

# Department Business Plan Update

Legislative and Legal Services

# Department overview

Legislative and Legal Services is charged with ensuring open and transparent government through the development of sound practices and systems for supporting effective decision-making by Council. This includes ensuring that all activities of the municipality are conducted within legislative provisions respecting the roles and responsibilities of local government. Legislative and Legal Services also facilitates corporate and business unit success through the provision of legal services and guidance.

# Core business functions

- Administrative tribunals
- Boards and Committees
- Bylaw and Policy development and management
- Council/Priorities Committee/Governance Advisory Committee support
- Census
- Election
- External legal support – retention and management
- Internal legal advice and support
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

# Progress on core function forecast

## Administrative Tribunals

- Complied with changes to the *Municipal Government Act* and accompanying regulations.
- Increasing complex context for tribunals as a result of federal, provincial and municipal legislative changes related to the legalization of cannabis.
- Provincial emphasis on regionalization supports Council's recent decision to make Strathcona County's Assessment Review Board a regional board.

# Progress continued

## Boards and Committees

- Comprehensive process review is ongoing and has included the implementation of substantial changes to boards and committees service and function.
- Onboarding of all County boards and committees to electronic meeting management is progressing well.
- Updates to various bylaws for boards and committees (e.g. Mayor's Executive Committee), and a major rewrite of the main Boards and Committees Bylaw is expected.

# Progress continued

Council/Priorities Committee/Governance Advisory Committee support

- Major review of the Meeting Procedures Bylaw will be completed early in 2020.
- The 2021 municipal election will also require the planning and implementation of orientation program for elected officials.

# Progress continued

## Census Modernization

- A Statement of Work was created that set out our Business Requirements and was competitively procured
- The successful proponent is Esri Canada
- Esri Canada is working on an ArcGIS-based solution to streamline the County's census process to make it fully online, improve the quality, review and reporting process of data collection
- The solution will be ready by end of 2019
- The 2020 census will use the solution

# Progress continued

## Bylaw and Policy Development and Management

- The Annual Policy Review project is near completion
- A report to update the Priorities Committee is underway
- Legislative and Legal Services will be shifting its focus to review and update County Bylaws over the next 18 months
- A plan to bring bylaw prosecutions in-house is currently being developed

# Progress continued

## Election

- The Ward Boundary Review is in progress
- The Priorities Committee was updated on the Ward Boundary Review on January 29, 2019 and June 18, 2019

# Progress continued

## Election

- *Bill 23: An Act to Renew Local Democracy in Alberta* received Royal Assent on December 11, 2018
- Significant changes to the laws regarding campaign contributions, disclosure, and third-party advertising were made
- Updates to the elections webpage have been completed
- Other updates to our elections project plan will continue in to 2020

# Progress continued

## Internal legal advice and support

- Working to build in house capacity to manage the legal challenges that impact our municipality, e.g., planning and development expertise, contract development and bylaw prosecution
- Have further developed and provided training on an array of standard form contracts
- Developing relationships within the organization – becoming the trusted partner and taking proactive steps to manage legal risk
- Implementing the results of our Organizational Review
- Acquiring software that will support both our internal legal team, and help us to monitor our external legal services provider – we anticipate that the software will be in use by the end of quarter three of this year

# Progress continued

## External legal support – retention and management

- The increase in litigation has had a significant impact on the need to retain external legal counsel. This has arisen in large part from legalization of cannabis, and decisions on planning (including the new MDP), development and permitting issues, bylaw prosecutions, and changes to employment and occupational health and safety legislation have resulted in significant legal fee expenditure
- Internal legal team shares information on best practices for retaining and monitoring external counsel
- Database of legal opinions has been established to provide a starting point for legal advice, and to help reduce legal costs

# Progress continued

## *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*

- The number of FOIP requests received as of May 31, 2019 is 42
- Due to the volume of records related to recent FOIP requests, Legislative and Legal Services has experienced issues with the reliability of the redaction software currently in use and investigation of more stable alternatives is underway
- The development of a County wide training program is underway and is planned to commence by Q3 of 2019

# Questions?

