

Report

Date December 12, 2023
Subject New Staffing Request – Part-time Payroll Clerk

File:

PURPOSE

To consider funding for a part-time Payroll Clerk position in the 2024 Operating Budget to assist with additional workload related to implementing the Collective Agreement for Paid On-Call Firefighters.

BACKGROUND

There is currently only one dedicated full-time Payroll position in the Municipality that is responsible for all aspects of payroll for the entire organization. The Human Resources (HR) and Benefits Coordinator currently supports payroll 30% of the time. However, the Human Resources workload has increased significantly due to the unionization of the Paid On-Call firefighters, and staff are finding that they are falling behind due to a lack of resources.

DISCUSSION

As stated above, there is only one dedicated Payroll Coordinator for the entire organization, and currently, the Human Resources and Benefits Coordinator supports payroll 30% of the time; the unionization of 100+ paid on-call firefighters has added a much larger workload to both Payroll and Human Resources. The time from human resources that currently assists payroll is no longer sufficient and payroll requires assistance to ensure that deadlines are being met and mandatory reporting requirements are being completed in a timely manner.

Prior to the unionization, firefighters were paid monthly, and this has now changed to bi-weekly, which has added time to the already increasing workload that the Payroll Coordinator has. Additionally, the Collective Agreement results in more complicated payroll requirements that add significant time and workload pressures to the Payroll Coordinator.

Having a dedicated part-time Payroll Clerk will alleviate the current pressure on the HR and Benefits Coordinator and support the Payroll Coordinator in data entry, meeting timelines, making inquiries regarding timesheets, and benefits administration. Lastly, a part-time Payroll Clerk would allow for training and succession planning in this very important position within North Cowichan.

There are annual payroll requirements for approximately 480 employees, including summer students. Payroll is an essential and legislated service. One staff member can no longer keep up with the requirements and needs backup coverage for holidays, sick leave, etc.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include a part-time Payroll Clerk within the 2024 Operating Budget.

- This option would provide the required resources to accomplish all payroll tasks and interpret Collective Agreements associated with municipal staff and paid on-call firefighters.
2. THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to bring forward the request for a part-time Payroll Clerk to a future budget process.
- This option would hinder the ability to address employee/firefighter concerns in a timely manner and add increased workload to both Payroll and HR.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of not hiring a part-time Payroll clerk would be that staff may not have the resources to address employee/firefighter concerns effectively and efficiently. The ability to provide payroll support to managers and departments may be compromised without the resources necessary.

The financial implications for the 2024 Operating budget would be an increase of \$68,000, which includes benefits and is costed for eight months of the year in 2024. It is anticipated that if approved by Council, the position will not be filled until Spring. The estimated annual pay would be approximately \$91,000, which includes benefits.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include a part-time Payroll Clerk within the 2024 Operating Budget.

Report prepared by:

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