
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report BME-04-2019 Preparation of Building Division Property Files for Digitalization



For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 10, 2019

OBJECTIVE:

To seek approval from Council for funding to support the staffing needed to complete the preparation of Building property files for Digitalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report BME-04-2019 Preparation of Building Division Property Files for Digitalization be received;
2. AND THAT the funds from the Building Stabilization Fund to support the staffing needed to complete the Digitalization Project as outlined in this report be approved.

Prepared by: Randy Charlton, CMM III, MLEO(c), CPSO, Manager of Building & Municipal Enforcement Services

Approved: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager of Community & Development Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff have hired additional resources, funded through 2019 salary gapping dollars, to prepare the building files for digitalization. By the end of 2019, the Caledonia files will be ready for the vendor to proceed with digitalization and subsequent destruction, however, remaining files in Dunnville and Hagersville require preparation. In order to complete the project, by the target date of August, 2020, the current staffing complement is required. This report requests the authorization to maintain additional resources, and the funding to do so.

BACKGROUND:

Report CAO-01-2017 Digital Innovations and Customer Service Enhancements identified a number of initiatives that had been launched that utilize technology to better connect with both residents and visitors to the County. Digital Collaboration was one of the focuses of the report, specifically using technology to move from a paper based system to a digital system.

Since the 2017 report, the technology continues to be implemented and is moving the Building and Municipal Enforcement Services Division from a paper based system to a digital system. The technology includes upgrading existing software; purchasing of additional or "add-on" modules including CityView mobile and Online Portal; implementation services for the software (including validation and refinements and end user training); and hardware such as large monitors (32") to allow Building staff to view large electronic plans/drawings, including upgrading and migrating the existing software solution, CityView, to the latest version, of "CityView Workspace". This particular report focuses on the extension of staffing support to the digitalization of all Building property files which serves as a foundational component of the larger initiative noted above.

ANALYSIS:

In order to move from a paper based system to a digital system, Building Services' existing property files need to be scanned and converted into a format that will enable the files to be retrieved electronically. These property files contain the supporting documentation for the issuance of a variety of Building permits, from single family dwellings to deck, garages, pools, commercial construction, industrial construction including zoning verification and other agency comment documents dating back in some cases years well before amalgamation.

Building Services issued a Request for Proposal in early November for digitizing services, since awarded to Nimble Information Strategies Inc. which identified that approximately 1.2 million pages need to be scanned in order to digitally store the property files. Once the Building files are digitally stored Building staff and the public will be able to retrieve documents quicker to better facilitate Building Services. With digitalized property files the next steps towards Customer Service Enhancements can be realized through electronic permit submission, electronic inspection requests and the ability to self serve and obtain documents through the Online Portal functions of CityView.

Over the course of the last 6 months, staff have been organizing each of the individual property files in the Caledonia Satellite Office (CSO), preparing these files for the vendor to undertake the required document conversion, scanning and digitize of these property files. This work is expected to begin with the vendor in January 2020. The property files will be scanned by an artificial intelligent software. This software will identify appropriate metadata and index these documents. This process when completed will essentially permit the documents to be electronically searchable by property and document category.

It is expected that all the files in the CSO will be ready for digitalization before the end of 2019. Once the County's Building Services property files are taken for scanning to the vendor, Building staff's ability to respond to residents building permit inquires and permit applications may be delayed, as staff requests the specific file to be scanned by the vendor and the electronic property file sent to the County. The vendor is responsible for having the requested property file scanned and sent to the County within one business day. Once scanned the paper property files will be destroyed.

Staff will next turn their attention to the property files in Hagersville and Dunnville, and will attempt to prepare as many files as possible before the move into the new Haldimand County Administration Building. The goal is to send as many files to the vendor (Nimble Information Strategies Inc.) as possible before the office move in order to reduce the need to take up storage space for these files and to complete the project, by the end of August, 2020.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

In order to prepare the property files in the Caledonia satellite office for the vendor for scanning and digitizing, staff were able to use salary gapping to fund an additional equivalent of 1.3 FTE's.

There are approximately 20,000 files in Dunnville and Hagersville offices. Based on how long it took to prepare the Caledonia Building files, staff estimate it will take approximately 4,760 additional hours over 34 weeks to prepare the remainder of the property files in Dunnville and Hagersville.

The chart below identifies an estimated number of hours to complete the preparation of Building Property files in Dunnville and Hagersville offices, the time expected to take to prepare these files and the funds needed to maintain staff to complete the digitalization of the files.

Hours estimated to complete project	FTE	Estimated Cost
4,760	1.3	\$117,500

Staff recommend that the associated cost be funded from the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve which by the end of 2019 will be estimated at \$5,395,491. Where available, salary gapping dollars will be used to fund the continuation of the project to reduce the overall impact to the Building Permit Cost Stabilization Reserve.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

Not applicable.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

None.