

# Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury

## Recommendation to Council

N° 2019\_REC\_68

File N°:

Date of meeting: August 26, 2019

Subject: The Town's commitment to the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative

### Recommendation

Whereas the Town of Hawkesbury answered the request to host the pilot project for the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative, and;

Whereas the federal government has chosen the Town of Hawkesbury, with the Prescott-Russell Employment Services Centre as a main partner, to take part in the pilot project, and;

Whereas the funding from the federal government will be \$1.3 million over a three-year period to allow the Town to develop serious action and integration plans.

Be it resolved to commit to become a Welcoming Francophone Community after being nominated by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and to agree to disburse close to \$5,000 in return for an investment of \$1.3 million from the federal, as recommended in 2019\_REC\_68.

### Explanation, history, context

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched a new francophone immigration initiative called **Welcoming Francophone Communities (WFC)**. This initiative aims to create more welcoming and inclusive Francophone communities in minority situation, in 14 communities across Canada.

In October 2018, the Cornwall and Hawkesbury areas were identified as potential communities to host the pilot project of Welcoming Francophone Communities. The Hawkesbury area was selected because French is part of everyday life for a very large majority of people. All the required services are already in place in French, such as the economy, employment, health, education, justice, arts and culture, and recreation, and most importantly, there is a great need of skilled labour.

To achieve the status of **Welcoming Francophone Community (CFA)**, the Town of Hawkesbury has at its disposal the support of the **Eastern Ontario Francophone**

**Immigration Support Network, an advisory committee** including a consultant, the participation the Mayor of the Town of Hawkesbury and a main partner, the Prescott and Russell Employment Services Centre. The goal is to develop serious action and integration plans that are eligible for funding from the federal government, to a maximum of \$1.3 million over a three-year period. Government funds will be available starting April 2020.

There is a lot of preparatory work currently being done behind the scenes with the help of the Immigration Support Network, the advisory committee, the Prescott-Russell Employment Services Centre and the Mayor of the Town of Hawkesbury.

With the ultimate goal of succeeding as a Welcoming Francophone Community, the Network is attempting to accelerate and assist the Town in its preparatory work by funding certain activities and events, including:

1. A conference and training workshop at the Hawkesbury Sports Complex Community Hall on Thursday, August 29, 2019, with a distinguished guest, Mayor Cyrille Simard of Edmundston, New Brunswick, who will share his experience with the elected officials and Prescott-Russell employers about to the reality of the lack of skilled labour, and the reception and retention of newcomers. The Network, PRESC and the Town would each contribute \$1,360 for the speaker and his travel expenses, and;
2. A gathering to be held from 5 to 7 PM on Thursday, August 29, 2019, inviting the public, community organizations and social clubs to explain the lack of skilled labour in Hawkesbury and the challenges of the Welcoming Francophone Community designation, and;
3. A light snack that will be served at these two events, the cost of which will be paid by our partners, the Francophone Immigration Network and the Employment Services Centre, and;
4. The Mayor's participation in the Provincial Ontario Francophone Immigration Network Forum in Hamilton, on November 5-7, 2019. The Network will pay a part of the transportation and accommodation costs for which the Town will contribute \$500, and;
5. The Mayor's participation at the Destination Canada Job Fair in France and Belgium to promote Hawkesbury as a destination of choice. The Network would contribute \$2,500 and the Town \$2,500. The Town of Hawkesbury Kiosk is funded by IRCC. Three PRESC staff members will be at Destination Canada and will take on the responsibility of matching Francophone immigrants with employers looking for skilled labour. The role of the Town is to promote all the positive aspects of living in a rural area versus large centres like Ottawa and Montreal. The Town has already sent its promotional tool kit to Ottawa who will pay for the plane fare to France and Belgium. The date of departure is scheduled for November 13 and the

return is scheduled for November 22. The work hours at the job fair are from 8am to 6pm local time.

Please note:

Destination Canada receives more than 20,000 applications from immigrants who must meet the IRCC criteria. Nearly 1,000 people are selected and invited to the job fair (which is not open to the general public). Several interviews, language tests and educational equivalency exams are studied. Only immigrants whose employers could not find the labour force in the Hawkesbury area will be eligible. Immigrants do not take the jobs available to the citizens of Hawkesbury.

### **Options/alternatives**

- 1.

### **Impact on budget**

Philippe Timbers confirmed that the budget could absorb the sum of \$1,360 to pay the travel costs and fees of the speaker for the August 29, 2019 conference;

Mr. Timbers also confirmed that in the amounts allocated for elected officials to attend conferences there remains an amount of \$2,500 that could be used for the trip fare to Destination Canada.

Only \$500 will be allocated for the provincial forum in Hamilton and \$3,000 for light snacks. Advertising, if needed, will be shared among the partners, with the Town contributing \$1,000.

### **Relevant studies**

N/A

### **Supporting document**

N/A

### **Communication plan**

Our communications coordinator will be responsible to keep the public informed, through press releases, our Facebook page and the Town's website, of the progress and activities related to this programme.

### **Department(s) involved**

### **Submitted and recommended by**

Paula Assaly, August 26, 2019

### **Comments of the Chief Administrative Officer**

Daniel Gatién, CAO

## Report Approval Details

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



**Daniel Gatién - Aug 20, 2019 - 5:14 PM**