

Report CCR-CS-08-15

To: Chair Pringle and Members of the Corporate Services Committee
From: Heather Morrison
Meeting Date: April 14, 2015
Subject: **Media Training**
Status: Recommendation Lost per Resolution CS51-15; Lost vote was supported by County Council during a recorded vote May 5, 2015 per Resolution CC71-15;

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS strong corporate responses and the management of media inquiries is becoming an increasingly important asset to have;

AND WHEREAS with constant communication coming from various sources including radio, print, social media and television, media training would provide practical tools necessary for councillors and staff to be prepared for future media interviews;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Redbrick Communications be hired to provide media training to County Council members and appropriate staff in the fall 2015 at a cost of \$3,000 per day exclusive of HST, plus expenses for three days;

AND THAT the council portion of this expenditure being \$6,000 exclusive of HST plus expenses be funded from the Council Communications Reserve.

Background

Redbrick Communications has been approached to provide media training to county council members and appropriate staff in order to be prepared for media inquiries during normal day to day business, in the event of an emergency or when speaking about hot topic items. Redbrick Communications has provided media training to various municipalities and organizations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), County of Wellington and Durham Region all of which speak very highly of the training

they received from Redbrick. Redbrick Communications has also served as the media contact for AMO and communications support for the Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario (MEPCO).

The training will include an introduction and background of why media relations training is important, what makes news and why, interview preparation and response tips and how to deliver strong photo and video images. The training will then use current events and scenarios to prepare relevant messaging and will also look at how to anticipate possible media questions. The training will conclude with mock interviews to simulate a range of topics and media formats (radio, television newspaper, social media, etc.) Staff are looking at the fall of 2015 to complete the training should council approve the recommendation within this report.

Training Format

In order to garner as much from the training as possible and to accommodate all council members, it is thought that two small groups of nine would be the best approach. This approach will provide the members with personalized instruction and maximum opportunity to practice mock print, radio and television interviews.

There will also be a third day of training offered to appropriate staff who deal with the media on a regular basis including all directors and communications staff from the county, including those from Grey Roots, Tourism and Economic Development. This will be a larger group who will learn how to develop key messages, with some staff participating in a range of mock interview while other staff observe and provide feedback.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

The Council Communications Reserve, as of December 31, 2014, has a balance of just over \$32,000. The costs of the two days of training for council members would be paid from this reserve. This cost would be \$3,000 per day plus HST and applicable expenses. The cost of the third day of training for staff would be funded from the corporate training budget, approved in the 2015 budget.

Staff time will be involved in participating in the staff portion of the training, and can be accommodated within the current departmental portfolios.

The training will help council and staff understand ways to stick to key messages and control an interview to avoid inaccurate quotes which can have legal and reputational impacts for individuals and the County.

There are no IT issues related to this request.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

6.2 continue to explore ways to improve communications and collaboration within and between county departments and service areas.

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted by,

Heather Morrison

Deputy Clerk/Records Manager

Director Sign Off: *Sharon Vokes*