

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire Mayor Watson and Members of Council File/N° de fichier: _____

From / Expéditeur M. Rick O'Connor
City Clerk

Subject / Objet Auditor General Exit Interview Date: June 29, 2020
Framework

This memorandum provides Members of Council with information about the exit interview process for the City's outgoing Auditor General, Ken Hughes, further to City Council's direction of May 13, 2020. As Members will recall, Council directed the City Clerk to report back by the end of Q2 2020 with details of the framework for the exit interview, which will be conducted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, as well as how the interview will fit into the overall process and schedule for hiring a new Auditor General.

Pursuant to Council's direction, the exit interview process described in this memo was developed by my Office in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, the City Solicitor and the Director, Human Resources. As described below in more detail, the exit interview will be:

- Conducted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, with administrative assistance from Human Resources, within four to six weeks of the end of the Auditor General's term on December 31, 2020; and
- Reported confidentially to Members of Council by way of an *in camera* verbal update/PowerPoint presentation from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, with the results of the exit interview used to inform key themes and any related comments.

Some additional details are below.

Background

On May 13, 2020, Council considered Motion No. 33/3, moved by Councillor Cloutier and seconded by Mayor Watson, which began the recruitment and appointment process for a new Auditor General to replace Mr. Hughes when his contract expires on December 31, 2020. The recruitment and appointment process is to be conducted in accordance with the Council-approved [Statutory Officer Recruitment, Appointment and Contract Administration Policy and/or Procedures](#).

Among other things, Council through the motion approved:

- The Mayor (Chair), the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, and the Deputy Mayors to be the Hiring Panel to interview candidates for the position of City Auditor General, and that the Mayor also seek input from all other Members of Council on their expectations of the desired qualifications for same;
- The engagement of an external search firm from the City's Standing Offer list to assist the Hiring Panel in undertaking an executive search for a new Auditor General, to an upset limit of \$50,000;
- Directing the Hiring Panel to report back to Council by Q4 of 2020 with a recommended candidate for Council's approval as the new Auditor General; and
- Directing the Office of the City Clerk to provide the required administrative support to the Hiring Panel.

The Cloutier/Watson motion was amended by Motion No. 33/4, moved by Councillor Brockington and seconded by Councillor Cloutier, which added the following steps as part of the process to recruit and appoint a new Auditor General for the City of Ottawa in this instance:

That Council direct the City Clerk to:

- a) Establish, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, the City Solicitor (or delegate) and the Director, Human Resources (or delegate), the framework for a voluntary exit interview with Mr. Hughes to be conducted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, including the interview's structure, questions, timing (schedule) and confidential reporting out mechanism; and**
- b) Report back to City Council by the end of Q2 2020 by way of a memorandum that includes details of the exit interview framework and how the interview will fit into the overall process and schedule for hiring a new Auditor General**

In accordance with the above-noted direction set out in the amending motion, my Office has established, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee, the City Solicitor and the Director, Human Resources, the framework for a voluntary exit interview with Mr. Hughes to be conducted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. As set out below, the framework includes the interview's structure, questions, timing (schedule) and confidential reporting out mechanism.

This memorandum fulfills the above-noted requirement to report back to Council regarding details of the exit interview framework and how the interview will fit into the overall process and schedule for hiring a new Auditor General.

Details of the Exit Interview Framework

Structure

As directed by Council, the exit interview will be conducted by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be accompanied by a representative from Human Resources who will take notes and compile the responses from the Auditor General for the Chair

and Vice-Chair. Following the interview, the results will be themed by Human Resources so that the Chair and the Vice-Chair can decide on information and comments to report to Council by way of an *in camera* verbal update/PowerPoint presentation, as described below in more detail.

Subject to the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of the interview, the interview may be conducted in person (with physical distancing measures as required) or electronically, using Microsoft Teams. The decision will depend on the preference and comfort level of the Auditor General and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee.

Questions

The City's exit interview template has been adapted for the purposes of the Auditor General's exit interview and is attached to this memorandum for ease of reference.

Timing (Schedule)

In accordance with the City's regular practice, the exit interview will be conducted within four to six weeks of the end of the Auditor General's term on December 31, 2020.

While it is noted that the preamble to the Brockington/Cloutier motion included that "an exit interview with Mr. Hughes would provide a valuable opportunity to learn from the departing Auditor General's experience **and to inform Council and the Hiring Panel during the recruitment and appointment process**" [emphasis added], the City's general practice is for an exit interview to take place within four to six weeks of the end of the incumbent's term. In this instance, the regular timing would mean that the exit interview will likely occur after the Auditor General's successor is appointed – and therefore, the interview would not "inform Council and the Hiring Panel during the recruitment and appointment process." Staff further advise that information relating to matters that would inform the current hiring process (e.g. suggested key skills, qualities and qualifications that should be sought in a new Auditor General) is generally not received through the exit interview process.

Therefore, the framework provides that information from the current Auditor General regarding suggested key skills, qualities and qualifications of a successor may be sought through an informal discussion between the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Auditor General, with the key points of this consultation provided through the Office of the City Clerk to the search firm to form part of the information provided to the Hiring Panel and integrated into the interview questions.

Confidential Reporting Out Mechanism

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee will report to Council by way of an *in camera* verbal update/PowerPoint presentation that provides the results of the exit interview, through the following process:

- As noted above, Human Resources will provide administrative support to summarize key themes resulting from the interview;
- The exit interview responses will be added to the Auditor General's employee file; and
- The Chair and the Vice-Chair will provide comments and information to Council based on the key themes through the *in camera* verbal update/PowerPoint presentation to Council,

with support from the Office of the City Clerk. This is similar to the approach used for various briefings to Council in recent years regarding matters such as the “Succession Plan Update,” considered by Council on March 27, 2019, and the “Organizational Alignment,” considered by Council on July 13, 2016.

- It is anticipated that the verbal update/PowerPoint presentation will be brought forward to Council shortly thereafter.

The matter will be addressed in closed session pursuant to *Procedure By-law* subsections 13(1)(b) – personal matters about an identifiable individual, including staff; and 13(1)(d) – labour relations or employee negotiations. As the content of the *in camera* briefing will contain information relating to an identifiable individual’s employment history with the City, the material falls within the exceptions contemplated by Subsections 13(1)(b) and 13(1)(d) of the *Procedure By-law*. As such, this matter will not be reported out.

How the Interview will fit into the Overall Process and Schedule for Hiring a New Auditor General

Following Council’s approval of the Cloutier/Watson motion, as amended, my Office issued a request for submissions to external search firms on the City’s Standing Offer list to assist the Hiring Panel in undertaking an executive search, further to Council’s approval of the engagement of such a firm. In this regard, I note that the Statutory Officer Recruitment, Appointment and Contract Administration Procedures provide that “... on behalf of the Hiring Panel and in accordance with Council’s direction, the City Clerk may issue a request for submissions on the recruitment process to qualified search firms on the City’s Standing Offer list.”

My Office also consulted with the Mayor as Chair of the Hiring Panel regarding a preliminary draft timeline for recruiting and appointing a new Auditor General. While the Hiring Panel will formally establish the timelines, a preliminary sense of potential timing was of assistance in determining how the exit interview will fit into the overall process and schedule.

The Hiring Panel will meet at the call of its Chair in accordance with the notice provision of the *Procedure By-law*. The Mayor has advised that the panel’s first meeting is tentatively scheduled for early August 2020. That said, formal notice pursuant to the *Procedure By-law* will be provided prior to that meeting.

At its first meeting, the panel will consider the approval of the search firm and formally establish the timelines to meet Council’s direction. The Hiring Panel will also be required to ensure matters related to confidentiality are addressed, pursuant to the Statutory Officer Recruitment, Appointment and Contract Administration Policy and Procedures. In accordance with the policy and procedures, all participants in the process will be required to sign a mandatory confidentiality agreement at the outset of the process and prior to receiving any confidential information. The Hiring Panel may also need to formally approve some of the City staff who may be permitted to access related confidential information, subject to provisions of the policy and procedures.

Please contact my Office if you have any questions relating to the Auditor General recruitment and appointment process.

M. Rick O'Connor
City Clerk