

## Special Meeting - Committee of the Whole

### Strategic Planning Session

### August 29, 2023

Grey County Council met on the above date at the Best Western at 1800 2nd Ave East in Owen Sound. Warden Milne assumed the Chair and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with all members present, except Councillor Bordignon.

The following staff members were also participating:

Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO; Tara Warder, Clerk; Amanda Kokas, Provincial Offences Court Manager; Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Community Services; Evan Davis, IT Infrastructure and Security Manager; Jennifer Cornell, Director of Long-Term Care; Kevin McNab, Director of Paramedic Services; Mary Lou Spicer, Director of Finance; Michael Letourneau, Director of Legal Services; Pat Hoy, Director of Transportation; Robert Hatten, Manager of Communications; Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture; Scott Taylor, Director of Planning; and Sarah Goldrup, Deputy Clerk.

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect, the history, spirituality, and culture of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples on whose traditional territories we gather and whose ancestors signed Treaties with our ancestors. We recognize also, the Metis and Inuit whose ancestors shared this land and these waters. May we all, as Treaty People, live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with all its diverse peoples.

## Strategic Planning Workshop

The Warden and CAO Wingrove opened the strategic planning session with a welcome and introductions of the consultant Ian Duff, attending from McSweeney and Associates.

Ian Duff explained the agenda for today's meeting and the process for engagement in today's session. The consultants reviewed the County's operating and capital resources and functions.

Councillor Kentner joined the meeting at this time.

The consultants shared the values identified by County leadership in developing the County's 2023 strategic plan, including integrity, collaboration and equality, and sustainability.

In response to the consultant's questions, the group discussed the values identified for the County's new strategic plan and noted other values for consideration, such as reconciliation.

Further, the group discussed recent events within the community, the support seen in the community in response, and considerations for community safety and well-being.

The consultants spoke about the survey results received from residents, which highlighted housing, healthcare, infrastructure, and public transportation as primary areas of focus. Further, respondents identified climate change, job opportunities, economic development, and fiscal management as additional priority areas.

In response to the consultant's questions, the group discussed the non-statistical results of the survey and the potential for missing demographics, such as seniors or young parents, who might not be represented in the survey results. The group discussed the public's awareness of the different spheres of jurisdictions or responsibilities held by the different levels of government or municipal boundaries. Discussion occurred on service demands, including pressures created by growing service scope or community needs not met by complementary provincial funding or the demand on services by visitors to Grey County, and considerations for changing, maintaining, or improving services. The group spoke about the roles and responsibilities of Council members and staff and the importance of building productive, collaborative relationships internally and with member municipalities or community partners. Further, the group noted other potential priority areas, such as childcare and the impact of commuting on community connections.

The meeting recessed and reconvened at 10:33 a.m. Councillor Paterson joined the meeting at this time.

Ian Duff invited members of Council and the Senior Management Team to share their priority items among the key strategic themes identified for the County's new strategic plan.

## Theme 1: How the County Does Its Business

In discussing the above-noted theme, group members shared priorities regarding financial responsibility, service delivery, and investing in technology to modernize and digitize services, utilize data, and improve internal systems or tools. The group heard comments regarding staffing, resourcing, and sustainable workloads. The group noted initiatives such as implementing asset management and a multi-year operating and capital budget through an integrated software solution. Improvements to customer service, connecting residents with information, and enhancing public engagement and outreach were raised by the group. Further, the group spoke about governance and investigating options for municipal restructuring or consolidating services for efficiencies, such as waste management, police services, or library services.

## Theme 2: Providing County Services & Infrastructure

In discussion of the above-noted theme, group members shared priorities regarding clarity of County priorities and responsibilities, implementation of action-oriented plans and strategies, sustainable asset and infrastructure management, ensuring proper infrastructure funding, and addressing depot pressures. The group discussed the service implications of recent growth and balancing essential, core, and enriching services that equitably adapt to various community needs. The group highlighted other considerations for services provided by the County, including:

- Long-term care facilities and staffing to support positive resident experiences
- Attracting early childhood educators and staff in areas anticipating or seeing significant growth
- Planning policy and process efficiencies to support strategic growth and the creation of attainable and affordable housing
- Healthcare and paramedicine pressures, support programs and partnerships, and advocacy
- County-supported housing and services to support vulnerable populations
- Improving service delivery to all provincial offences court stakeholders while advocating for the legislative challenges and issues facing judicial services.

The group noted initiatives such as an Infrastructure Management Review to ensure growth readiness, advocacy for healthcare pressures and a broader healthcare strategy, and Community Improvement Plan programs.

### **Theme 3: Continuing Growing the Best Corporation**

In discussion of the above-noted theme, group members shared priorities regarding a corporate culture of innovation, organizational excellence, customer service, and employee wellness and growth. The group heard comments from members, noting staff recruitment and retention, professional development or mentoring opportunities, and succession planning. Further, the group spoke about fiscal responsibility, embracing technology, partnerships, and collaboration towards improved internal processes and service delivery supported by strategic leadership and action-oriented tools and plans. The group noted initiatives such as a People Planning Review and the Human Resources Information System.

### **Theme 4: Putting a Roof Over Everyone's Head**

In discussion of the above-noted theme, group members shared priorities regarding affordable and attainable housing and the need to support the creation of diverse housing stock enabled by efficient planning processes and policies. Further, the group noted the role of housing as a social determinant of health that is vital in addressing the growing number of those experiencing homelessness, addictions, or mental health crises.

### **Theme 5: Ensuring the County Remains a Community Where Everyone Wants to Lay Down Roots**

In discussion of the above-noted theme, group members shared priorities regarding the impact of commuting on community connections and the draw of recreational facilities and programs or services, including those for seniors or youth and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Further, the group noted the need for greater access to diverse, affordable housing stock and services or amenities from complete communities, such as childcare, physicians, recreation, culture, and transportation.

The meeting recessed and reconvened at 12:30 p.m.

The consultant led the group in discussion regarding developing related strategic actions through this process.

## Next Steps

The consultants discussed the next steps for the strategic planning process, including the opportunity for municipal stakeholder feedback during the upcoming Warden's Forum and the development and review of proposed actions for implementing the County's new strategic plan.

## Adjournment

On motion of Councillors Boddy and McQueen, the special meeting of Committee of the Whole for a strategic planning session adjourned at 2:42 p.m. to the call of the Chair.

---

Brian Milne, Warden

---

Tara Warder, Clerk