delivery of services to the residents.

Aim

This report describes initiatives that the Township of Augusta has taken over the 2003 year to give a more efficient and effective delivery of its services.

Description of the Township of Augusta

The Township of Augusta is located in south eastern Ontario. The Township is bordered on the north by the Village of Merrickville-Wolford, the north east by the Township of Edwardsburgh /Cardinal, the west by the Township of Elizabethtown - Kitley, the south east by the Town of Prescott.

The Township has a population of approximately 7227 persons and, is a large rural farming community with large industries located at the southern end of the Township.

The Township Office is a stand alone complex as well as a Volunteer Fire Department housed in two locations (North Augusta and Maitland) and a Public Works Garage. There is a Landfill Site located in North Augusta and a Transfer Station located in the hamlet of Maynard.

There are various residential hamlets located throughout the Township. Those being, North Augusta, Maynard, Domville, Riverview Heights, Maitland, Algonquin and Roebuck.

Administration Improvements and Initiatives

One major improvement to the administrative services was that a CAO Clerk Treasurer was hired effective January 2003.

Prior to that, the municipality had seen the position vacant since June of the previous year. By filling this position, it would allow for a more efficient and effective operation from a staffing point of view given that the current Deputy Clerk Treasurer had to assume the role of overseeing the Township's administration and treasury for almost six months which, was a substantial burden work wise to the Deputy Clerk Treasurer. Given the size of the Township population wise versus what our neighbours to the immediate north (Merrickville-Wolford) have for administration staff (5 for a population of 2,500) this would be a burden to anyone having to deal with all of the legislation being implemented and having to ensure that the Township "kept on running".

The Council of the day allowed for a person filling the function of receptionist/administration support was brought in July of 2002 however, these were positions filled through Manpower and not all employees had any previous experience in an office environment let alone a municipal government organization. In October 2002 this position was filled again by a person through Manpower however, that employee had office experience thus eliminating again, the work load burden on the Deputy Clerk Treasurer. This relief position was allowed to be kept on after the hiring of the new CAO Clerk Treasurer due to all of the legislative requirements that the administration staff was now having to fulfill. This position has been classed as full - part time and falls under the collective agreement. The position is awaiting the outcome of an organizational review.

An organizational review was undertaken in the later part of 2003 in order to examine the structure of the organization as well as the municipal facilities. This included all departments including the Augusta Public Library. This review will be presented to the new Council (2003 – 2006) term in early January of 2004. Once presented it is hoped that more efficiencies to services will be identified to help best serve our ratepayers.

In October of 2003, the CAO had begun creation for a website for the Township which is hosted by our provider Digital Networks. The CAO had previously created a similar site for two previous municipalities and thus, the thinking was to create something similar that would allow communication with the residents on important issues or general information. Since there is no form of presenting an agenda prior to a meeting on Monday to the general public, (posting on a community bulletin board etc.) it was felt that a web site would be able to be utilized by the residents at their convenience. By creating a site "in house" saves expending tax dollars on something that could be created and maintained "in house".

Since it's inception (October 11, 2003), there have been over 461 "hits" to our site and out of those 254 are new visitors so that about 210 are returning visitors to our site. The site is not yet completed, it is under construction on a few pages however, that being said, it shows that by providing this service our ratepayers are finding an effective means of communication for things such as the Council agenda, minutes, notices to the public, and by-law index etc.. Many of our

visitors have been referred by sites such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and major search engines.

On November 24, 2003 the web site was reviewed by the Toronto Business Seeker and in December we were notified that our site was reviewed and was awarded The Seeker Business Web Award which looks at things such as, outstanding web design, excellence in content, user friendly navigation to name just a few.

Augusta Public Library

This fall saw the resignation of a part time employee from the Library. In order to be in compliance with the Collective Agreement and, upon presentation of the organizational review the Library Board was unsure how to effectively fill this position. It was suggested by the administration of the Township that a temporary solution could be the sharing of the full - part time administration position thus allowing to still be in compliance with the collective and enabling to still provide the quality of service that the patrons of the Library have come to enjoy.

The Library applied for, and was awarded a Trillium Grant in the amount of \$10,000.00 to purchase some additional reference material and shelving for the library. Some of the purchases will include World Book Encyclopedia 2003, World Book Student Discovery Encyclopedia 2003, World Book Encyclopaedia of People and Places 2003 and the World Book Young Scientist. Large print books and talking books along with French Language books will be purchased and hopes for a classical music collection on CD's were also planned to be purchased.

The small room at the back of the library will be used to house periodicals, reference materials and local history materials and will be able to be used by patrons as a quiet place to do research and work. The room will be referred to as the "Trillium Reference and Reading Room".

Building and Planning Department Improvements and Initiatives

In the summer of 2003, the Council agreed that a part time university student could be brought in under the HRDC summer program. This position was partially funded through the Federal HRDC program.

The student chosen was enrolled in the studies of Planning and was able to work along with the CBO in the planning and building department. The student was key in designing many forms that could be utilized in that department. It is the hope of this administration that once again, this program can be utilized in the summer of 2004.

A new Official Plan was created and adopted by the Council of the 2000 – 2003 term. It was adopted by the Council of the day on the 14th of October 2003 under By-Law number 2510 and has been forwarded onto the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for their approval.

Public Works Improvements and Initiatives

The Public Works Department arranged to have a flagging course for all staff, both full and part time in the early spring of 2003. This would allow compliance under the mandatory courses that the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) has deemed to be compulsory.

The other course taken in 2003 for two (2) full time and one (1) part time employee was the chain saw course. This course is a requirement under the Health and Safety Act for anyone operating a chain saw. Our Public Works Department try to perform many duties "in house" thus eliminating the dollar burden on the ratepayers and, by having qualified chain saw operators this will help to keep some of the work "in house" and compliant with Statute Law.

Treasury Improvements and Initiatives

In the last half of 2002 the Deputy Clerk Treasurer had begun arrangements for the payment of taxes receivable to the Township through any major financial institution in the forms of internet banking, telephone banking, ATM and in person. By making these arrangements, this process allows for the ratepayers the flexibility to be able to pay at their convenience anytime, day or night. The arrangements had been finalized to begin "working" at the beginning of the New Year.

One of the major industries located in Augusta, had also made arrangements for a credit union to become part of this process and this same courtesy could be extended to any ratepayer. Should any ratepayer deal with a financial institution other than a major financial institution, they are free to contact their institution to have them come forward and also make similar arrangements.

This again is allowing for the ratepayer to be given more choices on making payments to the municipality, thus making a more efficient and effective service delivery.

Communication of the Report

This report will be available at the Township Office, Augusta Public Library and, as well, on the Township's web site.

We will make every attempt to make it available to those with disabilities for their perusal and review. Should a copy in Braille be requested, Council will try to accommodate by having staff contact the CNIB to inquire if it could be translated.