

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: August 11, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
From: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: COU25-099
Attachments: None

Title: Contracted Human Resources Support Services Update

Objective: To update the Mayor and Council of the ongoing contracted human resources services within the City of Stratford and seek approval to extend the contracted services of Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions to the end of 2025.

Background: Background: The City continues through a transition in its delivery of Human Resources ("HR") services concurrent with Council's search and recruitment of a permanent Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

As of the date of writing this report, a permanent CAO has been named and will assume the role on September 2. Further, the City's Director of Social Services continues in the Acting Human Resources (HR) Director role.

At the April 28, 2025, Regular meeting the Interim CAO presented report COU25-050, and Council adopted the following resolution:

THAT the report titled "Human Resources Update" (COU25-050) be received for information;

THAT the Interim Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to enter into an agreement for services with Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions for a term of three (3) months at a cost of \$60,000, including HST and travel fees;

THAT a follow up report be brought forward within the next three-month term to evaluate ongoing need and seek further direction from Council, if required;

AND THAT the expenditure for this service be recorded in the HR department budget.

In the April 28, 2025 report, it was noted that “(a contracted firm) is intended as an interim solution to bridge the next several months after which time the next steps can be more clearly articulated, ideally with the input of the permanent CAO”.

Analysis: Since the start of the engagement, Ward & Uptigrove (W&U) has provided steady HR support tailored to the City’s operational needs during this transitional period. Their services have included both routine HR functions and guidance on more complex matters. The Acting HR Director and Interim CAO have been satisfied with this transitional support arrangement to date.

Day-to-day tasks have included support with onboarding and documentation, WSIB and disability/return to work file management, health and safety policy updates, and recruitment panel participation. Administrative support has also been provided for internal committees and labour-related documentation.

At a strategic level, W&U has offered advice on job evaluations & wage parity, compensation, labour relations, and accommodation files. They have also provided guidance on matters sensitive in nature and offered management drop-in hours and training sessions focused on HR legislation and practices.

As anticipated, this arrangement has helped address immediate HR needs and support internal capacity during this transition period.

As Council will recall, the original intent at the outset was to revisit the requirements in the context of CAO recruitment and operational need in three months’ time, and a subsequent report to make recommendations as to next steps; such is the purpose of this Management Report, and it is recommended by both the Acting HR Director and Interim CAO to allow the agreement for services to continue to the end of the calendar year (December 31, 2025).

Extending the support arrangement through to the end of 2025 will provide the incoming CAO with the flexibility to assess the current HR service model, consult with the Corporate Leadership Team, and determine the most appropriate structure and staffing approach moving forward. This allows for careful planning without making immediate long-term commitments. Most importantly, it also allows the incoming CAO to be involved with any future recruitment process(es). Lastly, if the incoming CAO determines at any point that the support arrangement with W&U is no longer needed, the current service agreement includes termination provisions.

As provided in the April report (COU25-050), the estimated value of the services for a three-month period fell below the \$60,000 consultant threshold, allowing staff to proceed without a formal RFP under Section 11.3.1 of the City’s Procurement Policy. Continuation of the support services to the end-of-year requires Council approval as per

section 24.1 of the City's Procurement Policy (the purchase price is greater than \$100,000; prior budget approval has not been obtained; it is in the best interests of the City to do so; and, Council has directed staff to provide a report for approval).

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

As the approved 2025 budget included staffing of the department, the short-term funding for these services will be offset by reductions in direct salary costs and have no negative impact on the 2025 operating results at this time.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Intentionally Change to Support the Future:

The recommendations of this report largely align with this Strategic Priority as this direction demonstrates intentional analysis of the service delivery.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This item does not fall under any One Planet Principles heading.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Contracted Human Resources Support Services Update" (COU25-099), be received for information;

THAT in accordance with the City's Procurement Policy, Council authorize the continuation of transitional support services with Ward & Uptigrove Human Resources Solutions for a term concluding December 31, 2025;

AND THAT the expenditures for this service continue to be recorded under HR consulting costs within the departmental budget.

Prepared by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Kim McElroy, Acting Director of HR

Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer