Recommendation

That the Committee of the Whole receives report OPS2019-51 from the CAO/Director of Operations regarding the one time grant from the Provincial government for small and rural municipalities to find efficiencies and cost savings, and recommends that request for proposals for a township wide energy audit, fire master plan, recreation master plan, building condition assessment, update roads need study and the development of a community safety and well-being plan be issued.

Background

On March 20, 2019, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing notified small and rural municipalities across the Province of a one-time, unconditional grant. The notification from the Minister is attached as Appendix 1. The Township received $642,347.00.

Analysis

While the grant is unconditional, the provincial government has encouraged municipalities to use these one-off funds for projects designed to modernize service delivery and identify more efficient ways of operating.

The Ontario Government recognizes that small and rural municipalities have limited capacity to plan, modernize, and improve the way they provide services to their communities.
Some of the examples the Province has suggested the funds be used for include, service delivery reviews, development of shared service agreements, IT solutions, and capital investments.

Staff are recommending that Committee of the Whole consider items such as:

- Energy Audit performed on all Township owned facilities to look for operating cost savings:

- Retaining a consultant to assist with the development of a community safety and well-being plan. The Province has mandated that all municipalities have a plan in place by January 2021. Although the County of Grey has indicated that they will take the lead and help facilitate the discussions between agencies, each lower tier municipality must have their own plan. In January 2019, amendments to the Police Services Act came into force, requiring municipalities to develop a “Community Safety and Well-Being Plan”. Plans must be adopted by January 1, 2021. Municipalities must work in partnership with other sectors such as education, police, social services, victim services, and the health sector to produce a plan that will improve service delivery to proactively address crime and complex social issues on a sustainable basis.

Lower tier municipalities in County systems are responsible for developing and adopting a plan, but groups of municipalities may work together to develop one common plan, that is then adopted by each Council.

Staff are currently working with colleagues across the County to discuss the best approach to this significant project. Recommendations on the proposed methodology will come forward to Council when they are available.

- Fire Master plan. The Township of Georgian Bluffs as a whole has never had a formal fire master plan in place to ensure the entire municipality fire protection is consistent as well as the assessment of the required equipment and services. This has
traditionally been left up to the Inter-Township Fire department to provide the required level of service.

- A recreation master plan to ensure that the Township is meeting the needs of its residents.
- The development of an up to date roads needs study. The last needs study was completed in 2014 and contained several errors and omissions that puts the accuracy into question.
- Building assessments on all Township owned building to ensure they are being maintained to a standard that maximizes their life expectancy as well as allows for proper capital planning.

At this time, the costs to complete the above noted studies and assessments are unknown. It is recommended that Committee of the Whole provide direction as to the plans and assessments that they wish to have completed.

Once direction has been given, proper request for proposals (RFP) can be issued and detailed costs can be obtained. Any of the surplus funds from the grant could be applied toward implementing recommendations included in the plans and assessments.

**Financial Impact**

None at this time.

**Implications**

It is anticipated that in the coming years, the province will be reducing grant payments to the township. Finding efficiencies and cost savings will ensure the township’s ability to absorb the financial reductions while still providing the services required.

**Consultation and Communications**

N/A
Conclusion

On March 20, 2019 the Ontario Government announced one time funding for small and rural municipalities to find efficiencies and reduce long term costs. The Township received $642,347.00.

Staff are recommending the completion of a Township wide energy audit, fire master plan, recreation master plan, updated roads need study, building condition assessments and the development of a community safety and well-being plan with the funds provide for with the grant. Any unspent portion of the grant could be allocated to the implementation of recommendations include in the approved plans and audits.

Supporting Documentation

Appendix 1—Correspondence from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing March 20, 2019

Respectfully Submitted:

_________________________________
Rick Winters, C.E.T.
CAO/Director of Operations
March 20, 2019
Your Worship
Mayor Dwight Burley
Township of Georgian Bluffs
dburley@georgianbluffs.on.ca
Dear Mayor Burley:

Our government for the people was elected to restore trust, transparency and accountability in Ontario’s finances. As you know, the province has undertaken a line-by-line review of our own expenditures, and we have been clear that we expect our partners, including municipalities, to take steps to become more efficient as well.

Municipalities play a key role in delivering many provincial services that people across Ontario rely on. Taxpayers deserve modern, efficient service delivery that puts people at the centre and respects hard-earned dollars.

Transforming service delivery and identifying more modern, efficient ways of operating is critical and complex work. As Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I recognize that many of Ontario’s small and rural municipalities may have limited capacity to plan and manage transformation, depending on the resources they have available and how far they have moved on their own modernization agendas.

That is why we are providing a one-time payment in the 2018-19 fiscal year to support small and rural municipalities’ efforts to become more efficient and reduce expenditure growth in the longer term.

To ensure that this investment is targeted to where it is needed most, municipal allocations are based on a formula, which takes into consideration the number of households in a municipality and whether it is urban or rural.

While this investment is unconditional, it is intended to help modernize service delivery and reduce future costs through investments in projects such as: service delivery reviews, development of shared services agreements, and capital investments. Our government believes that municipalities are best positioned to understand the unique circumstances and determine where and how this money is best spent.
I am pleased to share that Township of Georgian Bluffs receive a one-time payment of $642,347 which will flow in this fiscal year.

Staff from our regional Municipal Services Offices will be in touch in the coming days for your acknowledgement of this letter and to discuss any questions that you might have. I encourage you to work with ministry staff as you begin to think about the best way to proceed for your community. The Municipal Services Offices can offer advice and point to examples that may be helpful as you contemplate local solutions. In the future, we would be interested to hear about your modernization success stories.

Thank you once again for your commitment to demonstrating value for money. I look forward to continuing to work together to help the people and businesses in communities across our province thrive.

Sincerely,

Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing