

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services
Meeting Date: March 13, 2023
Report Code: CR-23-025
Subject: 2023 Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-23-025 respecting 2023 Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program, City Council directs staff to bring forward a by-law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Highlights:

- Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program has been confirmed for 2022.
- The City will receive \$325,610 under this program.
- The total cost to the City of Owen Sound for court security and prisoner transportation is budgeted to be \$660,000.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Previous Report/Authority:

None.

Background:

In 2006, the Province, AMO, and the City of Toronto undertook a joint effort – Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review. The final report, *Facing the Future Together*, included two recommendations including:

- a. Phase in an upload of funding from the province to the municipalities of municipal court security and prisoner transportation costs, to a maximum of \$125 million annually, beginning in 2012; and
- b. Undertake the development of court security standards in consultation with policing partners, the judiciary, and other stakeholders.

The City was represented by City Staff at the Court Security Task Force through an appointment by AMO.

Late in 2011, City Council authorized an agreement with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services respecting the Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program. The program was to begin in 2012 and be phased in over seven years ending in 2018. The maximum provincial total contribution in 2018 was set at 125 million dollars.

The original agreement was for a 3-year term and expired in 2014. A second two-year agreement expired in 2016, and a third recently expired in 2018. Since 2018 the funding agreement has been annual.

The City's historical funding was:

2012	\$61,324
2013	\$122,648
2014	\$183,972
2015	\$185,973
2016	\$232,466
2017	\$313,131
2018	\$365,319
2019	\$454,519
2020	\$422,212
2021	\$403,985
2022	\$373,648

The funds will be transferred in four installments in 2022. The 2022 funding amount is \$325,610 (2022 - \$373,648).

Analysis:

Annual reports for court security costs are submitted as required by the agreement. The 2022 annual court security costs increased over estimated costs due to some serious judicial hearings with multiple accused parties. The overall costs increased over estimates as a result. The number of in custody appearances at the courthouse remains lower than pre-COVID. Total funding for the court security grant remains static, while overall costs across the Province continue to rise creating an increasing funding shortfall. The overall amount recovered in this grant continues to be affected by reduced staffing during COVID thus resulting in a decreased portion of the overall funding when some services did not reduce costs.

Court Security and Prisoner Transportation are provided for all Grey County Municipalities, but the costs are unique to Owen Sound

County Council as part of the Hanover and Owen Sound Task Force looking at the challenges that Hanover and Owen Sound experience, identified an issue with security costs associated with the Courthouse located in Owen Sound. The Report identifies that the County will review the existing funding model for the Grey/Bruce courthouse located in Owen Sound and identify whether there are opportunities to offset costs for service delivery, given this supports populations beyond the municipal boundaries of Owen Sound. Offering this service at a regional level or identifying funding support streams was noted by the Task Force as an approach that can be considered. Continuing to work with the Province to find funding solutions that are equitable will be important in addressing this matter.

Financial Implications:

The 2023 funding allocation is approximately \$50,000 less than the amount anticipated in the Police Board operating budget. This will create a 2023 deficit if alternative savings or funding sources cannot be identified.

Communication Strategy:

None.

Consultation:

Police Chief

Attachments:

Letter from Solicitor General

Recommended by:

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Kate Allan at kallan@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1238.