



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Legislative & Clerk Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Alexander, Acting Clerk
Date to Council: December 13, 2022
Report Number: LCS-2022-37
Subject: Civil Marriage Services

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report LCS-2022-37 entitled “Civil Marriage Services”, **be received**;

And that Civil Marriage Services offered by the Town **be terminated** effective December 31, 2022;

And further that the Acting Clerk prepare a by-law to amend By-Law 2018-09 with the respective revisions to terminate Marriage Ceremony Services and the agreements with the Town’s officiants;

And furthermore, that the Acting Clerk prepare correspondence to all Town Officiants terminating their agreements and a notice **be posted** on the Town’s website.

Background

At the Policies and Priorities Committee meeting held on November 28, 2017, Council approved Corporate Services & Clerk Report No. 43-17 regarding the Issuance of Marriage Licenses and Civil Marriage Ceremonies and implementation of these services. By-law 2018-09 was adopted to authorize the service of Marriage Licences and Civil Marriage Services.

There are only three categories of people who can legally solemnize a wedding ceremony in Ontario: a religious official, Ontario Municipal Clerk or designate, a Judge or Justice of the Peace.

The *Marriage Act*, R.S.O 1990 c.M.3 section 24 authorizes the Clerk of a municipality to solemnize marriages under the authority of a licence. The Act also allows the Clerk to delegate authority to solemnize marriages to a service provider. The Clerk has delegated authority to four officiants to provide Civil Marriage Ceremonies on behalf of the Town.

The fee charged for Civil Marriage Ceremonies is \$250.00 plus HST during office hours and \$350.00 plus HST on evenings and weekends. The Town collects all fees prior to the marriage ceremony and retains a \$75.00 administration fee, when an officiant provides this service.

Comments

Earlier this year, the Clerk's Service Delivery Review (Service Review) recommended the department focus on core functions of legal and clerk services. The Service Review examined all the Town's Vital Statistics Services which are Death Registrations, Marriage Licensing and Civil Marriage Services and the level of staff support needed by the Clerk's department to offer these services.

In 2022, 21 marriage ceremonies were booked, the highest number of bookings for this service since it launched in 2018. This increase could be from the lack of services provided in the past two years due to the pandemic and the restrictions on gatherings which made couples defer their weddings plans. In 2018 and 2019, this service averaged 10 bookings annually or approximately \$750.00 in net revenue to the Town.

The Service Review identified marriage ceremonies as a discretionary service with limited financial return to the Town. Civil Marriage ceremonies are not regarded as a core service of the department. Rather this is an add-on service for those residents who wish to obtain their marriage licence and if needed, obtain an officiant to provide a marriage ceremony. Instead of offering marriage ceremony services, the Service Review recommended the following:

"That the Clerk's office maintain a roster of wedding officiants within the community and make those names available to interested parties. This action would mean that the Town would no longer serve as a wedding service broker. This action would also be in keeping with the overarching strategy of focusing on core services."

and

"That the appropriate by-law and fee schedule be amended based on the direction of Council."

Staff have reviewed the Service Review recommendations and have observed that the wedding industry in Windsor-Essex is a well-established sector as marriage ceremony services, including marriage officiants, are highly marketed within the region. The recommendation to maintain a roster of officiants would require significant time from staff to maintain up-to-date information. This information is readily available on the internet.

Furthermore, the region has a dedicated wedding magazine which advertises various marriage service providers, and local banquet halls that host wedding shows annually where vendors, including officiants, promote their services. The wedding industry consists of professional experts that can assist couples in officiating their wedding.

It is recommended that the Town terminate civil marriage services and not maintain a roster of wedding officiants as the wedding industry has the capacity to provide this service. Furthermore, By-law 2018-09 should be amended to reflect Council's direction.

Consultations

Chief Administrative Officer

Financial Implications

The financial implications of terminating the civil marriage services to the Legislative and Clerk Services budget is minimal to the department's operating budget. The administration fee for civil marriages is \$75.00 per booking and the annual average booking for civil marriages is 10 or \$750.00 in revenue. It is noted that the \$75.00 fee does not cover the cost of staff time to make arrangements for the service.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable ☐

Website ☒ Social Media ☐ News Release ☐ Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Jennifer Alexander, MPA
Acting Clerk

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
None	None