

COUNCIL MEETING

CLERKS DIVISION

REPORT CLK-2024-06

April 9, 2024

SUBJECT: Training Sessions – Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official

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APPROVING: Rob Axiak, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND approves registering all members of council for Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official 1.0 and 2.0 training offered through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN - VALUES

Integrity: As a guide for our actions, we will emphasize honesty, accountability, and ethical behaviours, to ensure we consistently uphold the highest standards of trustworthiness, transparency, and fairness in all our endeavours.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Staff have provided an overview of the training sessions available through the AMO as per the council's directive. This report outlines the training opportunities presented by AMO and highlights key aspects of the sessions.

BACKGROUND:

This report fulfills the motion passed by Welland City Council on May 16, 2023, which is as follows:

“THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND directs staff to arrange a customized training session regarding Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official offered by the Association of Municipalities in 2023, and further THAT Council is provided the opportunity to submit additional conflict resolution related learning objectives to this session.”

DISCUSSION:

Previously, AMO offered a training session titled "Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official." However, since the motion was presented to council, there have been updates to the structure of the training. Now, the training session has been divided into two programs, each spanning two consecutive days. The training sessions will be conducted virtually.

The training is tentatively scheduled for the following dates:

- Navigating Conflict Relationships 1.0 – May 22 and 23, 2024 from 6 – 8:30 p.m.
- Navigating Conflict Relationships 2.0 – June 19 and 20, 2024 from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official 1.0

Learning Objectives:

- The typical patterns of behaviour that give rise to creating “conflict traps” and how to escape from them.
- The secrets of neuroscience and how this knowledge can give us a heads-up on what we should do in the moment.
- Understanding conflict styles and how these can create obstacles or pave the way toward collaboration.
- The importance of moving from a position-based to an interest-based approach in order to create a win-win, value-add relationship.
- The roles of empathy and assertiveness in relationship formation.
- Learning effective and practical communication tools which include:
 - Avoiding communication blockers
 - First words to use
 - The difference between Acknowledging vs. Agreeing
 - A simple yet powerful 4-step technique to assist in having better and more collaborative conversations.

Training for members of council is scheduled for May 22 and 23, 2024 from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Navigating Conflict Relationships as an Elected Official 2.0

Learning Objectives:

- Properly preparing for a conflict conversation
- Developing greater questioning skills by examining the root causes of behavior (including broken promises) using a model that contains six sources of influence.
- Learning advanced, effective, and practical communication tools, to address more complex situations including:
- Managing the angry person / the angry public

- Dealing with confrontation
- Delivering bad news
- How to say “No”
- Understanding unconscious bias
- Unpacking the importance of the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)
- Dealing with resistance

FINANCIAL:

The total cost for the two (2) sessions is \$6,800 which will be paid through the professional development budget.

CONCLUSION:

Providing training to council members is essential for effective governance and leadership standards in municipalities. Access to relevant sessions empowers members to address complexities, nurture relationships, and make informed decisions, benefiting their communities.

ATTACHMENT:

None.