

Municipality of Lakeshore – Report to Council

Legal and Legislative Services

Legislative Services



To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Brianna Coughlin, Division Leader – Legislative Services
Date: November 12, 2024
Subject: ServiceOntario – Marriage Licence Modernization Program

Recommendation

Direct the Clerk to read By-law 113-2024, being a By-law to authorize an agreement with the Province of Ontario for Marriage Licence Modernization, during the Consideration of By-laws, as presented at the December 10, 2024 Council meeting.

Strategic Objectives

3b) Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Functions - Revise business processes to establish and employ a risk management framework, improved workflow management, and financial modelling to inform management of reserves

Background

The Municipality of Lakeshore issues marriage licences pursuant to the *Marriage Act*. Individuals that wish to be married in Ontario must complete the following steps:

1. complete a marriage licence application;
2. provide 2 pieces of government-issued identification for each person getting married;
3. provide supporting documentation, such as original certificates of divorce (if applicable)
4. pay the licence fee; and
5. sign the marriage licence in-person at the Municipal Office, sworn before the Licence Issuer (Clerk or Deputy Clerk).

The Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement (ServiceOntario), has been working on a phased approach to modernize the marriage licence application process through the Marriage Licence Modernization (MLM) program. This initiative aims to streamline and transform both the paper-based marriage licence application process for applicants and the issuance

process for municipalities in Ontario by moving towards a digital delivery model that minimizes physical touchpoints.

MLM is using a phased implementation approach with iterative improvements to features and functionalities and gradual rollouts to municipalities. The province-wide rollout strategy is currently being planned.

The first phase was in Spring 2021, when ServiceOntario enabled electronic signatures on marriage licence application forms and developed a PDF tool for municipalities, where applicants could see a proof of the marriage licence prior to obtaining their licence.

The second phase was launched in March 2023 to six municipalities. Since then, the service has expanded its features and functionalities to bring more value to the public and participating municipalities and improve application and issuance processes.

Comments

The Municipality has provided an online application and payment process for marriage licences since 2020. Moving to the provincial online application process will simply require a link to the ServiceOntario site and decommissioning of the Municipality's online application form. The Legislative Services Division will remain the contact for marriage licences and would receive training and support from ServiceOntario.

The advantage of moving to the provincial portal is a clearer process for the applicant, including an online appointment booking process (confirmed and approved by Administration). In addition, ServiceOntario would be responsible for the care and control of the supporting documentation for the applications.

Paper-based applications will continue to be accepted in-person, however it is anticipated that most applications will continue to be submitted online.

Administration recommends entering into an agreement with the Province of Ontario to participate in the online application process. It is anticipated that transition to the provincial process would begin in February 2025.

Others Consulted

ServiceOntario

Financial Impacts

There is no fee for participation in the MLM program. The fees for marriage licences will remain the responsibility of the Municipality of Lakeshore as set out in the annual User Fee By-law.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Service Ontario - Marriage Licence Modernization Program.docx
Attachments:	
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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Submitted by Susan Hirota

Approved by the Corporate Leadership Team