

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services
Meeting Date: October 6, 2025
Report Code: CS-25-103
Subject: Court Security – Agreement with County of Grey

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-103 respecting Court Security – Agreement with the County of Grey, City Council directs staff to bring forward a by-law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute an agreement with the County of Grey respecting Court Security.

Highlights:

- Under the Community Safety and Policing Act, police services are responsible for courthouse security. The Owen Sound Courthouse serves a broader region, and the City of Owen Sound has faced a significant funding shortfall related to these responsibilities that provide a regional service.
- In April of 2024 the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee had recommended, among other actions, that the City approach the County regarding the funding shortfall.
- Grey County Council approved moving forward to develop an agreement to cover the City's court security funding gap starting in 2025. The County will pay the difference between the actual costs and the provincial transfer amount (approx. \$370,000 in 2024), with adjustments annually.
- Continued advocacy is essential to achieve a full provincial upload of these costs or a shift to regional/provincial service delivery.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Collaborative City.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Service Review CM-23-012](#)

[CS-24-036 Build a Business Case to Review Critical Funding Needs – Court Security](#)

Background:

The Community Safety and Policing Act states that police services are responsible for the security of courthouses within their jurisdiction. The Courthouse in Owen Sound is a consolidated court housing both the Ontario Court of Justice and the Superior Court of Justice, which provides Court Services for a wider region.

At its meeting in April of 2024, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee considered report CS-24-036 regarding Court Security. The report provided background on the legislative requirements and costs to the City relating to Court Security.

Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee approved the following resolution:

SR-240426-003

“THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-24-036 respecting Critical Funding Needs relating to Court Security, the Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Direct staff to continue to implement the recommendations of the Goss Gilroy Review of the Court Security and Prisoner Transportation Program;
2. Direct the City’s representatives on the Owen Sound Police Services Board to request that the Chief of Police review the Goss Gilroy recommendations and optimize the recommendations locally toward further reducing the costs of court security and prisoner transportation;

3. Direct staff to prepare a motion for the Mayor to present at Grey County Council, requesting that a staff working group be developed to investigate the funding shortfall in court security costs (which may also be expanded to include Bruce County);
4. Continue through the City's government relations priorities, to advocate provincially and through SOLGEN and M.P.P. Rick Byers for other changes to be implemented as recommended by the Goss Gilroy Review that are beyond the scope of local control; and
5. Continue to support the provincial upload of the funding gap or the creation of regional or provincial entities to deliver court security and prisoner transportation."

Carried

The request respecting Court Security was presented to Grey County Council through report CAOR-CW-18-24. County Council approved the following at their meeting July 25, 2024:

CW82-24

Moved by: Councillor Hutchinson

Seconded by: Councillor Boddy

That report CAOR-CW-18-24 regarding court security and prisoner transportation be received; and

That staff be directed to prepare an agreement that would provide to the City of Owen Sound the difference between the city's net Court Security and Prisoner Transport costs and the provincial CTSP grant; and

That the funding be included in the annual county budget commencing January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter.

Analysis:

The City's Director of Corporate Services has worked with County staff toward an agreement.

The fundamental principle of the agreement is that the County will cover the costs of Court security that are currently paid by City that exceed the costs covered by the Provincial court security transfer payment. In 2024, the cost that will be covered and uploaded to the County is estimated at

approximately \$240,000 per year. This will change on an annual basis depending on the costs relating to providing security and the provincial upload amount.

The County will be taking a report forward to County Council respecting the Agreement at their meeting October 9. The required funding from Grey County is higher than was originally anticipated. An August 2025 directive from the Ministry of the Attorney General that required armed officers will further increase the costs of court security.

This highlights the need for continued advocacy and a provincial upload of the entire cost of court security.

City Responsibilities Under the Agreement

The City shall provide to the County, no later than April 30 of each year, a copy of the Annual Financial Report submitted to the Ministry of the Solicitor General, covering the Reporting Year ending December 31 of the prior calendar year. The report shall include:

- a. A detailed account of the eligible expenses budgeted to provide security and prisoner transport as submitted to the Province;
- b. Any supporting correspondence or documentation from the Owen Sound Police Service explaining the basis for the reported expenditures and;
- c. Any information related to realized or potential revenue streams arising from courthouse and building operations.

It is understood that if there is a new arrangement with the Ministry regarding provincial upload amounts or the City's current agreement is amended, the City is required to notify the County within 25 days.

The agreement is for an indefinite term and has a cancellation notice requirement of 45 days by either party.

The agreement commits the City and County to working collaboratively to reduce the overall shortfall by examining budget documents as well as actual and potential cost recovery streams.

Financial Implications:

In 2024, the cost of court security was \$764,000.

The provincial transfer amount was \$394,000.

The estimated cost to be covered under the county agreement is approximately \$370,000 (2024). Under the Agreement, the County contribution would be determined annually based on the net shortfall in the preceding calendar year.

Communication Strategy:

The Director of Corporate Services will be required to submit annual financial information to the County each year by April 30.

The previous resolution directed provincial advocacy to implement the Goss Gilroy Review recommendations and support further provincial upload of costs. The need for ongoing advocacy is identified and supported by the draft agreement.

Consultation:

The County of Grey Staff have been consulted and have supported the development of the Agreement.

Attachments:

None

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services
Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 x. 1252.