

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 4, 2022

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Jeff Letourneau, Director Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Digital Strategy Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Committee of the Whole receive this report for information, and That Committee of the Whole recommend Council approve the one time funding of \$6,250 for Project Concentrator from reserves




BACKGROUND:

In 2022, the Municipality engaged the services of Blackline Consulting to work with the project team and staff across the Municipality to develop a Digital Strategy. John Naas, Partner – Blackline Consulting, presented the Digital Strategy to Council on September 20, 2022. This report represents staff's recommended action plan following the presentation of the Digital Strategy.

DISCUSSION:

The development of the digital strategy was highly collaborative engaging senior management and staff from different departments across the municipality. It also leveraged other key reports including the Municipality's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and the recent Service Delivery Review.

The Digital Strategy is a key enabler to unlock value the Municipality can offer to its various stakeholders including:

 Residents and Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater transactions available online• Increased transparency• Improved access to information
 Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamline processes• Reduce wait times• Manage service expectations
 Municipal staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use data to inform decision-making• Create and foster a culture of innovation• Manage growth efficiently

Both key performance indicators and the ability to accurately produce those measures are equally important, and this strategy will help the Municipality do so. The Municipality should start to see changes both internally (staff) and externally (residents and businesses) as it implements the Digital Strategy.

Management recommends the following next steps which are all fully aligned with the Digital Strategy:

1. Hire the IT Leader – this position has been previously approved by Council in the 2022 Budget.
 - a. Addresses initiative #10 in the Digital Strategy
 - b. Role should be focused on business systems and applications, integration, vendor management and contract management
 - c. IT Leader will be accountable to develop the plan to implement the full Digital Strategy which will involve:
 - i. Enhancing online services
 - ii. Expanding use of business systems
 - iii. Standardizing and enhancing customer services
 - iv. Automating accounting processes such as Accounts Payable
 - v. Enhanced use of GIS data
 - vi. Streamlined Daycare processes
2. Recommend moving forward with the Lanark County IT proposal which will be brought forward in the 2023 Budget
 - a. Addresses initiative #5, #8, #9 in the Digital Strategy
 - b. Proposal involves the following:
 - i. Server upgrades to replace aging IT infrastructure which will improve network speeds
 - ii. Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity – involves a cloud based backup and business continuity solution that will allow the Municipality to operate if power is out at Municipal Offices.
 - iii. Enhanced Cyber Security solution
3. Recommend implementing Project Concentrator which will automate the processing and recording of payments made through digital channels (banks, telepay, EFT, etc....)
 - a. Addresses initiative #4 in the Digital Strategy
 - b. This project has been in the planning stages since 2016 and management recommends to move forward in the fall of 2022 with implementation
 - c. The project involves working with our banking partner RBC as well as Lanark County IT. RBC will concentrate all electronic payments from all sources and Lanark County IT will integrate the recording of the payments directly into our financial system. This project has the opportunity to deliver significant value and savings. Once implemented, it will reduce a significant amount of manual data entry by the AR Clerk and increase efficiency, improve data timeliness and accuracy within the financial system and enable improved financial reporting.

- d. There is a one time fee of \$1,250 payable to RBC as well as estimated one time staff cost for Lanark County IT of \$5,000 for a total one time project cost of \$6,250

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Receive the report for information and approve the one time funding for project Concentrator of \$6,250

Option 2: Receive the report for information and defer project Concentrator until the IT Resource is hired

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The IT Resource is included in the 2022 Budget and the Lanark County IT proposal will be brought forward in the 2023 Budget. Project Concentrator has a cost of \$6,250 and it is recommended to fund this from reserves.

SUMMARY:

Staff are fully aligned with the Digital strategy and recommend moving forward with the following projects to begin implementation of the Digital Strategy:

1. Hire the IT Resource
2. Bring Lanark County IT proposal forward in the 2023 Budget
3. Implement Project Concentrator to automate payments received through digital channels at a cost of \$6,250.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed by:

Jeff Letourneau,
Director Corporate Services

Ken Kelly,
CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Mississippi Mills Digital Strategy