



Report **COR2024-043 - Professional Development Budget Request – Follow-Up Report**

Date **Tuesday, November 12, 2024**

From **Brittany Drury, Deputy CAO / Director of Corporate Services**

Memo Report

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Analysis

The Township formally recognized the benefits and necessity for ongoing staff professional development via creation of the Human Resources Policy manual in 2018. Said manual includes a Training and Development Policy, establishing opportunities for professional development at the staff level, and parameters for pursuing career development.

Historic Township Budgets have allocated \$2,500 per staff member to pursue professional development opportunities. This amount has remained the same since at least 2008. With inflation, new demands, and levels of expertise at the local government level and new service downloads from upper tiers, expansion of funding dedicated to staff professional development is recommended.

Investing in staff professional development achieves Council's fifth strategic pillar, as established in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, being, "Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services.

Said pillar identifies the Township as a leader in municipal and customer service excellence, through a focus on fiscal responsibility and investing in staff to attract and retain highly skilled employees. Within said pillar, objective 5.4 establishes an expectation for ensuring proper distribution of workload and retention of staff, and specifically, to support ongoing staff education and succession planning.

Investing in staff, and prioritizing retention and attraction of a skilled workforce will continue to be prioritized in the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Currently, and for at least the past decade, the Township has allocated \$2,500 per Full Time Employee (FTE) to pursue professional development opportunities on an annual basis. With existing staff compliments, the total budget allocation for professional



development in 2024 was \$99,500. While this allocation totals the \$2,500 per FTE, how the total budget is spent is flexible per department.

This individual allotment is expected to fund educational opportunities, including webinars, workshops, and training sessions, as well as conferences and networking events.

In considering inflation, increased costs at conferences and simply increased costs overall, enhancement of funding dedicated to staff professional development is recommended. With new legislation and downloading of services from upper tiers, including the province, education and training opportunities for staff are paramount in providing excellent service to the Georgian Bluffs community and minimizing risk to the corporation.

The first draft of the 2025 Budget included a proposed increase to the annual professional development budget of \$103,000, thereby increasing the annual allotment per FTE to \$4,500. With an existing staff compliment of 45 FTEs, total annual contributions were estimated at \$202,500.

To reduce the impact of external increases and minimize the proposed operating increase, staff have prepared a second draft of the 2025 Budget, reflective of a \$3,500 professional development budget per FTE. With an existing staff compliment of 45 FTEs, total annual contributions are now estimated at \$157,500.

Comparable Data

At their meeting on September 27th, Council directed staff to gage professional development budgets of other member municipalities throughout Grey County. In collecting the requested data, staff connected with the 9 lower tier municipalities throughout the County, and representatives of the County of Grey.

While not all 9 member municipalities answered staff's survey, with 6 respondents, the Township was able to define a range in annual allocations between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per staff member, across the County. All other member municipalities, that participated in the poll, separate training costs from conference costs, with the average allocation of conference costs totalling between \$30,000 and \$40,000 per operating department.

In considering the Township includes conference costs within the professional development budget, maintaining an increase in historical budgets, to the noted \$3,500, is in line with averages across the County member municipalities.



Financial Impact

In reducing the requested increase to annual professional development budgets, to \$3,500 from the original \$4,500, as presented on September 27th, a total of \$45,000 has been cut from the 2025 operating budget.

Staff will continue to monitor the Township's professional development needs beyond the proposed 2025 increase.

Strategic Priorities

Investing in staff professional development achieves Council's fifth strategic pillar, as established in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, being, "Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services.

Conclusion

Increasing the Township's professional development budget to \$3,500 per FTE achieves Council's fifth strategic pillar as established in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, while continuing to invest in individual, career specific professional development opportunities at the staff level to ensure staff can pursue continuing education to remain up to date on changing legislation, service levels and service delivery.

Reducing the budget request from \$4,500 per FTE, to the noted \$3,500, results in an operational savings of \$45,000, thereby reducing the overall impact to the 2025 tax levy.

Respectfully Submitted: Brittany Drury, Deputy CAO / Director of Corporate Services