

ROBERT J. SWAYZE

INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

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THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ESSEX
OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER
REPORT TO COUNCIL IN OPEN SESSION

TO: Mayor Snively and Members of Essex Council
FROM: Robert Swayze, Integrity Commissioner
DATE: April 6, 2021
SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Integrity Commissioner for 2020

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the 2020 Annual Report of the Integrity Commissioner dated April 6, 2021 be received for information.

Background:

I was originally appointed Integrity Commissioner for the Town of Essex by Agreement dated November 5, 2015 with a term expiring on November 3, 2017. That contract was extended at the request of Council until December 31, 2018. In 2018 a request for proposal was advertised and I was again the successful bidder. A further agreement was entered into for a two year term ending with January 31, 2021. In that contract Council has the right to extend the agreement on the same terms and conditions, for a further term of 2 years ending on January 31, 2023.

By an exchange of E-mails with the Clerk, the service agreement has been extended to the date of this meeting and I am prepared to accept an additional extension until January 31, 2023 on the same terms and conditions.

Activity in 2020

In my 2019 report I complimented Council for the low activity by the Integrity Commissioner in the year and this year also remains low, which continues to speak well for this Council regarding compliance with the Council Code of Conduct (the “Code”).

I am required by the Municipal Act in a periodic report to summarize information without identifying the person concerned.

During the 2020 year, I had only two complaints about a member of Council for failing to declare a conflict. I dismissed them both and on one of them the Ontario Ombudsman had a conference call with me. I believe that the Ombudsman was satisfied with my reasons for dismissal. I also had only three requests for advice from Councillors all of which were on potential pecuniary conflicts. One of them asked about the impact of election campaign contributions on being able to support the donor. My answer was that there is no impact if the contributions are made according to the law.

Councillor Orientation

In the past 3 years, I have conducted more than 30 workshops across the Province on the *Modernizing Ontario’s Municipal Legislation Act, 2016* (Bill 68) which came into force in 2019. It made substantive changes to the accountability and transparency regime in Ontario and added the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* to the jurisdiction of the Integrity Commissioner. If Council has not taken some of this training, it is recommended that a session be provided in the near future.

Conclusion:

It has been a pleasure serving the Town of Essex as Integrity Commissioner. I wish to convey my sincere thanks to members of Council and staff, for their cooperation and assistance in carrying out my mandate.

Prepared by:



Robert Swayze
Integrity Commissioner

Attachment(s): none