

Department business plan update

Legislative and Legal Services (LLS)

Department overview

Supporting relationships among the County Council, administration and citizens, Legislative and Legal Services (LLS) is charged with ensuring open and transparent government through the development of sound practices and systems for supporting effective decision making by Council. LLS ensures that activities of the municipality are conducted within legislative provisions respecting the roles and responsibilities of local government.

Department overview – Legal Services

Contract preparation, negotiation, and review; bylaw preparation and review; legal advice and opinions; review and update department documents; conduct bylaw prosecutions; manage litigation on behalf of the County

Ensure that the County's needs for legal services in specialized areas of law are addressed through selecting, retaining and monitoring external legal service providers

Assist County staff and members of the public with FOIP requests and privacy complaints; represent the County in any Information and Privacy Commissioner Inquiries; support County to ensure that County's projects and programs are privacy legislation compliant

Department overview – Legal Services

NEW! Rollout of New Contract Templates

- A newly created suite of purchasing contract templates are targeted to roll out in June to further streamline the contracting process: both regular and short form templates for the following categories - goods, services, combined goods and services, consulting services, and construction
- Amending agreement template and extension letter template have been updated and a new letter template created for phased deliverable
- Two User Guides and instructional videos to support staff in using the templates have been created, and 14 Q & A sessions have been scheduled

Department overview – Legal Services

Successes and Challenges:

- Requests for legal services increased 295% over a period of 3 years (2017 – 2020)
 - **251** legal service requests in 2017 ➡ **740** requests in 2020
- **NEW!** Our FOIP team is creating a series of articles for the Insider to inform staff about FOIP and privacy; the first was published in April

Department overview – Legal Services

COVID-19 has impacted the entire corporation, requiring significant additional legal support – with over 60 COVID related requests in 2020 alone, including bylaw drafting, legal advice, contract reviews, and contract drafting, often on an emergent basis

Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

Elections - so much is new!

More opportunities to vote:

- Adapting to COVID and adding convenience for our voters led to our planned increase in locations and hours for advance voting (from 115 in 2017 to an estimated 190 in 2021)
- **NEW!** Drive-thru voting: Our advance votes will include innovative drive thru option – the convenience of voting from your car – COVID precautions respected. We will be offering drive thru voting at the Enviro-Station on October 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 & 13 from 10 am – 6 pm
- Increased our # of regular voting stations from 23 to 32



Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

Making it easier for all:

- **NEW!** Candidate e-Newsletter
 - Can be found on Strathcona County's website under Candidate Information ([Candidate information | Strathcona County](#))
- **NEW!** Excited to have input from the Accessibility and Advisory Committee and the Youth Advisory Committee
- **NEW!** We will be offering an audio ballot for visually impaired voters
 - This will be offered during the advance vote period in the Agora on October 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15
- Election office location is street level to allow for better access for election day staff, candidates and citizens

Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

Safety First:

- We have increased our staffing to ensure voter safety, including adding COVID clerks to ensure that all appropriate precautions are taken



Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

NEW! The Democracy Brochure is designed to encourage participation in our local government. It sets out a variety of ways to connect with the democratic process:

- **VOTE!** run for an elected position; apply to be an election worker
- Volunteer with or donate \$ to a candidate; attend a council meeting
- Volunteer for a board or committee



Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

Contract Management

- Strathcona County's contractual needs are becoming increasingly complex. Defining corporate processes and oversight of contract management practices will lead the County in developing sound, effective and achievable outcomes related to the management of contracts across the organization
- The County's practices are at a developmental level, and gaps and some value leakage points have been identified
- **NEW!** In conjunction with the SCBT work, we are creating a comprehensive governance framework to enhance efficiency and address gaps and value leakage points

Department overview – Legislative Services and Contract Management

Census

- COVID forced the cancellation of the 2020 census
- The modernization efforts have continued despite the pandemic
- **NEW!** Our goal of conducting a paperless census will be achieved when we hit the streets in 2022

Department overview – Governance Services

Tribunals and Quasi-judicial Boards:

- Coordinate and support appeal hearings to quasi-judicial boards, including the SDAB, RARB, BEORC, GAARC, and ASB in accordance with the *MGA* and principles of natural justice

Successes and Challenges:

- In 2020, all hearings were conducted with an option for virtual participation, with 90% virtual participation
- Litigation – Mohr et al. and Weed Act

Department overview – Governance Services

Boards and Committees:

- Support and maintain Council committee structure and bylaws, manage committee processes, including development of mandates, manage elected official and public member appointment processes, coordinate support to all 8 advisory committees and provide orientation, templates, and training

Successes and Challenges:

- In 2020, council committees rose to the occasion (the COVID occasion) and held their meetings via electronic means
- The GAC conducted 82 public member interviews all virtually
- The new member orientation was also provided virtually
- **NEW!** Governance produced a video to assist learning and allow more flexibility for participants' learning styles and time commitments
- **COMING SOON!** A brand new Boards and Committees Bylaw complete with a Code of Conduct

Department overview – Governance Services

Council / Priorities Committee / Emergency Advisory Committee/ Governance Advisory Committee Meetings/ Mayor's Executive Committee

- Coordinate and support Council, Priorities Committee, Emergency Advisory Committee, and Governance Advisory Committee meetings, including agenda creation and management, minutes, and documentation and monitoring of Council action items
- We ensure all legislative requirements necessary to support effective, defensible and open/ transparent decision-making are in place and provide procedural advice in meetings
- We also plan and manage the Council and Priorities Committee annual schedule of meetings and any modifications required to the schedule

Department overview – Governance Services

COVID

- This is a highly public-facing area and we have been successful in ensuring public participation and transparency throughout the time of COVID through effective use of technology and evolving processes
- Work is ongoing and the schedule is relentless – Along with managing the usual 2 Council meetings and 1 to 2 Priorities Committees per month, we also managed:
 - Council's 3 new Task Forces to address the recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic – this created an additional workload in terms of meeting management
 - Supported 11 EAC meetings in 2020 – dramatic increase due to the pandemic – also needed to webcast these meetings because of the public interest in COVID and to ensure transparency to the public

Department overview – Governance Services

Successes and Challenges:

- The demand for support and complexity of meeting facilitation dramatically increased in 2020 (e.g., sorting out remote participation, managing new technology, significant increase in the number of meetings, and webcasting EAC meetings)
- Support members of the public who wish to provide presentations to PC or participate in a public hearing in this new virtual world
- Support members of the public who wish to file a Property Tax Relief request – these requests have dramatically increased – 2019 we had 5, 2020 we had 3, and 2021 we have had 13 in Q1
- **COMING SOON!** The new Meeting Procedures Bylaw was delayed due to COVID, but is set to be before Council in June 2021

Department overview – Governance Services

Training and Resources for Good Governance:

- We support the County by providing advice, training, and resources to promote consistency on good governance:
 - Council Committee New Member Orientation Video
 - Self-Directed eSCRIBE Training Guide, interactive videos and FAQs
 - In 2020, we trained 40 people, more than half of those (23/40) were trained virtually either via Teams or Zoom
 - Council Report Writing Session – helps ensure an excellent standard of report writing across the organization
- Insider resource page to support planning for council and PC meetings
- Tracking of Items due to Council
- Tracking of Covid-related motions
- Tracking of budget impact motions
- Research support for administration and members of the public on Council history

Core business functions

- 1 Administration
- 2 Legislative Services and Contract Management
- 3 Legal Services
- 4 Governance Services

Core function highlights

1 Administration

Coordinates all operations of the Legislative and Legal Services department, undertakes all business planning and budgeting, works with the MAFIAA on employee engagement, and ensures collaboration with other departments

A Prolific Department

Year	Total reports	Things that make you say hmmm...
2017	348	55 of these reports created by LLS – 15.8%
2018	439	75 of these reports created by LLS – 17.1%
2019	480	85 of these reports created by LLS – 17.7%
2020	456	108 of these reports created by LLS – 23.7%

Core function highlights

2 Legislative Services and Contract Management

The core functions of this branch include implementation of the general municipal election, by-elections, public votes, municipal census, ward boundary reviews, and validating petitions. This branch also defines corporate processes and oversight of contract management and delegations of authority

Executed Contracts by Department and Year				
Contracts	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Contracts Executed	604	649	550	60*

*to February 28, 2021

Core function highlights

3 Legal Services

The core functions of this branch include responding to the legal needs of the County (contract preparation, negotiation and review, bylaw preparation and review, legal advice and opinions), providing proactive legal support to departments, conducting bylaw prosecutions and ensuring the County complies with applicable privacy legislation

Legal Services Requests

Year	Number of Requests
2017	251
2018	404
2019	726
2020	740

New Purchasing Contract Template Documents

New Purchasing Tools	Number
New Purchasing Contract Templates – Regular	5
New Purchasing Contract Templates – Short	5
Updated Ancillary Purchasing Agreements	3
New User Guides	2
Q & A Sessions	14
Instructional Videos	TBD

Core function highlights

Bylaw Prosecutions

Year	Number
2020	106
2021 (to May 15/21)	16

FOIP Information Access Requests

Type	Date		
	2019	2020	2021*
General	36	27	15
Personal	10	12	1
Consults	3	2	
Law Enforcement Disclosures	69	42	18
Investigations	3	2	
Total:	122	85	34

Note * to May 15, 2021

Core function highlights

4 Governance Services

Council/Priority Committee/Emergency
Advisory Committee/ Governance
Advisory Committee/COVID -19
Recovery Task Force Support

Number of Council Meetings Supported			
Year	Council, Special Council, Budget	PCM	Total
2017	30	8	38
2018	42	9	51
2019	39	10	48
2020	45	14	59 *
*** also had 11 additional EAC meetings in 2020 and 29 Task Force meetings for Covid recovery, 1 chief commissioner recruitment committee, 2 Performance Plan Committee (TOTAL of 43 additional meetings!)			

Number of Council and Priorities Reports Reviewed				
Year	Council, Special Council, Budget	PCM	Total	LLS Reports*
2017	266	82	348	55 of these reports created by LLS
2018	325	114	439	75 of these reports created by LLS
2019	330	150	480	85 of these reports created by LLS
2020	351	105	456	108 of these reports created by LLS
* includes the additional closed session added reports and public presentation reports for PCM but does not include reports where LLS was not the lead department (i.e., where we provided advice or legal review)				

Successes and challenges

- We continue to save paper
- Virtual training
- Senior Leadership Team was onboarded to the eSCRIBE platform
- Coping with all the change due to COVID impacts



COVID impacts

Staff Impacts

- COVID fatigue
- Some staff are really enjoying working from home while others are feeling very isolated
- A lot of LLS staff are still required to be in office due to operational requirements

Financial Impacts

- Lost hearing revenue, increased legal cost and overtime, reduced training and travel costs

COVID impacts

Service Impacts

- COVID-19 has resulted in significant additional legal demand (over 60 COVID-19-related legal services requests in 2020 alone, with COVID-19 implications now a standard consideration in a broad range of legal services)
- Challenges continue with respect to virtual Council and committee meetings and the need to improve technology
- We have encountered difficulties in the managing the review and execution of contracts given the number of County staff and suppliers that have been working from home
- Meetings have increased - since January 1, 2021, we managed 7 PCM meetings, 9 Council meetings, 6 Special Council meetings, 1 EAC meeting, 16 Mayors Executive, 6 GAC, and 9 COVID Task Force meetings total 54 meetings

Employee engagement (MAFIAA)

ENGAGEMENT SURVEY THEME	ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE	PEOPLE PLAN FOCUS AREA
Work Environment	Let's Create/Change the Conversation - "What's on Your Plate?"	Ensure we have an agreed upon approach (the conversation) when wanting to assign work, and to help staff feel safe to indicate that they are overburdened and respectfully request a collaboration on re-prioritizing or reallocating work to accommodate new or higher priorities
Diversity and Inclusion	Inclusion Education & Awareness	Diversity is a given; for us to embrace this, we need to learn how to be more inclusive. This requires us to understand the diversity around us and what it looks like to be inclusive. This initiative will focus on helping LLS team members learn about inclusion (what it is, what it means, what it looks like), and become more aware of their own biases in order to manage them
Values	"That's Not LLS"	This initiative focuses on ensuring we are LIVING our values and commitments to each other. It also focuses on creating a safe mechanism for team members to indicate when something has occurred that they feel is not in line with the values of the team and organization. Additionally, this mechanism is intended to open communication between team members regardless of their positional authority in a safe, non-punitive manner

Initiatives

- LLS supports over 40 initiatives from across the organization
- LLS does not have any initiatives reflected in the 2021-2024 Business Plan, as none of our improvement projects or programs require additional budget

But as a reminder:

- Brand new suite of contracts, procurement documentation, and guides for the corporation
- In-house bylaw prosecutions
- Of course, there is a little thing called the **2021 GENERAL ELECTION**
- And then inauguration and orientation of the new Council

Questions?

