

## BUSINESS CASE

**DATE:** February 15, 2023

**TO:** Dan Horan, Chief Administrative Officer

**FROM:** Vicki Gannon, Director of Corporate Services and HR

**SUBJECT:** Request for 1 x FTE – Occupational Health and Safety Manager

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### Background

After observing an increasing trend in WorkSafeBC costs for the Township, staff completed an analysis to determine potential causes of the increase and develop some options to improve the situation. The table below summarizes the increasing costs related to employees away from work due to workplace injuries. The table shows both an increase in premium rates (as a result of increased claims) and the associated dollar value of premiums paid.

| Year | Premium Rates | Premiums Paid        |
|------|---------------|----------------------|
| 2019 | 2.76          | \$317,468            |
| 2020 | 2.54          | \$273,629            |
| 2021 | 3.66          | \$434,154            |
| 2022 | 3.71          | \$490,797            |
| 2023 | 3.99          | \$528,000 (expected) |

### Needs Assessment

The work associated with managing the increase in WorkSafe claims and ensuring compliance with health and safety sits with management staff within the Township. The work itself is decentralized to individual managers, which means that WorkSafeBC related work competes with day-to-day operational needs and priorities. It also means there is some duplication of effort across the departments with respect to WorkSafeBC program management.

One clear option to improve the situation is to centralize the management of the Occupational Health and Safety program within a single position with the expertise to manage an organization-wide safety program and a robust return-to-work case management program.

An analysis of municipalities within the Capital Regional District (CRD) shows that many have chosen to use centralized Occupational Health and Safety Specialists to make gains in this area. Some of these municipalities include Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Sidney and Colwood. Sooke is currently in the process of requesting an increase in funding to create a position.

### Risk Assessment

Without the addition of a centralized Occupational Health and Safety Manager, the Township can expect to see increasing premiums paid to WorkSafeBC. The addition of a new position is expected to increase the number of safety program activities, which is expected to reduce the number of workplace injuries that result in time-off on WorkSafeBC claims. The new position

will also be able to focus effort to work closely with employees and WorkSafeBC case managers to facilitate return-to-work processes, which will drive down WorkSafeBC premiums paid each year. Finally, the new Occupational Health and Safety Manager will be able to focus on the changing legislative and regulatory environment, ensuring the Township is compliant with best practices and rules related to safe work environments for our employees.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that we increase the budget to fund an Occupational Health and Safety Manager, reporting to the Director of Corporate Services and HR. This position will assist managers in two distinct areas. First, in the area of disability management, providing professional guidance and support to managers on all matters relating to absences due to illness or injury, including liaising on claims submissions, appeals and managing employees' return to work. Second, the Township's Occupational Health and Safety programs will be further developed and will have a positive impact on employees wellness and safety.

### **Cost Implications**

The annual salary for this position (same as the Manager of Communications and the Manager of Economic Development) has a range of \$106,523 - \$121,048 plus 24% for all benefit costs (\$29,050), for a total annual approximate cost of \$137,375. A one-time cost of \$7,500 will be required for officer furniture and IT equipment.

If this position is approved, it is expected that the savings in premiums as a result of improved case management and compliance to health and safety will cover the salary and benefit costs of this FTE.

Supported / Not Supported



Dan Horan, P.Eng  
Chief Administrative Officer

1 March 2023

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Date