



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	February 24, 2022
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-04-22
Title:	Digital Modernization Funding
Prepared by:	Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Karin Noble, Archivist
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW33-22; Recommendation adopted by Council March 10, 2022 per Resolution CC22-22;

Recommendation

1. That Report EDTC-CW-04-22 regarding Digital Modernization Funding be received; and
2. That the required County funds of \$17,808.00 be funded from any 2022 surplus realized by Grey Roots, or if a surplus is not available, from the Grey Roots General reserve; and
3. That the agreement be executed prior to Council approval as per Section 25.6 (b) of Procedural By-law 5003-18.

Executive Summary

On January 25, 2022 the Warden and staff received notice from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on a successful application to Intake Three of the Municipal Modernization Program. The application, Digitization for Electronic Access, is a joint initiative by Grey Roots Archives, Legal Services and Clerks. Without firm indication of funding, this item was not included in the 2022 budget.

Background and Discussion

Staff applied to Intake Three of the Municipal Modernization Program to hire a third party to digitize the County's individual by-laws, minute books and Grey County Council Minutes and Proceedings publications, 1854 – mid 1990s. These digital versions, when combined with existing digital records from

the mid-1990s onward, will provide for full digital access to such records since the County became operative.

These historic records remain vital permanent records of the County. Although they are carefully preserved in physical form at Grey Roots, they are difficult to access due to this preservation, and they are not easy to review or search in any comprehensive or wide-ranging manner.

Digitizing these records will vastly simplify both public access and internal use and will support internal efficiencies, identification of legal obligations, response to public requests and preservation of originals, including additional backup in case of disaster.

Preliminary cost estimates enabled staff to submit a reasonable funding application of \$50,000. The grant requires the recipient to contribute 35% of the total project costs. Staff were successful in receiving confirmation of 65% funding (\$33,072) by the province to complete this important work.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing notified the Warden and County staff on January 25, 2022 that the County's application was successful. The transfer payment agreement has been received and must be signed and returned to the province no later than March 1, 2022.

To fulfil project timelines, an RFP would be released following Council's consideration of this report. The project is anticipated to be completed February 2023.

Following project completion, cost savings will be realized for the following staff positions to allow other work to be done, as well as reduce overtime, or the contracting of outside legal assistance: Director of Legal Services, Solicitor, Archivist, Assistant Archivist, Contract and Real Estate Coordinator, Administrative and Accessibility Coordinator, and Clerk. In addition, the municipality can be better prepared for intangible legal consequences.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Sections 253-255 of the Municipal Act, 2001 require that a municipality maintain its records "in a secure and accessible manner", to provide public access to them, subject to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Under the County's records retention by-law (By-law No. 4418-08), the records to be digitized are identified for permanent retention.

Financial and Resource Implications

Without an indication of funding, this project was not included in the 2022 budget. The required County funds of \$17,808.00 will be paid by 2022 Grey Roots surplus, and if necessary from the Grey Roots General reserve. This reserve houses the recently transferred 2021 surplus, which was known at the time of submission.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal – Grey Roots, Legal Services, Finance, Clerks
- External – preliminary cost estimates

Appendices and Attachments

None.