

Report from Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk

Date of Report: November 13, 2017

Date of Meeting: November 20, 2017

Report Number: LCS-B057-2017

File: 10.50.1

Subject: 2018 Election Operating Budget - Advertising

Recommendation

That the Budget Standing Committee receive this report for information.

Background

At the November 6, 2017 meeting of the Budget Standing Committee (BSC) the Director of Legal and Clerks Services presented the 2018 Operating Budget which included the 2018 Election Budget. The BSC questioned the advertising budget line that showed \$3,000. The BSC felt that this amount would not be enough to meet the upcoming communication needs for the election as there are many changes to the *Municipal Elections Act* that will need to be communicated to the general public and to prospective candidates.

During the preparation of the 2018 Election Operating Budget, staff drew from the 2014 budget for their base. In 2014, the advertising budget for the municipal election was \$2,700. Upon reviewing this line item, it was noted that payments were made for Facebook posts, newspaper ads, and poll signage.

Report

The Area Clerks Election Planning Task Force met at the Regional offices on November 9, 2017 to review their communication plans. The region and the municipalities are planning to work together to present a consistent message, most especially because of the direct election for the regional chair. This is the key focus of this task force because there are many complicated changes that will need to be written in plain language and placed on social media as well as in the local and regional newspapers.

The region has offered the services of their communications staff to prepare the ads and prepare a plan for getting the information to the public, this will lighten the workload for the City of St. Catharines internal communications staff during 2018.

In 2018 there will be an increased need for advertising expenses due to changes for the nomination period, changes to how a candidate files, changes to the way candidates can advertise, etc. Currently there is \$400,000 allocated in the operating budget for the 2018 municipal election. Although a fulsome communication and advertising plan has

not been fully developed; early discussion indicate that more dollars may be required for the advertising component of the election to meet the communication requirements necessary for the 2018 municipal election. The City Clerk will manage the election within this budget envelope as much as possible as there are a number of forecasted expenditures at this time.

Financial Implications

There is \$400,000 budgeted for the 2018 municipal election. Should additional advertising expenditures for the election be required they will be managed within the overall corporate budget or with reserves as the estimate at this time for additional advertising is a low dollar amount of \$3,000.

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Submitted & Approved by: Heather Salter, Director of Legal and Clerks Services, City Solicitor