

**SPECIAL OTTAWA CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES 37**

**Wednesday, July 15, 2020**

<p><b>12. REVIEW OF RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESSES FOR COUNCILLORS' ASSISTANTS</b></p>
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**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That City Council approve:**

- 1. The following improvements to the hiring and recruitment and related processes for Councillors' Assistants, as described in this report and specifically as follows:**
  - a. That staff develop a recruitment toolkit for Members of Council, including best practices, statutory and administrative responsibilities, job description templates and standardized interview questions, as described in this report;**
  - b. That staff develop mandatory hiring and recruitment training for incoming Members-elect as part of Council orientation, as described in this report;**
  - c. That staff implement mandatory individualized orientation sessions for Councillors' Assistants, as described in this report;**
  - d. That staff amend the employment contract for Councillors' Assistants, as described in this report;**
  - e. That staff implement voluntary exit interviews for Councillors' Assistants who voluntarily leave their position, to better inform the recruitment and hiring process, as described in this report;**

- f. That staff establish a mandatory gender equity, diversity and harassment training session for all Members of Council and their staff, as described in this report;
  - g. That staff provide ongoing training to Councillors' Assistants throughout a Term of Council, as described in this report; and
  - h. That, as part of the 2018-2022 Mid-term Governance Review, staff be directed to bring forward for Council consideration a revised Councillor's Office Manual that reflects current policies and procedures, as described in this report; and
2. That the City Clerk be directed to incorporate a review of Members' office-related matters, including employment matters, as part of each governance review, as described in this report.

**MOTION NO 37/8**

Moved by Councillor T. Kavanagh

Seconded by Councillor J. Leiper

**WHEREAS** the independent consultants' report identifies opportunities to strengthen the orientation process to ensure Councillors' Assistants are aware of, and understand, their rights and to enhance training and education opportunities for Councillors' Assistants; and

**WHEREAS** while human resource needs of Members of Council are supported by the Office of the City Clerk, independent and impartial professional support should be available specifically to Councillors' Assistants to address all matters arising from their employment, including but not limited to relevant provincial statutes, by-laws, policies or procedures, in a confidential manner such that no information regarding same will be disclosed without the express written consent of the Councillors' Assistant involved; and

**WHEREAS** the HR Programs and Planning Branch of Human Resources Services does not provide direct support to the Office of the City Clerk or Members of Council, and has an overall mandate for:

- Policy development and legislative compliance;
- Learning and Development;
- Diversity and Inclusion;
- Staffing programs and Outreach; and
- Talent management, workforce and succession planning;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Human Resources Services be directed to establish a point of contact within the HR Programs and Planning Branch to support Councillors' Assistants by responding in an independent, impartial and confidential manner to any inquiries arising from their employment, including but not limited to relevant provincial statutes, by-laws, policies or procedures involving employment matters, as described in this motion; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the identified support person be communicated to all Councillors' Assistants by way of a memo no later than August, 2020.

CARRIED

#### **MOTION NO 37/9**

Moved by Councillor C. McKenney

Seconded Councillor K. Egli

**WHEREAS** City staff and Members of Council have expressed support to help prevent and meaningfully address violence and harassment in the workplace; and

**WHEREAS**, while the Consultants' report on recruitment and hiring practices for Councillors' Assistants is a good start, it could be bolstered by concrete changes to policy to more readily address issues of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace; and

**WHEREAS** Councillors' Assistants deserve to have additional resources and protections in place to address sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, including preventative measures; and

**WHEREAS** potential Councillors' Assistants must feel safe and supported during the interview process and any subsequent complaint or review process; and

**WHEREAS** flexibility within the hiring process can still be achieved while providing some standardized requirements that will contribute to the safety and support of job applicants for Councillors' Assistant positions;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. A third party from the Office of the City Clerk or Human Resources shall be present during all interviews for Councillors' Assistant positions;**
- 2. All interviews for Councillors' Assistant positions shall take place in a City facility or by electronic means;**
- 3. The Office of the City Clerk and Human Resources be directed to provide mandatory prevention messaging and information for Councillors' Assistant applicants on where to seek support and redress before, during and after the interview process;**
- 4. Human Resources, in consultation with the Women & Gender Equity Specialist and the Council Liaison for Women and Gender Equity, be directed to develop a mandatory workplace sexual violence and harassment prevention campaign for Members of Council and Councillors' Assistants, to augment the mandatory gender equity, diversity and harassment training session described in Recommendation 1(f) of the staff report;**
- 5. Staff be directed to develop and bring forward as part of the 2018-2022 Mid-term Governance Review an anonymous reporting mechanism for the filing of workplace concerns and complaints by Councillors' Assistants or job applicants for Councillors' Assistant positions, similar to that in place at OC Transpo; and**
- 6. The Office of the City Clerk and Human Resources be directed to promote an open-door culture, in a manner similar to the "no wrong door" concept, to ensure Councillors' staff and/or applicants for Councillors' Assistant positions are supported no matter how they disclose instances of harassment or violence, in a manner that ensures privacy, confidentiality, compassion and support for survivor-led decision-making as well as awareness of where to seek additional support and how the matter may be addressed through relevant statutory provisions, policies and procedures.**

CARRIED with Councillors R. Brockington, G. Darouze and M. Luloff dissenting on Resolution 1 of Motion 37/9.

The report recommendations, as amended by Motion no. 37/8 and 37/9, were then put to Council and CARRIED as amended.