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Council-In-Committee Meeting – June 12, 2025

Subject: Vittoria Old Town Hall Expression of Interest Results
Report Number: CDS-25-016
Division: Community and Development Services
Department: Fleet and Facilities Services
Ward: Ward 4
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

That Staff Report CDS-25-016 Vittoria Old Town Hall Expression of Interest Results be received for information; and

That staff be directed to proceed with the surplus declaration and sale of the Vittoria Old Town Hall building and parkland on the open market; and

That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Agreement of Purchase and Sale, and any other documents necessary to complete the transactions.

Executive Summary:

Purpose of the Report:

This report seeks Council direction on the future of the Vittoria Old Town Hall building and adjacent parkland, Lamport Park.

Background and Context:

Staff Report OPS-25-001, Vittoria Old Town Hall Options Report (Attachment A) was presented to Council on January 14, 2025. The report identified \$1,000,000 in immediate capital repairs required at the facility and \$245,000 in capital repairs required to maintain the building over the next twenty years.

Due to historically low facility utilization and close proximity to the Vittoria & District Community Centre, the report presented six (6) potential options for the future of the Vittoria Old Town Hall and Lamport Park properties.

The recommended option was Option #3 – the nominal sale of the Hall to a local non-profit and to retain the parkland. Further, staff recommended that if Option #3 was not successful and there were no willing non-profit organizations willing to purchase the Hall under the conditions set by Council, that staff proceed with Option #6 - the surplus and sale of the Vittoria Old Town Hall and parkland on the open market.

Key Findings and Analysis:

To facilitate a fair, open and transparent process for potential local non-profit organizations willing to purchase the Hall for a nominal fee, a non-standard Expression of Interest (EOI) document was developed by County staff. Expression of Interest OPS-FAC-25-25 Non-Profit Acquisition of Vittoria Old Town Hall (Attachment B) was made public on April 4, 2025 through the County's bids & tenders platform and closed on April 29, 2025.

The expression of interest identified key deliverables that proposals were to meet including the:

- a. Disposition of the Norfolk County owned Vittoria Old Town Hall to a local non-profit organization for a nominal fee (\$1)
- b. Discontinuation of Norfolk County operations and maintenance of the Hall
- c. Ensure local access to the Vittoria Old Town Hall and community involvement in potential revitalization.

Only one proposal submission was received in response to OPS-FAC-25-25 and was received from The Vittoria & District Foundation Inc. (Attachment C). Overall, the proposal met most of the County deliverables & objectives identified within the EOI and would allow potential local access to the Hall.

However, it also proposed a number of County concessions that would cost the County over \$500,000 over five years for Norfolk County to dispose the Hall asset including:

- \$300,000 in immediate funding to assist funding capital repairs
- \$150,000 in operating grants from the County over 5 years (\$50,000 Year 1, \$40,000 Year 2, \$30,000 Year 3, \$20,000 Year 4, \$10,000 Year 5)
- Approximately \$6,000 annually for the County to waive property taxes in perpetuity
- The County to cover legal fees and prepare the Agreement of Purchase on behalf of The Vittoria & District Foundation Inc.
- The County to conduct and pay for water quality testing analysis
- The County to conduct and pay for a septic tank inspection and pump-out

It is staff's opinion that the submission did not meet the key deliverable of disposition of the Hall for a nominal fee (\$1) due to the initial financial request of \$300,000 in the first year of the proposal. Further, as outlined in Staff Report OPS-25-001 Vittoria Old Town Hall Options Report, one of the pros of option 3 was the elimination of imminent and future capital funding requirements for the County. The \$500,000+ capital and operating grants requested represent a significant deviation from Option 3. Lastly, staff have concern with providing a capital grant of this magnitude for a non-County asset without formal grant reporting procedures which are common for senior levels of government.

Conclusion:

It is staff's opinion that the proposal does not meet the Council intention of Option #3 of Staff Report OPS-25-001 Vittoria Old Town Hall Options Report and Option#3 was not

successful. Staff recommend proceeding with the back-up option, Option#6, of the staff report and staff proceed with the sale of the Hall and parkland on the open market. Minor costs of \$10,000 will be required to move the existing monuments and flagpole to another County property within the hamlet of Vittoria.

Discussions:

Staff Report OPS-25-001, Vittoria Old Town Hall Options Report, presented six (6) potential future options for the future of the Hall. The staff recommendation was Option #3 Nominal Sale of Hall Parcel to local Non-Profit (Retain Parkland), in this option, Norfolk County would sell the Vittoria Old Town Hall building to local non-profit organization for a nominal fee of \$1. The parkland would remain a Norfolk County parkland. An easement would be provided to the non-profit for maintenance of the septic tank and tile bed. Further, Norfolk County would include a first right of refusal within the sale agreement to ensure Norfolk has the option to re-purchase the Hall at the same consideration as initially conveyed should the non-profit wish to sell the building in the future. To incentivize organizations to take the facility, a one-time grant or ongoing operating grants could be provided by Council. A list of pros and cons of this option was presented within the report as follows:

Pros:

- Ensure local access to the historically significant Vittoria Old Town Hall building
- Elimination of imminent and future capital funding requirements for County
- Minimal operating and maintenance required for the parkland property
- No County operations required for the hall
- Potential increase in community involvement with facility

Cons:

- Loss of revenue related to a sale to open market
- Limited uses of Hall due to size of parcel, parking concerns, etc.
- Continued maintenance required for parkland property

Further, staff recommended that if Option #3 was not successful that staff proceed with Option #6 - the surplus and sale of the Vittoria Old Town Hall and parkland on the open market. In this option, Norfolk County would surplus and sell the Vittoria Old Town Hall building and parkland on the open market to the highest bidder. This option is the most financially prudent option presented to Council. A list of pros and cons of this option was presented within the report as follows:

Pros:

- Potential revenue of \$520,000+ which could fund other local projects
- Elimination of imminent and future capital funding requirements
- Elimination of County operations and maintenance expenditures
- Heritage designation will remain ensuring building façade will not be altered without Norfolk County approvals
- Increased potential uses of entire property vs Hall only sale

- Potential for re-zoning of lands for residential / housing supply

Cons:

- Loss of public facility and parkland in Vittoria
- Initial cost of \$10,000 for movement of site features to County land
- Less County input into future use

Should Council decide to proceed with Option#6, some minor costs will be required to move the existing monuments and flagpole currently on the Lamport Park. It should be noted that as a heritage designated facility, no alterations to the building façade and designated attributes will be permitted without Norfolk County approval.

Financial Services Comments:

Option #6 – Surplus and Sale of Hall and Parkland Parcel on the Open Market;

It is estimated that disposing of the hall & parkland through the open market could generate revenues of up to \$520,000.

From an expense perspective there would be similar minimal selling fees and costs to relocate existing fixtures as in Option #3. However, unlike Option #3, there would be no other material costs associated with the assets in the future.

Option #3 – Nominal Sale of Parcel to Local Non-Profit:

If the proposal is accepted, the facility would be disposed of for \$1 (nominal revenues).

From an expense perspective, the body of the report covered the concessions requested from the EOI proposal, totalling a cost of approximately \$500,000 to the County over 5 years. To facilitate Option #3, if it were approved, operating and capital budget amendments would be required to formalize the proposal, and an agreement would need to be developed for the organization to enter into a funding arrangement with the County to ensure the funds provided by the County are used appropriately.

Summary

Option #6 is recommended in part because it is the most favourable option financially. It is expected compared to Option #3 it could generate higher one-time revenues (approx. \$500,000 more) and will generate lower costs going forward (approx. \$500,000 less).

Previous reports on the potential disposition of the Vittoria Old Town Hall have covered the overall financial implications. These are not rehashed above for brevity, but for quick reference, both of the options discussed above would result in the following:

- A reduction to the net levy requirement for the facility's annual operating costs.
- A reduction of lifecycle costs contributing to the infrastructure funding shortfall.
- Avoidance of capital costs budgeted for 2026 to bring the facility back to a safe condition.
- Staff time and one-time fees required to facilitate the transaction which are expected to be accommodated in the Approved 2025 Levy Operating Budget.

- A slight increase to property tax revenues due to the removal of the municipal capital facility exemption.

Interdepartmental Implications:

This proposal was evaluated by staff within the Community and Development Services and Corporate Services Divisions.

Consultation(s):

Consultation has occurred with the Senior Leadership Team and the Supervisor, Purchasing.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority

Serving Norfolk - Ensuring a fiscally responsible organization with engaged employees who value excellent service.

Explanation: A potential disposition of the Vittoria Old Town Hall would reduce Norfolk County taxpayer support for community halls and improve Norfolk's overall financial sustainability.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment A - Staff Report OPS-25-001 Vittoria Old Town Hall Options Report
- Attachment B - Expression of Interest OPS-FAC-25-25 Non-Profit Acquisition of Vittoria Old Town Hall
- Attachment C – The Vittoria & District Foundation Inc response to OPS-FAC-25-25

Approval:

Approved By:
Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed By:
Bill Cridland, General Manager, Community and Development Services

Prepared By:
Michael Simoes, Director, Fleet and Facilities Services