

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Corporate Services

Workforce Development



To: Mayor & Members of Council
From: Justin Rousseau, Corporate Leader- Chief Financial Officer
Date: October 3, 2023
Subject: Recruitment Challenges and Path Forward

Recommendation

1. Direct the Corporate Leader-Chief Financial Officer to implement phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Recruitment Strategy as laid out in this report;
2. Approve a 2023 Budget variance of an upset limit of \$100,000 dollars for requirement services for Phase 1;
3. Approve a first charge to the 2024 Budget with an upset limit of \$117,000 for salary and benefits cost for the recruitment of a Health and Safety Coordinator/Workforce Advisor; and
4. Approve a 2023 budget variance of an upset limit of \$15,000 dollars for the recruitment of a Health and Safety Coordinator/Workforce Advisor.

Background

The Municipality of Lakeshore has been experiencing challenges in the recruitment of talented, experienced professionals. The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the attraction and retention challenges regarding several positions and vacancies. The intention is to provide a path forward to tackling the Municipality's challenges.

The introduction of Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act and the growth in the province and region have helped worsen an already difficult employment environment post-pandemic. The municipal sector is a unique environment where qualified professionals with experience in municipal legislation are key to the municipality's long-term success and stability and overall management and long-term visioning. Lakeshore is Essex County's largest employer of municipal professionals outside of the City of Windsor. The attraction and retention of staff are of the utmost importance to achieve the goals of Council and our residents.

New legislation has put municipal professionals in short supply for staffing in the areas of engineering, planning, finance, business professionals, recreation management and qualified and trained operators with the proper licensing to complete regulated works such as water and wastewater.

Lakeshore is competing with not only the municipalities in Essex County for labour but also those across the province. Decisions about the competitiveness of wages and benefits and culture programs to make Lakeshore an employer of choice will be critical to the overall success of the municipality in both the short term and long run.

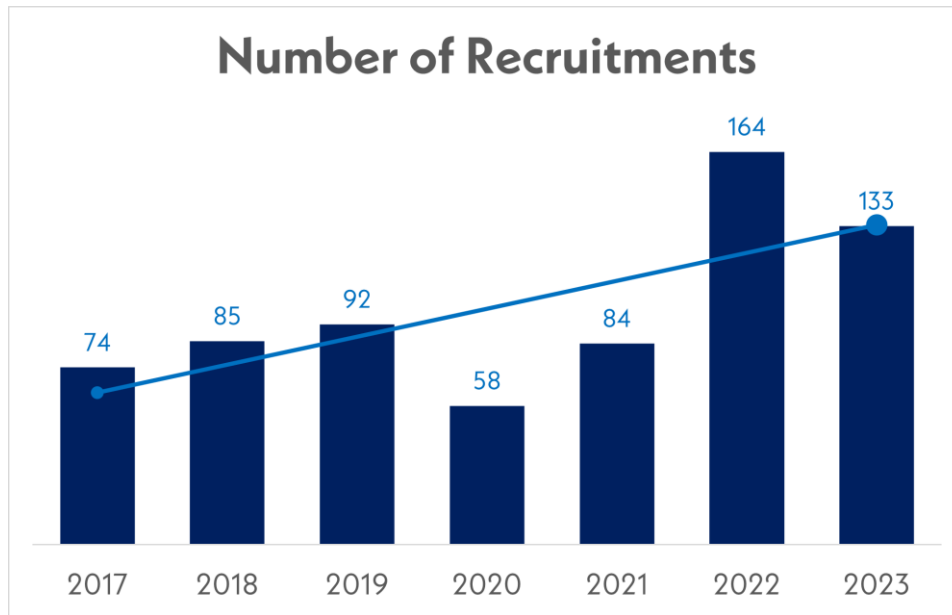
Currently, Lakeshore is experiencing a significant recruitment challenge and loss of talented municipal staff to other municipalities in the region and elsewhere in the province due to the new municipal environment allowing some forms of flexible work arrangement. Being the largest talent pool in the region does position Lakeshore with more risk than some of our comparators for our staff to be recruited by our peers.

Currently, the following key positions are not filled in Lakeshore:

- 1 Engineering Technologist - Sanitary and Stormwater
- 2 Team Leader - Engineering Development
- 3 Engineering Technologist - Roads and Utilities
- 4 Engineering Technologist - Development approvals (2 staff)
- 5 Associate Lawyer
- 6 Division Leader - Water Management
- 7 Team Leader - Sanitary and Stormwater
- 8 Financial Analyst (temp)
- 9 General Counsel
- 10 Planner II
- 11 Team Leader - Community Planning
- 12 Division Leader - Utilities and Eng Mgt
- 13 Water Treatment Operator (temp)
- 14 Water Distribution Operator (temp)
- 15 Capital Project Coordinator
- 16 Part-Time Facility Attendants

The Workforce Development Team is working hard to stay on top of the ongoing recruitment challenges however the number of recruitments is challenging for the team to manage with current staffing levels.

The following is a 7-year trend in total recruitment:



*2022 was actual 264 with 100 elections staff onboarded

The graph above shows that Lakeshore is on pace to reach well over 160 recruitments in 2023 as we sit at 133 in September and currently have 16 key open recruitments. Currently, Lakeshore is an average of 3 recruitments a week or 500-800 interviews annually with a staff of 2 dedicated resources. Workforce Development staff play a vital role in the hiring process by supporting hiring managers and candidates throughout the process and ensuring a fair, equitable, efficient and transparent recruitment.

The following report is designed to put an action plan in place to deal with this ongoing issue, in both the short and long term.

Comments

At the Municipality of Lakeshore, the recruitment process holds significant importance in ensuring the right talent is brought into the organization. This process typically involves several key steps. Firstly, it starts with identifying the need for a new hire through a job requisition form, which can arise due to various reasons such as expansion, attrition, or the creation of a new position. Once the need is established, a detailed job description is drafted and/or modified outlining the roles, responsibilities, and required qualifications. This information is then used to advertise the position through various channels like job boards, social media, and company websites.

Following this, applications are collected and screened to shortlist candidates who best match the outlined criteria. This shortlisting process is crucial in managing the influx of applications and ensuring that only qualified candidates move forward. Subsequently, interviews are conducted, which could be in the form of one-on-one meetings, panel interviews, or virtual interviews. These interviews are designed to assess not only the

candidate's technical skills but also their cultural fit and soft skills. Following the formal interview, shortlisted candidates are often asked to complete a skills assessment through testing.

After the interviews, reference checks are conducted to verify the information provided by the candidate and to gain insights from previous employers or colleagues. Depending on the nature of the role, additional assessments or tests may be administered to evaluate specific skills or aptitudes. Once all assessments are completed, a final decision is made, and an offer is extended to the chosen candidate. Post-offer negotiations, onboarding, and orientation are the final steps in integrating the new hire seamlessly into the organization.

Throughout this process, expertise in Human Resources plays a critical role in ensuring that the recruitment process adheres to legal and ethical standards while also aligning with the company's overall strategic goals. This comprehensive approach to recruitment at the Municipality of Lakeshore demonstrates a commitment to bringing in the best talent to drive the organization forward.

The increased time spent on recruitment has led to a decline in some of the key Workforce Development Programs such as Health and Safety, orientation for new staff, training/development and cultural improvement strategies, it is believed some of these gaps have led to frustration of staff and are part of ongoing challenges.

Recommended Recruitment Strategy

Workforce Development believes that the solution to the Municipality's ongoing challenges is a multi-phased approach.

Phase 1- It is recommended that the municipality move to a municipal and professional recruitment agency for positions that have not been successfully recruited after 2 postings. At this time Lakeshore would be moving to this model for 3 to 5 of the above positions. It should be noted that recruitment agency costs can range between 25%-30% of the annual salary for a successful placement. The results of a successful candidate are not guaranteed however given the supply and demand issue in the municipal sector this corrective action should be considered an alternative.

Phase 2- Council precommitment to the 2024 budget additional staffing dollars for a Health and Safety Coordinator/Workforce advisor so that additional resources can be spent on the key areas of recruitment and the protection of our current staff in the workforce and work on cultural improvement to retain staff to cut down on turnover. Also it is recommended to begin the process of recruitment for this new position as soon as possible (2023) in order to help reduce the number of vacancies and risk to the municipality.

Council has reviewed this business case in the last two municipal budgets however due to budgetary pressures in other areas the service level was not enhanced. (See attached Business case from 2023 budget). Currently, the pressures in the Workforce

Development Division have reached a critical state and require some attention to deal with the ongoing struggles of the municipality.

Phase 3- Completion of the ongoing workplace assessments as well as non-management salary review and employee benefit packages to ensure Lakeshore remains competitive in the region and across the sector. This is scheduled to be completed in Q4 of 2023 and will be back before Council for consideration prior to the 2024 budget.

Phase 4- Increase our efforts and outreach with post-secondary education facilities to provide meaningful training to young potential municipal professionals in the areas of need to develop the next generation of municipal professionals here in Lakeshore. Focusing on the areas of Engineering, Planning, Finance Etc. Also, use resources in Workforce development to do outreach and job fair events for municipal-specific attraction purposes. For this phase to be successful the resources of more senior leaders in management will need to shift from task completion to staff development for this to be a successful long-term strategy.

Others Consulted

None

Financial Impacts

The following are the financial implications for each phase of the Recruitment Challenges and Path Forward action plan outlined in the report.

Phase 1- It is estimated that on average the municipality could be looking at \$20,000 dollars per recruitment with an estimated 5 recruitments per year. Thus, the anticipated budget variance could be \$100,000 dollars. This cost will be built into future budgets, but a variance could be expected in 2023.

Phase 2- It is estimated that the cost and benefits for a Health and Safety Coordinator/Workforce Advisor would be in the range of \$117,000 for 2024. Should Council approve the precommitment of 2024 budget and the addition of the headcount it is estimated that a variance of \$15,000 could be expected in 2023, by the time recruitment is completed.

Phase 3- There are no additional budgetary figures expected as these projects have been approved by Council and completion is scheduled in Q4 of 2023.

Phase 4- Currently there is no estimated amount for phase 4 as resources to do this outreach and municipal-specific attraction do not exist in the organization. However, should Council approve the strategy a plan can be brought forward in the 2024 budget.

Attachments

Business Case (2023 Budget) Health and Safety Coordinator/Workplace Advisor.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Recruitment Challenges and Path Forward.docx
Attachments:	- StaffingBusinessCase-WDAdvisor Approved JR.docx
Final Approval Date:	Oct 5, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Prepared by Justin Rousseau

Approved by Truper McBride