



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: October 4, 2022

Date: Organization chart review
and recommendation

VISION

We see Argyle as home to a healthy and thriving rural population. Our municipality promotes and supports economic and social opportunities for the region and engages in the active expression of our unique Acadian heritage. We are a place of choice for rural living and are widely recognized for our warm hospitality and joie de vivre. Surrounded by fresh air and cool ocean breezes, we work and play in the great outdoors. People choose to live in Argyle because of our commitment to each other, to our community and to our neighbors. Argyle is a place we are proud to call home.

Background:

As you are aware, there have been positional changes in the organization in the past 18 months. Our former Assistant to the Director of Public Works was shifted to Executive Assistant to the CAO/Deputy CAO, and the position was backfilled part time, as it was determined at the time that was what was required for the position. We put out a competitive hiring opportunity, and filled the position, and that position recently submitted their resignation as they are pursuing other interests outside the organization.

Our former Director of Public Works noted that he has seen 11 assistant positions come and go in his tenor as Director, and as our Building Inspector. This is a significant sign that the current setup does not suit employees that are chosen for it. Furthermore, it is challenging to have continuity and experience to support the former Public Works positions with this sort of turnover. The leadership team are challenged to find a better solution and have accepted the challenge.

What has changed

Since we filled that part-time position, two major staffing items have changed. First, the leadership team decided that the largest need for development is development officers to support the fundamental needs of the developer. Also, the building inspector is in dire need of assistance due to increased demands for his time and effort. We made the executive decision to fill a position for Inspection/Development, rather than refill a community development officer position. Logic was that if we weren't ready to address growth at the foundation, the CDO position would have challenges to encourage growth.

With the changes to accommodate a Deputy CAO and an assistant, the team was confident that community development matters could be handled well by that department. Finally, it was determined that economic development growth is best led by the well-trained staff at WREN.

We also decided a full-time fire inspector was needed to deal with the backlog of inspections needed. This proved very successful, as our service provision increased immensely. The addition of that position does not create more need for support, as he is independent and can manage his workflow rather well. His need would be clerical.

The other major change was the move. We have learned a lot about how the front desk functions, its strengths, and weaknesses, and what is needed for service support there.

What we learned

We noted that many questions were asked of the Assistant to the Director position that could not be answered directly and were transferred to our building inspector. This occurred many times, and it wouldn't matter who sat in the chair that issue would remain. This is an understandable situation, and with the addition of a second building inspector (in training), many of those questions could now be fielded more directly.

We learned that the front desk services lean heavily on finance, and much less on Operations, Inspection and Recreation. The person responsible for Operations, Inspection and Recreation would be better suited to support the tax collection primarily, and secondly to support the three other departments needing a hand.

We learned, and have learned year after year from our auditors, that we are short-staffed in finance as it relates to internal controls. For example, the same person should not be responsible for the creation of a supplier, the setting up of an amount owing to that supplier, and the cheque run supporting that supplier. We have two major areas of concern that another person could fix if responsibilities shifted to that person. The auditors have noted that to eliminate all issues, it would take 2-3 people hired in that department to achieve it. This is not practical, but we are noticing a significant increase in demands from the province and internally for proper planning and controls. Also, with the incoming of Asset Management recommendations, that will add more pressure on the Directors and the CAO to work on that information.

We are aware of succession planning needs in our Finance Department, and the need to train another person for tax collection, customer support, and accounts payable functions.

The addition of this function as part of the new description should greatly aid the Director of Finance in her mission to effectively staff the front desk, which is the source of many questions and services that are desired by our residents. This move would improve our service delivery, availability to the resident, and aid the delivery of the finance function while continuing to provide a support role for our Operational and Inspection departments.

The conclusion to support a full-time position, focused first on finance and second on the other departments, is the consensus of the leadership team. The position would fall within the salary scale range for a supporter staff, with an estimated annual cost of \$39,000 to \$44,000, before pension and medical benefits. Currently the cost for the position at part time for a year would have been about \$26,000 without pension or medical benefits. The difference is not budgeted for the position but would not be a considerably higher amount for the year, considering hiring won't be completed until November, and we will have a full month with no expense for the position.

MGA considerations:

No significant considerations. The CAO errs on the side of caution if there is a change in classification of staff, as this is a decision of Council, while hiring, job descriptions, evaluations etc. is ultimately the responsibility of the CAO. This could be considered a considerable change in description for a position and thus the Council's approval.

CAO's Recommendation:

Recommend that the Council approve the hiring of a full-time Accounting Clerk position, with responsibilities to support the Operations and Inspection Departments. The full-time position shall be provided more responsibilities than a part time position and shall be trained to perform tax collection and other front desk duties, freeing up our current collector to focus her time and talent on other taxation and property matters.

Where the auditors recommend 2-3, we are suggesting a .5 increase in staffing duties. It should be noted that this position was formally a full-time position and was moved to part-time to assess the actual duties of the position. Also, the move would shift the reporting from the Director of Operations and Protective Services to the Director of Finance.

Suggested motion:

Move that the classification of Accounting Clerk (full time) be approved by Council, replacing the current part time position of Administrative Assistant.