

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, March 23, 2012				Report Date	Friday, March 16, 2012			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	x	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
REPORT TITLE									
Moving Forward Report #23/03/12/1101									

Subject: To recommend a process for group discussion to resolve contentious issues.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council adopt the following resolution agreeing to weekly meetings, possibly without compensation, to assist in working through the current workplace challenges and taking steps to move forward.

**WHEREAS** the Delfi Group has provided a list of recommendations to be followed to help resolve current workplace and council challenges which include discussion and mediation;

**AND WHEREAS** this Council would like to resolve current challenges in the most cost effective methods;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby agree to meet on a weekly basis for the next \_\_\_ weeks to attempt to work through these issues.

**AND FURTHER THAT** Council does hereby agree to begin this process by truthfully and honestly answering the following questions in anticipation of discussion:

- i. **What would you ultimately like to see happen to diffuse this situation and move forward?**
- ii. **What aspects of your position would you be willing to compromise on?**
- iii. **What do you want or need Council and/or staff to do to help you realize your needs?**
- iv. **What steps are you willing to take to move forward in a positive, open and transparent manner?**
- v. **What do you think/how do you feel about what has been occurring here?**
- vi. **What needs to change to change your position/feelings?**

Background/Executive Summary: The Delfi reports listed a number of recommendations that were to be followed to facilitate moving forward. The public would like to see this issue resolved in the most cost effective manner possible. Staff have provided the following suggestions, which fall within the annual training and education budget for staff and Council.

It is suggested that a number of these problems are the result of personality conflicts and not actual "municipal business". As such, it is recommended that the weekly "mediation meetings" occur without the extra per meeting compensation for Council members but instead be absorbed in the honorarium that they automatically receive for performing the duties of their positions.

It is suggested that weekly meetings occur based on the responses to the following questions in order to come to agreement or at least agree to disagree and “move forward”. It must be acknowledged that it is difficult to move forward if the secrecy, private discussions and allegations continue. Each individual must make the effort to stop repeating past practises and to only have discussions at the table. Please come to the meeting with any amendments to these questions or the resolution so that we can begin to move forward by passing the resolution and beginning these meetings.

Any meetings where actual training or discussion of policy etc. will be conducted will be treated as regular meetings and council members are to be compensated accordingly as they would be conducting council business which will benefit other Councils in the future.

Despite what has been stated publicly at council meetings, the following lists **all but two** of Mr. Bonenberg’s recommendations. As explained previously, those two recommendations were removed as they were outside of the mandate and authority of Mr. Bonenberg’s investigation and were actually opinions on past decisions of Council. Mr. Bonenberg acknowledged them as such in the reports stating that he does not have any authority over these decisions.

**All of the remaining recommendations from the Delfi reports are included below.** Please be prepared to prioritize this list for staff to act upon Council recommendation.

- 1) That scheduled and timely performance reviews be conducted with the Clerk and proper documentation be produced.
  - a. **This has already been commenced. The 360 review has been completed. The meeting to provide feedback is slated for March 23, 2012 at 1:00.**
  
- 2) That Council develop a continuous learning plan for Council, budget it accordingly and follow through on the agreed to targets.
  - a. **Council has budgeted \$5,000 to be used towards education and training for Council for 2012.**
  
  - b. **AMO provides a session entitled “Meetings to Meet your Needs” which provides advice for chairing and participating in meetings is to be held in Peterborough on May 15, 2012. (closest venue) This might be beneficial to members of council. Other options will be provided as they become available.**
  
  - c. **Two workshops are being arranged for our workplace through the Valley EFAP program entitled “Dealing with Difficult People” and “Bullying in the Workplace”. There are a number of other sessions which can be scheduled and will be agreed upon as a group. These have been selected just to get us started. Dates and times still need to be set.**
  
  - d. **There is a full day course given in Ottawa through Achieve Training Centre entitled “Leadership and Management” and although it looks as if this might be geared more toward managers, it may prove useful for members of Council as well. Additional information may be found at <http://www.achievecentre.com/pwleadership.html>.**
  
  - e. **The Public Services Health and Safety Association also holds courses. They will come to our workplace but costs are either \$110 or \$70 per person depending on whether they are full or half days. Titles include: “Dealing with Difficult or**

**Angry Persons” and “Workplace Bullying and Domestic Violence”. They focus on recognizing signs and understanding legislation. Additional information may be found at**

**<http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/PSHSA/Training/Preventing-Workplace-Violence.aspx>.**

- 3) Council should review their procedural by-law 2008-10 annually with the intent to review the validity of the procedures, adjust if necessary and clarify roles and responsibilities.
  - a. **Will be reviewed in the near future. Councillor Gibson has contacted the Clerk with suggestions for improvement which will be discussed in the near future. The Clerk has noted a number of amendments for Council consideration, a formal review will take place according to our notice by-law in the near future.**
  
- 4) That training be pursued by the head of Council to more effectively and constructively lead all types of municipal meetings and public sessions.
  - a. **See 2. a. for starters. Perhaps 2.c.**
  
- 5) That training be conducted for Council and staff on delivering the Municipal Code of Conduct. It is appreciated that no “formal course” on this may be available, however elements of how to realize the Code are. For example there is a course called “Thinking on your feet” that could assist individuals in handling awkward and difficult situations.
  - a. **2. b and d is a start.**
  - b. **<http://www.mindtools.com/> is an excellent on-line resource and includes “thinking on your feet”. It may be worth registering for the additional content however; it offers some good advice in its “free” sections.**
  
- 6) Council and staff should pursue “Conflict Resolution” training.
  - a. **Will be pursued through Valley EFAP. Additional resources will be advertised as they come available.**
  
  - b. **Achieve Training Centre has a course in Ottawa on April 24, 2012 which the Clerk has registered for. The costs of having the course delivered here were prohibitive as the provider originates in Winnipeg. Other options will be researched.**
  
- 7) That the policy to address staff and public complaints be overhauled to ensure the process is clear and that confidentiality is maintained.
  - a. **All policies will be reviewed in the near future including the Municipal Code of Conduct and the Municipal Policy on Harassment and Workplace Violence.**
  
  - b. **Note - (The policies are clear, however; the investigator was not familiar with working with Municipal Government and the rules concerning open and closed meetings and the need for Council to make any decision in open session were not fully understood by him.)**

- 8) That a mediator be sought to begin the process of mediation between the Reeve and the Deputy Reeve and the Reeve and the Clerk.
- Seek mediator and begin process March 2012 for a 6 month period; review progress after 6 months and clarify action plan.
    - a. **As Council does not wish to spend further funds on this issue, it was thought that weekly dialogue with all of Council and the Clerk will assist in resolving current and preventing future issues.**
    - b. **Continued education to ensure that each party is aware of their roles and responsibilities will assist in alleviating some of the perceived challenges. This has commenced with the provision of the Cuff books, the industry magazines to Council members and the scheduled review of Mr. Dean's 2008 presentation.**
    - c. **All other suggestions will be considered!**
- 9) Utilize the present Performance Review System with the Clerk with the intent to clarify roles and set clear expectations.
- Begin the process immediately and develop a schedule for feedback, formally and informally with a review period at least every 6 months.
  - Utilize a 360 review system for the Clerk, incorporate feedback from that process into a training and development plan.
    - a. **The 360 has been completed – a meeting is to be held on March 23, 2012. A follow up meeting may be scheduled for September, 2012.**
- 10) Develop a continuous learning strategy for Council. There may be assistance from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to facilitate such a strategy and assist with possible workshops, seminars and courses. MMAH may also be able to assist Council in the suggested review of their procedural by-laws.
- a. **MMAH has been contacted to determine what type of workshops or seminars it can provide. Updates will be provided once determined.**
  - b. **Council has scheduled a review of the 2008 document prepared after a session with Mr. Fred Dean, then solicitor on governance and roles.**
- 11) Leadership and Governance training can be pursued in many different ways and need not be high cost. On line training, reading, and interactive workshops provided at Municipal conferences are effective and reasonably affordable ways of gaining some knowledge and improving the skills necessary to preside over meetings.
- a. **Some suggestions have been provided above.**
  - b. **George Cuff's books on municipal leadership have been purchased and distributed to each council member.**
  - c. **Monthly Municipal World magazines will be available; the first edition has been received.**

d. Valley EFAP has a number of resources which may be borrowed on an individual basis.

e. There are also the various websites whose links have previously been provided:

i. Thinking on your Feet

<http://publicspeaker.quickanddirtytips.com/Impromptu-Questions-Think-On-Your-Feet.aspx>

ii. Ombudsman's Office

<http://www.ombudsman.on.ca/Resources/Municipal-Reports.aspx>

iii. Information and Privacy Commissioner

<http://www.ipc.on.ca/english/Home-Page/>

iv. MMAH <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page5606.aspx>

12) MMAH or other County staff may be able to assist in facilitating an overview of the Code of Conduct and the Workplace Harassment and Violence Policy with Council. Some clarity on roles after complaints are received, investigation processes, and timeframes and confidentiality rules would be helpful in the future.

a. **It is suggested that this best be provided by MMAH or the municipal solicitor if he is willing. As you know, MMAH is not often willing to provide legal advice. If the solicitor is utilized, there will be a fee however; there are funds in Council education and training that may be utilized to cover.**

13) Conflict Resolution training can be gained through workshops, books and on-line courses. Outreach with other Municipalities and the County may present opportunities in collaborating to bring in the necessary training tools.

a. **Options previously discussed.**

It will be up to Council to prioritize these suggestions for staff to take action.

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact: All recommended actions may be absorbed within the current budget.

Policy Impact: None, as per policy.

Others Consulted/Resources/References: Noella Lebreton, Treasurer. Sloane Gagnon, Public Services Health and Safety Association. Brenda Vanasse, Achieve Training Centres. Shelley TerMarsh, Valley EFAP. Jon King, MMAH. County of Renfrew website. <http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/LetsTalk.pdf>; <http://www.osach.ca/products/resrcdoc/rvioe528.pdf>; <http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/HSO/media/PSHSA/pdfS/BoardMember.pdf>;

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,

Municipal Clerk

*Melinda Reith*