

Richard G. Ramsay Management Consultants Inc.



"Helping you to chart your course"

Municipality of Clare

Organization Study

Final Report

Presented to Municipal Council, March 4, 2015

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The Municipality of Clare

The Municipality of Clare (Municipality) is the largest Acadian community in Nova Scotia and occupies the western half of Digby County along St. Mary's Bay in south-western Nova Scotia. The population of Clare is 8,319. The Municipality is governed by a Warden and seven Councillors, each representing a specific geographical area of the Municipality. The Municipality provides the typical range of municipal services to residents and businesses. A detailed listing of all services is provided in Section 6.0 of the report. The Municipality's operating budget for 2014/15 is approximately \$8.7 million.

The organizational study was carried out under the supervision of Municipal Council. The scope of study focused on the service areas of Administration, Finance, Public Works, Environmental Services, Protective Services, Building and Fire Inspection Services and Tourism. Policing and Fire services were examined only as they related to municipal staff involvement.

As part of the Study, a review of current municipal organizational issues, legislation and reform initiatives in Nova Scotia and across Canada was done. There are currently significant municipal reform initiatives occurring in Nova Scotia, specifically related to applications for dissolution to the Utility Review Board by three towns as a result of decreasing taxable assessment, insufficient future revenues, costly infrastructure upgrades and other fiscal challenges. While there is a number of initiatives regarding local government structures taking place across the country, other provincial governments are taking a more "hands-off" approach toward local government structures.

Recommendation LGR1 – Local Government Research

It is recommended that Council and the Chief Administrative Officer continue to be involved in the municipal reform initiatives in Nova Scotia and prepare any required responses to ensure the interests of the Municipality are represented.

1.2 Cooperative Service Delivery

Cooperative service delivery is not a common practice between the Municipality of Clare and other municipalities. The only two inter-municipal agreements in place are for the delivery of Regional Economic Development and Waste Management Services.

Recommendation CSD1 – Cooperative Service Delivery

It is recommended that the Municipality examine further opportunities to cooperate with adjacent municipalities in the delivery of municipal services on a regional basis, if proven to be economically feasible for the region.

1.3 Governance Structure

The Municipality's governance and staff organizational structures were examined as part of the study. Currently, Council governs under a Council/Committee system that includes Council, eleven Standing Committees and representation on ten outside Boards and Agencies. This structure requires significant time commitments for Councillors. Formal policies setting out the roles, responsibilities and procedures for the governance structure do not exist.

Recommendation G1 – Governance Structure

In order to meet the role of Municipal Council as strategic planners and policy makers, it is recommended that Council adopt the Council/Committee of the Whole Council/CAO governance structure as shown in Figure 8.3.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality adopt formal policies for the Chief Administrative Officer, Council Meetings and Procedures, and Committee of the Whole.

Recommendation G2 – Standing Committees

It is recommended to eliminate the Standing Committees for Recreation, Tourism, Public Works, Economic Development, By-laws and Communication.

Further, it is recommended that formal Terms of References for all Standing Committees be prepared and approved by Council.

1.4 Administrative Structure

In addition to the employees at the Clare Health Centre, the Municipality employs sixteen (16) permanent full-time employees and one (1) term employee (Active Living Coordinator); as well as casual, part-time, and seasonal employees in the Departments of Tourism, Recreation and Public Works. Nine municipal employees report directly to the CAO creating challenges for her to provide the level of support and oversight required by Department Heads and Council. The need for a more dedicated focus on Human Resource Management was also identified during the Study.

There are a number of key management processes identified in Section 11.0 of the report that are required to ensure the efficient and effective operations of a municipal organization. The Study determined these key management processes do not formally exist.

Recommendation S1 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Municipality realign reporting responsibilities and adopt the staff organizational structure as shown in Figure 8.5.

Further, that the CAO devote more time to the development and implementation of the management processes identified in Section 11.0 of the report and assume primary responsibility for the management of the organization's Human Resources and implementation of the HR recommendations contained in Section 14.0 of the Report.

The duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Assistant to the CAO require updating to ensure all tasks associated with supporting Council and the CAO are performed by this position.

As well, a higher focus on Human Resource Management by the CAO will require administrative support from the Administrative Assistant.

Recommendation S2 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the job description for the Administrative Assistant to the CAO be updated to include all duties related to the support provided to Council; specifically the preparation of agendas for Council, COTW, and other committees as required, recording and transcribing meeting minutes and other governance related administrative duties.

Further, that the responsibility for all Human Resource Management administrative duties in support of the CAO be assigned to the Administrative Assistant to the CAO.

The current vacancy in the Finance Department provides an opportunity to review how financial management services are provided to Council and the organization as a whole. The addition of a Director of Finance, reporting directly to the CAO, would replace the position of Payroll Clerk/Accounts Payable Assistant. This would address the requirement for professional finance expertise. Once hired, the new Director would review all financial management, accounting and financial clerical duties and responsibilities to ensure proper financial controls are in place and workloads are appropriately distributed between the three positions in the Department.

Recommendation S3 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the position of Payroll Clerk/Accounts Payable Assistant be deleted and replaced with a new position for a Director of Finance.

Further, that the new Director of Finance assume responsibility for all financial duties currently being done by the CAO and undertake a review of all accounting and financial clerical duties and responsibilities for the organization to ensure proper financial controls are in place and workloads are appropriately distributed between the three positions in the Finance Department.

There is only one full-time employee in each of the Departments of Tourism and Economic Development. The mandates of the Departments of Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building/Fire Inspection all include components that relate to the development of the greater community of the Municipality of Clare. Combining the four Departments into a new single Department of Community Development addresses the need to ensure overlapping mandates are coordinated, reduces the number of direct reports to the CAO and eliminates single employee departments.

Recommendation S5 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Departments of Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building Inspection be eliminated and a new Department of Community Development be created to be led by the new position of Director of Community Development.

Recommendation S6 – Staff Structure

It is recommended that an internal competition be undertaken to select one of the current Department Heads to fill the position of Director of Community Development. The titles of the positions reporting to the new Director would be changed to Managers.

Further, it is recommended that resources be put in place to provide any training and development deemed necessary to support the new Director of Community Development in assuming the new job duties and responsibilities associated with this position.

The need was identified to coordinate the management of municipally-owned facilities (lessons learned from Nova Scotia Auditor General Report re: the Bluenose project) to ensure the efficient use of financial and human resources related to facility management. This is best accomplished by assigning all facility management responsibilities to the Superintendent of Public Works (formerly titled Sewer/Public Works Supervisor). As a further step to reduce the number of direct reports to the CAO, the oversight and management of Transfer Station staff would become the responsibility of the Superintendent of Public Works. The Superintendent would continue to be responsible for all municipal wastewater systems.

Recommendation S7 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the position of Sewer/Public Works Supervisor be renamed Superintendent of Public Works and continue to be responsible for all municipal wastewater systems, and in addition, assume responsibility for the supervision of the Transfer Station and staff, and assume responsibility for all facilities owned by the Municipality.

Further, it is recommended that resources are put in place to provide any training and development deemed necessary to support the Superintendent of Public Works in assuming these new job duties and responsibilities.

The Clare Health Centre facility, while not a typical municipal service, is a Department of the Municipality requiring the same level of support services and human resource management as all other municipal Departments.

Recommendation S8 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Clare Health Centre be recognized as a Department of the municipal organization and that the same level of support and resources be provided as are provided to all other municipal departments.

1.5 Management Team

A formal Management Team does not exist within the Administrative Structure of the Municipality. The existence of a Management Team facilitates consistent management practices, sharing and coordination of resources, as well as a forum to identify future challenges and

opportunities. Successful Management Teams have a clearly defined Terms of Reference set out in policy, resulting in the creation of a clear and consistent professional corporate culture.

Recommendation MT1 – Management Team

It is recommended that CAO formalize, through policy, the formation of a Management Team to meet regularly for the purposes of sharing information and resources in the organization and to foster the development of a consistent management philosophy across all Departments of the Municipality.

1.6 Strategies, Policies and Workflow Processes

The workflow processes required for an effective and efficient local government operations are supported by a number of key strategies and polices which are listed in Section 11.0 of the Report. These strategies and policies provide clear direction to Council, the CAO, and staff as to the “systems” of governance and administration; as well as provide information to the public and potential suppliers about how the Municipality operates. The preparation and administration of key policies and strategies is the responsibility of the CAO, with support from the members of the Management Team (See *Recommendation S1* above).

Recommendation SW1 – Key Strategies and Policies

It is recommended that CAO and Management Team ensure the key strategies and policies listed in Section 11.0 are prepared and presented for Council approval.

There is little, if any, coordination of work or sharing of information across the organization. Coupled with the lack of key operational strategies and policies, this results in a “silo” culture where productivity, workflows and the delivery of services to the public are less efficient. It is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the delivery of services compared to goals and objectives due to the absence of a Municipal Strategic Plan.

Recommendation SW2 – Strategies and Workflow

It is recommended that Municipal Council champion the development of a Municipal Strategic Plan that will provide clear vision and direction for Council, staff and the public on the future direction of the organization.

Further, it is recommended the CAO and Council develop a quarterly reporting system for the public that, as a minimum, reports the progress in meeting the goals and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan, reports any deviations from the annual financial plan, and gives an overview of the activities of the previous quarter and expectations for the coming quarter.

Further, it is recommended the Management Team develop key indicators of performance to be included in the quarterly reports to the public and to be built into the employee performance evaluation system.

1.7 Communication

Communication among employees, between employees and their supervisors, between the CAO and Department Heads, and between Council and the CAO is vital for efficient operations and the delivery of quality services to the public. Equally important is communication with the public and the Municipality's external stakeholders. The opportunity to improve communication between Council and staff and with the public was identified.

Recommendation C1 – Communication

It is recommended that the Municipality develop a Communication Strategy for how information sharing will be handled for both internal and external communications.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality adopt a Staff Meeting Policy that will require, at a minimum, regular monthly Departmental staff meetings and semi-annual CAO meetings with all municipal staff.

Further, it is recommended that essential communication skills training be provided to members of the Management Team and all employees of the Municipality.

1.8 Information Management and Technology

Information is abundant. How well it is managed has a direct impact on the productivity of staff and efficiency of service delivery to the public. Of equal concern is the loss of valuable corporate memory when a key employee leaves the employ of the Municipality taking valuable information gained through experience that has not been documented. Hand in hand with Information Management is Information Technology (IT). The Municipality currently contracts network administration and end user support from an external service provider; however, there was no evidence of formal planning to manage the Municipality's IT needs into the future.

Recommendation IT1

It is recommended the Municipality develop an Information Management Strategy for the management of the Municipality's information including hard copy and electronic records, as well as corporate memory.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality engage the services of an external IT expert to undertake an IT needs assessment so as to develop an IT program that will enable proactive management of the Municipality's IT infrastructure and provide for the timely and affordable replacement of IT resources.

1.9 Staffing Levels and Compensation

An analysis of other similar rural municipalities in southwest Nova Scotia was done to assess the level of staffing in the Municipality. Overall, the Municipality's staffing level is within range of comparable rural municipalities in the southwest region of the Province. A preliminary survey of salaries paid by other municipalities for similar duties and responsibilities indicated the Municipality is offering competitive and comparable salaries to its employees.

10.0 Human Resources (HR) Review

The Study identified many positive aspects of the Municipality's HR practices; however; a number of weaknesses were identified that are directly impacting employee morale and productivity. Some of the more serious deficiencies included out-dated and incomplete job descriptions; the lack of regular coaching and feedback from management; poor communication within the organization and with Council; and the performance evaluation process. The need for succession planning was also identified. Overall, the Municipality requires a Human Resource Strategy to promote proper HR practices and ensure employees are motivated, productive, recognized and held accountable for the job duties and responsibilities assigned to them. The implementation of the recommendations in the Report will facilitate the development of an HR Strategy for the Municipality.

Recommendation HR1 – Training, Learning and Development

As part of the annual performance evaluation process and review of job descriptions, it is recommended the Municipality develop an annual training program for employees who require certification and skills upgrades.

Further, in addition to specific skills training identified for individual employees, organizational training is encouraged, specifically in the areas of Leadership and Supervisory Training for Department Heads and Supervisors, Building Teams and Teamwork, and Essential Communication Skills for all employees.

Further, during the development of annual operating budgets, it is recommended consideration be given to including appropriate resources to fund identified individual and organizational training and development.

Recommendation HR2 – HR Planning

It is recommended that the Municipality identify critical positions in the organization and establish succession plans for each of these positions.

Recommendation HR3 – Compensation and Benefits

It is recommended the Municipality adopt a Salary Administration Plan Policy setting out the requirement for complete, accurate and up-to date job descriptions, annual performance evaluations for all employees, job evaluations to ensure internal equity, and the requirement for regular market salary reviews to ensure external equity for salaries paid to all Municipal employees.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality develop salary scales based on the results of the internal job evaluations and an external salary review. Placement on salary levels will be determined from the results of the job evaluation process and movement across steps will be based on an employee's job performance as reflected in their annual performance evaluation.

Recommendation HR4 – Performance Evaluation Process

It is recommended, on at least an annual basis, supervisors prepare and conduct a formal performance evaluation for all employees who report directly to them that documents the key

aspects of an employee's performance, includes jointly developed work plans and performance objectives for the coming year and identifies any training or professional development required to ensure the employee's job skills are kept current and/or to meet new job requirements.

Further, it is recommended that training be provided to all Department Heads and supervisors who have responsibility for managing the work and efforts of other employees so as to develop their skills in planning the work for the employees they supervise; and, enhance their supervisory skills in managing the performance of their employees. Also, that the training includes best practices for conducting performance evaluation meetings and addressing employee performance that falls below job standards.

Further, that Council conduct a formal review of the CAO's performance on an annual basis.

Recommendation HR5 – New Employee Orientation

It is recommended the Municipality undertake a review of the HR Policy for Staff Orientation and update where necessary to ensure new employees feel welcome, are aware of organizational policies and practices and have a complete understanding of their role, duties and responsibilities.

Recommendation HR6 – Employee Recognition Policy

It is recommended the Municipality develop an Employee Recognition Policy where employees who achieve targets and performance goals, significant milestones in their career, or make a significant contribution to the organization are recognized and celebrated by their peers and Council.

Recommendation HR7 – Teamwork

It is recommended that team building training be provided to Department Heads and non-management employees to build employees' skills and abilities in teamwork and develop an organizational culture for working in teams.

Recommendation HR8 – HR Policy Framework

It is recommended that a formal process for the review of all HR Policies be developed to ensure changes to employment-related legislation and/or new developments in HR management practices are incorporated into the Municipality's HR Policies.

2.0 Terms of Reference for Study

The Terms of Reference provided by the Municipality in the Request for Proposals for an Organizational Study are summarized below.

- 2.1 Review current municipal organizational issues, legislation and reform initiatives.
- 2.2 Examine current service delivery methods in Clare identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- 2.3 Review all staff position descriptions in respect to completeness and identify improvements.
- 2.4 Determine if the current staff level is appropriate and qualified for Clare operations.
- 2.5 Examine the effectiveness of workflow processes among staff and between Municipal Council and staff.
- 2.6 Assess the strategies for information and communication among and between staff, Chief Administrative Officer, Municipal Council and the public.
- 2.7 Examine the efficiency of the Municipality's departmental structure and reporting processes.
- 2.8 Identify and assess alternative service delivery opportunities.
- 2.9 Determine human resources matters relating to management practices, leadership abilities of management staff, staff morale, performance assessment, staff compensation levels, policy and procedure documents, and succession planning details.
- 2.10 Review the roles and relationships between Municipal Council, regional boards and committees, and Committees of Council.
- 2.11 Examine and report on existing service agreements between Clare and other municipalities. Identify other potential regional service opportunities. Identify the impact on Clare of modifications to current agreements.

3.0 The Municipality of Clare

The Municipality of Clare (Municipality) is the largest Acadian community in Nova Scotia and occupies the western half of Digby County along St. Mary's Bay in south-western Nova Scotia. Settled in 1768 and incorporated in 1879, the Municipality is the only municipality in Nova Scotia that conducts business in both French and English languages. With a population of 8,319, the five largest sectors of the economy are resource-based industries (18%), manufacturing (15%), retail trade (13%), health care and social services (11%) and educational services (11%). The Municipality has many home-based businesses and in the Municipality of Clare alone, there are

more than 150 small and medium-sized enterprises. The largest private sector employers are Comeau’s Sea Foods, A.F. Theriault & Son, Université Sainte-Anne and La Villa Acadienne.

Statistics Canada provides the following relevant 2011 census data for comparable municipal units:

Table 1.1
% Increase (Decrease) Census Population
2006 - 2011

Municipal Unit	% Increase (Decrease) census population 2006 to 2011
Municipality of Clare	-5.6
Municipality of Argyle	-4.7
Municipality of Yarmouth	-1.9
Municipality of Barrington	-4.6
Municipality of Digby	-6.5
Province of Nova Scotia	1.8

The Municipality is governed by a Warden and seven Councillors, each representing a specific geographical area of the Municipality. Over the past few years, Council and staff have been transitioning from a Council/Clerk Treasurer management system to a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) system. Council identified the need to carry out an organizational review of its policies and practices to ensure its sustainability into the future.

The Municipality’s operating budget for 2014/15 is approximately \$8.7 million. The Municipality provides the typical range of municipal services to its residents and businesses, as do other rural municipalities in Nova Scotia. The scope of this project focuses on the service areas of Administration, Finance, Public Works, Environmental Services, Protective Services, Building and Fire Inspection Services and Tourism. Policing and Fire services will be examined only as they relate to municipal staff involvement.

4.0 The Approach

The organizational study was carried out under the supervision of Municipal Council.

We believe that the review was done transparently with all participants being advised of our role, how their input will be used, and how they can impact the result. In particular, staff may have been anxious about the review, so a “user friendly,” open, and non-threatening approach was used, encouraging input and attempting to relieve anxiety. Each Councillor and all full-time staff were interviewed in a confidential manner, using a standardized survey.

A communications and reporting system was developed to provide adequate and consistent communication among the consultant, Municipal Council, and staff to encourage opinions and ideas that may impact on the final report. Throughout the review, any issues identified that were

not specific to the review, but that would be of interest and concern to the Council, were noted and are included in the Final Report.

5.0 Research Current Local Government Trends

Local government reform initiatives have been slow to get traction across Canada in recent years, following a number of successful and some unsuccessful initiatives in several provinces across Canada.

5.1 Nova Scotia

Until 2014, following the major forced amalgamation of the Town of Bedford, cities of Halifax and Dartmouth and the Municipality of the County of Halifax in the capital region; the forced amalgamation of several municipal units in Cape Breton, and the volunteer amalgamation of the Town of Liverpool and the District of Queens, there had been no major structural reform in any other regions of the Province.

The Town of Canso and the Municipality of the District of Guysborough have amalgamated after a decade of feasibility studies and discussions among the parties.

In 2014, the Town of Bridgetown applied to the Nova Scotia Utility Review Board (URB) for dissolution. The Town based its decision on a projected dire financial situation. A hearing was held before the URB and an order was issued for dissolution effective April 1, 2015.

Also in 2014, the Council of the Town of Hantsport made a decision to apply to the URB for dissolution and become part of the Municipality of West Hants or the Municipality of the County of Kings. Town Council made that decision based on the loss of major commercial assessment, and hence, lower tax revenues. In addition, the identification of future capital infrastructure expenditures further threatened the Town's financial sustainability. A hearing before the URB is scheduled for March 2015. During the preparation of this report, an Interim CAO has been appointed to lead the transition for the Town.

The Town of Springhill has also applied to the URB for dissolution and approval to join the Municipality of Cumberland. A hearing was held before the URB and a decision is pending.

It is interesting to note that these three applications were made to the URB in an uncontested manner between the parties and with the support of the Department of Municipal Affairs. The Department has provided financial support for these amalgamations to occur, including funding the costs for pre-amalgamation studies and future financial commitments to ensure the success of these initiatives. (Refer to URB website for details of transitional funding).

Several municipalities have adopted the more common approach to improving service delivery efficiencies through the sharing of services with other municipal units. For example, nine units in northern Nova Scotia have combined to purchase, install and maintain a common approach to a financial system. Cumberland County and the Town of Amherst are sharing financial services. In Lunenburg County, an inter-municipal organization has been formed to manage solid waste

resources. It is their plan to expand the joint board services into other regional services, for example recreation. In Pictou County, four of the six municipalities are developing an agreement to deliver local services. Many other joint service agreements exist around the province and although not a new phenomenon, there appears to be more effort to cooperatively deliver local government services

In October 2014 the report "*The Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Review*" was published. The report stated that "demographic and economic trends present major challenges for municipalities". The Report contained forty-one recommendations related to governance structures, sustainability, developing alternative approaches to financing, monitoring and accountability, equitable cost responsibility for roads, collaboration opportunities, financial indicators and major challenges for Nova Scotia municipalities. This report will form the basis for Provincial/Municipal relations and actions over the immediate future. It is a must read to be understood by all elected officials in Nova Scotia.

5.2 Newfoundland

Four reports have been published recommending the amalgamation of the Cities of St. John's and Mount Pearl on the Avalon Peninsula. The most recent of these reports was published in 2010. To date, no amalgamation has occurred, nor are there any plans to move forward on the recommendation.

5.3 New Brunswick

There have not been any major amalgamations in New Brunswick since the amalgamation in the Miramichi region. In 2011 the Premier announced a Local Action Plan for Local Government intending to strengthen local government capacity, ensure fairer taxation, improve collaboration among communities and improve the legislation governing local government. Since the announcement, legislation has been amended, regional service commissions continue to be formed in several unincorporated areas, the conditional grant system has been revamped, and some areas have been amalgamated (five have been attempted of which three received positive community votes, and two were voted down by constituents).

5.4 Prince Edward Island

There are discussions taking place currently to encourage the joining of rural areas with less-rural areas, either through amalgamation or annexation. The Provincial Government is promoting these discussions in order to bring efficiencies and economic development opportunities to greater population bases. In the Montague area, a study has been undertaken relating to amalgamation of areas surrounding the Town.

5.5 Manitoba

The Provincial Government announced in May 2013 that it would allow for municipalities to proceed with amalgamations "that reflect contemporary realities and their structures as they plan for the future". Research indicates that the legislation would give the Province the ability to help

municipalities move through the amalgamation process for the 2014 municipal election. Nothing has been reported on these actions.

5.6 British Columbia

In 2012 the Provincial Government reviewed the taxation tools and powers, levels and sources of other revenues of local government, but did not mention structural changes.

Our research did not identify any other major restructuring of local government policies and structures in other areas of Canada.

Recommendation LGR1 – Local Government Research

It is recommended that Council and the Chief Administrative Officer continue to be involved in the municipal reform initiatives in Nova Scotia and prepare any required responses to ensure the interests of the Municipality are represented.

6.0 Delivery of Municipal Services

Based on an annual revenue budget (2014-2015) of approximately \$8.7 million, the Municipality provides a range of public services to its residents and the businesses located in the Municipality. These services, listed below, are provided through a combination of municipal staff, inter-municipal agreements, contracting out and the support of volunteers.

6.1 Protective Services

Fire service

Fire service is provided by eight (8) volunteer fire departments in the Municipality, (approximately 200 volunteer firefighters). The Municipality provides funds generally to cover the essential operational costs of the Clare fire departments and periodically assists with some major capital acquisitions.

Police Services

Police services are provided under the provincial contract by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Municipality is charged annually for seven officers.

By-law Enforcement

The Building Inspector, who is a Special Constable, carries out building inspections, fire inspections and the enforcement of other municipal bylaws (i.e. Dangerous and Unsanitary Premises). The Assistant Building Inspector is the Civic Address Officer. Animal control is provided by contract.

Emergency Disaster Management

An Emergency Management Organization is in place, which provides the response protocol for an emergency disaster within the Municipality.

Building Inspection Service

Staff of the Municipality provides building inspection services.

6.2 Transportation Services

Streets and Sidewalks

The Municipality is not responsible for any “local” roads in the Municipality, and therefore, are not required to cost share with the Provincial Government. The Municipality contracts maintenance for 12.7 km of sidewalks in the area.

Street Lighting

The Municipality is serviced with approximately 147 streetlights that are owned by Nova Scotia Power and leased to the Municipality. Currently, Nova Scotia Power is converting these lights to LED.

6.3 Environmental Services

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The Municipality operates three wastewater treatment plants located in Meteghan, Church Point and Belliveau Cove, and is responsible for collecting wastewater within those areas. After treatment, the effluent is discharged into St. Mary’s Bay. Municipal wastewater staff carries out operation and maintenance of the wastewater collection system. There are 12 km of wastewater collection pipes. 223, 000 cubic meters of wastewater were treated in 2014.

Solid waste/resource management

Residential and commercial solid waste is collected by a contracted company and transferred to the Clare Transfer Station. It is then transported to Queens County for disposal under a regional agreement. Organics are collected by the Municipality’s contractor and transported to Yarmouth under a separate agreement. Recyclable materials are collected in the Municipality and transported to the Clare Transfer Station, from where they are transported to Kentville. The CAO manages these contracts. In addition, several municipalities in the region have formed an organization named “Waste Check” to promote and educate the public regarding recycling and other solid waste management practices. The Municipality has two representatives on the Waste Check Board of Directors.

6.4 Environmental Development Services

Land Use Planning, and Development Administration

A municipal staff person is the Development Officer for the Municipality and is responsible for development administration, building inspection and fire inspection services. The Municipality has a Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By Law to govern the development of land in the Municipality. A contracted company is utilized to assist Municipal Council in processing amendments to the Land Use By Law and Municipal Planning Strategy.

Community and Economic Development

Until mid 2013 the Regional Development Authority (RDA) was responsible for regional economic development. The thirteen RDA's in Nova Scotia have been replaced by seven Regional Economic Networks (REN). The local Western Regional Economic Network (WREN) has been formed, in which the Municipality will participate by providing in-kind resources, but no financial contribution. The WREN has a Board of Directors, with both municipal elected officials and businesses represented. In addition, the Municipality employs an Economic Development Officer to implement the Clare Economic Development Master Plan and provide economic development services to the Municipality.

Tourism

Municipal staff operates a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) located in a building on the Université de St. Anne campus. The University provides this space and maintains it at no cost to the Municipality. The service is provided for seven months per year. It is staffed with a manager and one/two students. Open from April-October, the Centre provides municipal and area information for visitors and local residents, and promotes the region as a tourism destination. The Municipality operates the Rendez Vous de la Baie café, souvenir boutique and Acadienne Interpretive Centre in the same facility. Plans are underway for the immediate divestiture of the Café to a not-for profit organization.

The Tourism service, through the Tourism Committee, is responsible for the preparation and implementation of a Tourism Strategy.

6.5 Recreation and Leisure Services

Recreation

Municipal staff provides recreation services and programs. These include an Active Living Program, recreation programming using school facilities, operation of Wentworth Park, after school and summer youth programs, provision of lifeguard services at Mavillette Beach, bookings for the former Legion facility, and assisting a soccer program.

A great deal of the Director's time is devoted to assisting and building capacity in not-for-profit community groups, and the encouragement and recognition of volunteerism in the Municipality.

The department hires after-school programmers and part-time summer staff to assist in providing several community recreation programs.

Community Grant Program

The Director of Recreation screens applications for grants under a Community Grant Program for the consideration and approval by the Recreation Committee.

Special Events

Staff and volunteers provide municipally sponsored events. There are other special community events supported by Municipal staff.

6.6 Regional Library Service

The library, located in the Municipality, is owned and maintained by the Municipality. The Western Regional Library Board, on which the Municipality has an appointed Councillor, provides the staff and materials. The Board receives a portion of their funding from the Province and municipal units within Shelburne, Yarmouth, and Clare Counties.

6.7 Financial and Administration Services

A staff of five in the Office of the CAO provides administrative and financial support services to Council, Committees of Council and municipal departments. This support includes, but is not limited to, preparation of Council and Committee agendas, minutes and related correspondence; preparation of annual budgets and external audit; and day-to-day financial management activities such as revenue collection and accounts payable, payroll and government reporting.

6.8 Funding of Municipal Services

Municipal services are funded by property tax rates charged on all taxable assessment in the Municipality, by grants from other levels of government, special service charges, own source revenue (e.g. interest on unpaid taxes) and user fees.

7.0 Cooperative Service Delivery

In Nova Scotia, local governments are mandated under the Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act (MGA) to provide many services. In addition, the MGA permits (discretionary) local governments to provide other services to taxpayers within their jurisdiction. The MGA does not, however, indicate the manner in which these services must be provided.

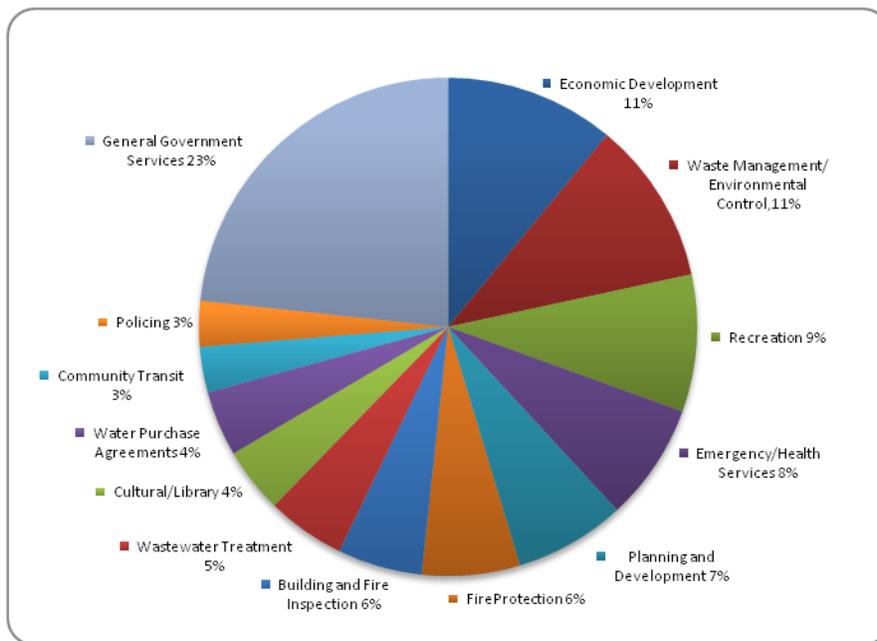
There are currently fifty-four municipal units in Nova Scotia. Due to shrinking tax bases (thus decreasing the ability of units to maintain tax levels), cost increases and increasing demands by taxpayers to improve and increase services, it has become normal practice for municipalities to share the delivery of services with adjacent municipalities and other levels of government. The

term of this phenomenon is known as “cooperative service delivery”. The Department of Municipal Affairs supports and promotes this practice among municipalities.

Figure 7.1, provided by the Department of Municipal Affairs, indicates the range of municipal services that are being shared by two or more municipalities across Nova Scotia. This data comes from nineteen municipal units, and therefore is not a summary of all fifty-four municipalities. In our opinion; however, the results would not vary significantly if a larger sample size were used in the analysis.

Figure 7.1

Cooperative Service Delivery (from Department of Municipal Affairs)



It is evident that the services that are more predominately shared are general government services (mainly information technology), economic development (through former regional development agencies), solid waste management (under the seven waste management regions), recreation services (through shared facilities and programs), emergency services (through regional emergency management organizations), and planning and development.

Cooperative service delivery is not a common practice between the Municipality of Clare and other municipalities. There are only two inter-municipal agreements.

7.1 Regional Economic Development

- Western Regional Economic Network (WREN), which replaces the former Regional Development Agency (RDA), is the agency responsible for the economic development of the member municipalities.

7.2 Waste Management Services

- Partner of Waste Check (six municipal units in western and southern Nova Scotia) to educate and promote effective solid waste management practices for business and residential waste.
- Informal agreement with the Town of Yarmouth to receive and recycle organics collected in the Municipality.
- Agreement with the Town of Digby and Municipality of Digby to receive and recycle their beverage containers collected and then transferred to a processor in Kings County.
- Agreement through Waste Check with Queens Regional Municipality to receive and dispose of residual solid waste in their 2nd Generation Landfill, based on a tipping fee per tonne which includes trucking from the Clare Transfer Station to the Queens Regional Landfill.

Recommendation CSD1 – Cooperative Service Delivery

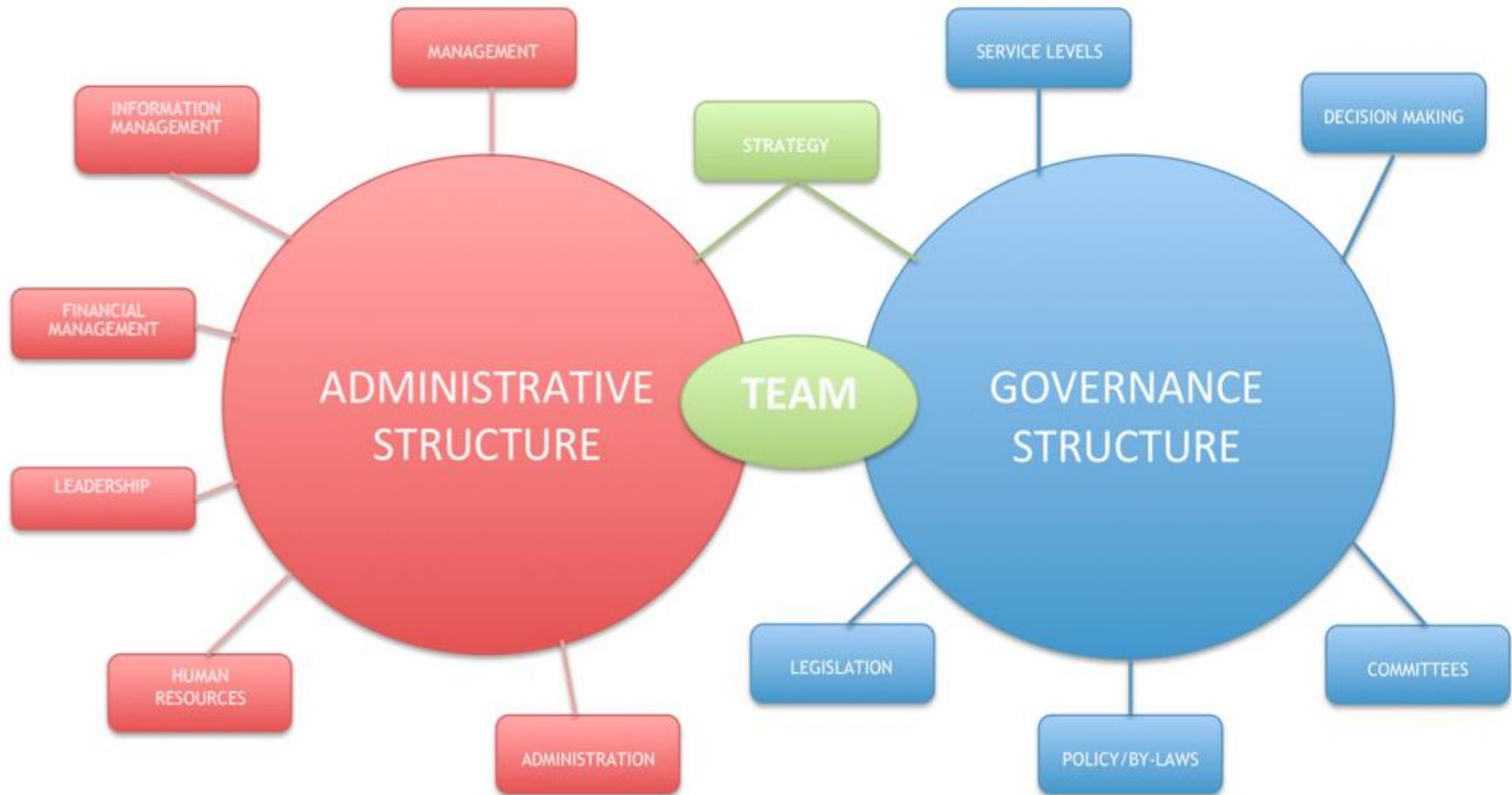
It is recommended that the Municipality examine further opportunities to cooperate with adjacent municipalities in the delivery of municipal services on a regional basis, if proven to be economically feasible for the region.

8.0 Organizational Framework

The key components of an organizational framework are shown in Figure 8.1. This framework provides the basis for recommendations to the Municipality on governance and administrative structures. Under the framework there are clear responsibilities for each structure within the Municipality and the manner in which both structures (governance and administrative) interact to effectively ensure its success. As well, the framework highlights the importance of a shared vision and teamwork that is required to ensure the Municipality is functional in all areas.

Municipal Council delegates the level of responsibility and role to staff in some measure. What measure that is depends on the capability and quantity of staff resources. What is clear; however, is that staff should be given the responsibility to not only manage the delivery of services effectively, but to also provide quality information on which Council bases its decisions.

Figure 8.1
Organizational Framework



In order for staff to accomplish this, several management processes must be in place in the Municipality:

- Management control processes
- Financial management processes
- Human resource management processes
- Leadership and accountability processes
- Administrative procedures
- Management information systems
- Strategic or business planning processes

Any structure for the Municipality should take into consideration its future, not only the present Council and staff complement. The structure should support the goals of the Municipality as stated in its vision, mission and values statements.

It is a common belief that professional public management practices and systems can operate much like the private sector in many ways. The Council can act as a Board of Directors, giving direction in the form of by-laws and policies to management, who in turn manage and implement the day-to-day affairs of the Municipality, on behalf of Council. In return for this delegation of responsibility and authority, management must provide information to Council to demonstrate its accountability to Council and to the public.

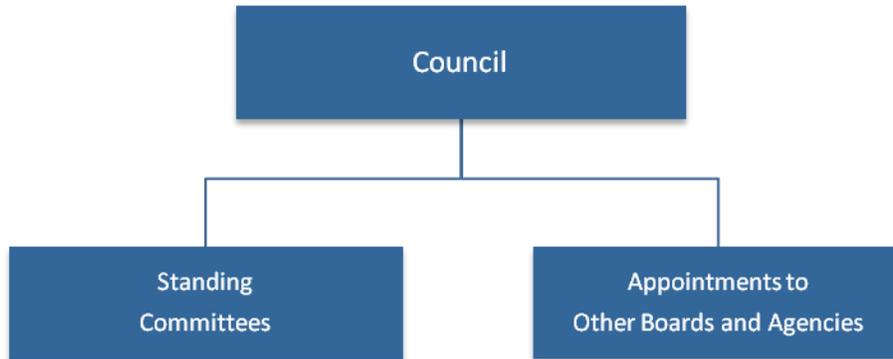
Just as a Board of Directors and staff of a private sector business strive to attain the same goals, Council and staff of the Municipality strive to attain the same goals, although the drive for the profitability mandate is replaced by the mandate to provide cost effective and quality public services. Organizational relationships are vital for efficient delivery of services to the public. There must be an effective relationship among members of Council, between Council and management, between management and staff, and among staff. All of these people are vital to the success of the Municipality. Trust, motivation, and communication are all criteria that will enhance the service to the public, whose purse is required to fund these services.

8.1 Current Governance Structure

The Municipality is governed by Municipal Council, which is made up of a Warden and seven Councillors. Nova Scotia Municipal elections are held every four years, the last being in 2012. The Municipality's governance structure operates under a Council/Committee system. This system makes the Council a policy/legislation/strategic body, while appointing the CAO to manage the day-to-day operations within the policies and bylaws of Council. The current Governance Structure for the Municipality is shown below in Figure 8.2. Just recently, the

Municipality applied to the Nova Scotia Utility Review Board to alter the boundaries of some Districts, and to retain the current number of Councillors.

**Figure 8.2
Current Governance Structure**



In addition to Council, there are eleven (11) Standing Committees. Municipal Councillors may also be appointed to other community agencies, boards and commissions (currently 10 outside agencies). The recommended (legislated) Planning Advisory Committee, Audit Committee, Emergency Disaster Planning Committee, and the Police Advisory Committee are all in place. The current list of Council Standing Committees and the external Boards and Agencies Councillor(s) are appointed to is shown in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1
Council Committees, External Boards and Agencies**

Council Standing Committees	Other Boards and Agencies
Recreation	Western Counties Regional Library Board
Planning Advisory	Waste Check – Regional Solid waste
By Laws	Western Region Economic Network
Police Advisory	Clare Firefighters Assn.
Tourism	Villa Acadienne
Emergency Disaster Management	Harbourside/Meadow View Homes
Public Works	Highway 101 Task Force
Communication	Yarmouth Hospital Foundation
Finance, Audit, Administration	Upper Clements Theme Park
Clare Economic Development	
Doctor Search and Recruiting	
Committee of Whole Council	

According to the *Municipality of Clare Meeting List* there are approximately one hundred and fifty-five (155) meetings per year for Council and the twenty-one committees, boards and agencies. In addition to Municipal Council meetings, the number of monthly meetings per Councillor averages four. This requires a significant time commitment from Councillors.

It is also common that the formation of Standing Committees results in confusion over the assignment of responsibilities between the Committee and respective Department Head when committee members become involved in the day-to-day operations of departments. The Study found no evidence, with the exception of the Economic Development Committee, that Standing Committees of Council have documented Terms of Reference approved by Council. That alone can cause confusion in the delivery of common services.

Agendas are prepared and provided prior to all Council and Committee of Council meetings, followed by transcription and circulation of appropriate minutes that are duly approved. The Warden is the Chair of Council and Committee of Council meetings.

As part of the organizational study, individual confidential interviews were held with the Warden and each Municipal Councillor. The common reason indicated by Councillors for the study was to examine the sustainability of the Municipality, leadership, and roles of Council and staff under the Council/CAO system. Some common themes heard during the interviews include:

- Lack of public involvement and public engagement in Council business
- Lack of internal communication at all levels
- Lack of documented Terms of Reference for Committees of Council
- Process for the performance evaluations of staff
- Lack of strategic direction
- Uncertainty regarding staffing levels and the need for more staff
- Inconsistent coordination and cooperation among departments: e.g. internal policies, practices, departmental activities, management philosophy
- Lack of regular financial reporting to Council, CAO, Department Heads and the public

Councillors expressed concern that the Municipality is not future-focused and that operations and decisions are “in the moment” with insufficient time being allocated to developing long-term plans for the Municipality.

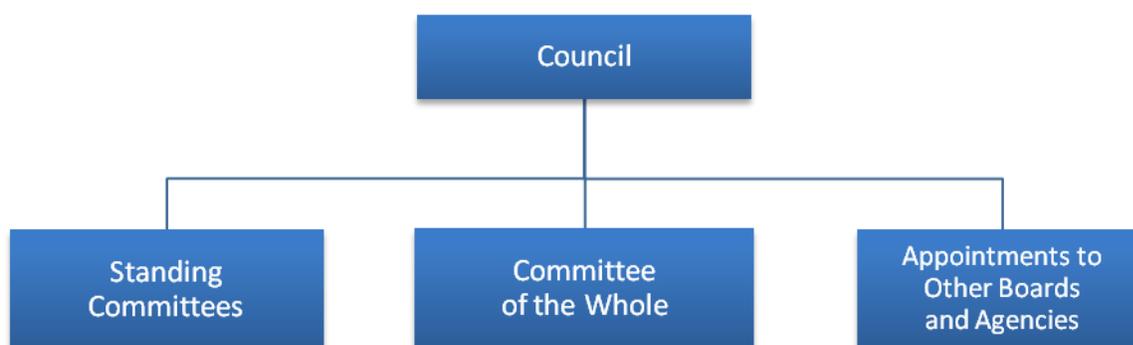
Councillors indicated an interest in placing emphasis on the following:

- Implement the recommendations from the Organizational Study
- Regional economic development through WREN
- Build internal communication best practices
- Develop a long range plan for all aspects of the Municipality
- Implement the appropriate staff levels and organizational structure

8.2 Recommended Governance Structure

More and more municipalities in Nova Scotia are adopting a Council/Committee of the Whole Council/CAO structure and reducing the number of standing committees (unless there is a major need to have members of the public on the Committee). This system is more efficient because it ensures Councillors have the time required for municipal government issues and enables better communication and information sharing on all aspects of the Municipality's operation. Under this system, standing committees are replaced by a committee of the whole Council, known as the Committee of the Whole (COTW) (or Committee of Council), and all Councillors participate in discussions dealing with the entire municipal operation. The recommended Governance Structure for the Municipality is shown in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3
Recommended Governance Structure



The proposed governance structure framework is based on a clear understanding and separation between the role of Councillors and the role of staff. The structure recognizes Municipal Council as a 'Board of Directors' where Councillors are the strategic planners responsible for policy decisions and legislative decisions. The provision of services and management of municipal operations is the role of staff, within the policies and by-laws set by Municipal Council.

Communication and information sharing is enhanced by the attendance of the CAO and Department Heads at meetings of Council and COTW, as required, to present reports, recommendations, activity updates and assist Council in the development of policies and by-laws.

The recommended governance structure will be supported by three key policies for the benefit of Council, staff and public:

- **Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Policy** – outlines the roles, responsibilities and authority of the CAO
- **Council Meetings and Procedures Policy** – documents the formal procedures for meetings of Municipal Council and COTW

- **Committee of the Whole Policy** – outlines the roles, authority and procedure for the Committee

Although the Municipality has minimized the committees needed for municipal issues, the number of committees and appointments to other boards and agencies has caused standing committees and other agencies to require a significant time commitment from Councillors.

Adopting the recommended governance structure, along with the supporting policies/procedures, would result in the elimination of operational Standing Committees, specifically committees for Recreation, Tourism, Public Works, Economic Development, as well as the committees for By-laws, and Communication. The duties and work done by these committees will become the responsibility of COTW. Department Heads will have the option to create Advisory Committees to facilitate easy access to public opinion and public input regarding Council decisions relating to the respective municipal services they are responsible for.

Councillor appointments to external Boards and Agencies should be limited to those with a municipal related mandate to ensure Councillors have sufficient time to focus on the future direction of the Municipality and deal with the complex issues of the Municipality. Table 8.2 provides a list of the Standing Committees required under a Council/Committee of the Whole Council/CAO governance structure.

Table 8.2
Council Committees, Boards and Agencies

Council Standing Committees	Other Boards and Agencies
Planning Advisory	Western Counties Regional Library Board
Police Advisory	Waste Check – Regional Solid waste
Emergency Disaster Management	Western Region Economic Network
Audit Committee	Clare Firefighters Assn.
Doctor Search and Recruiting	Villa Acadienne
	Harbourside/Meadow View Homes
	Highway 101 Task Force
	Yarmouth Hospital Foundation
	Upper Clements Theme Park

Recommendation G1 – Governance Structure

In order to meet the role of Municipal Council as strategic planners and policy makers, it is recommended that Council adopt the Council/Committee of the Whole Council/CAO governance structure as shown in Figure 8.3.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality adopt formal policies for the Chief Administrative Officer, Council Meetings and Procedures, and the Committee of the Whole.

Recommendation G2 – Standing Committees

It is recommended to eliminate the Standing Committees for Recreation, Tourism, Public Works, Economic Development, By-laws and Communication.

Further, that formal Terms of References for all remaining Standing Committees be prepared and approved by Council.

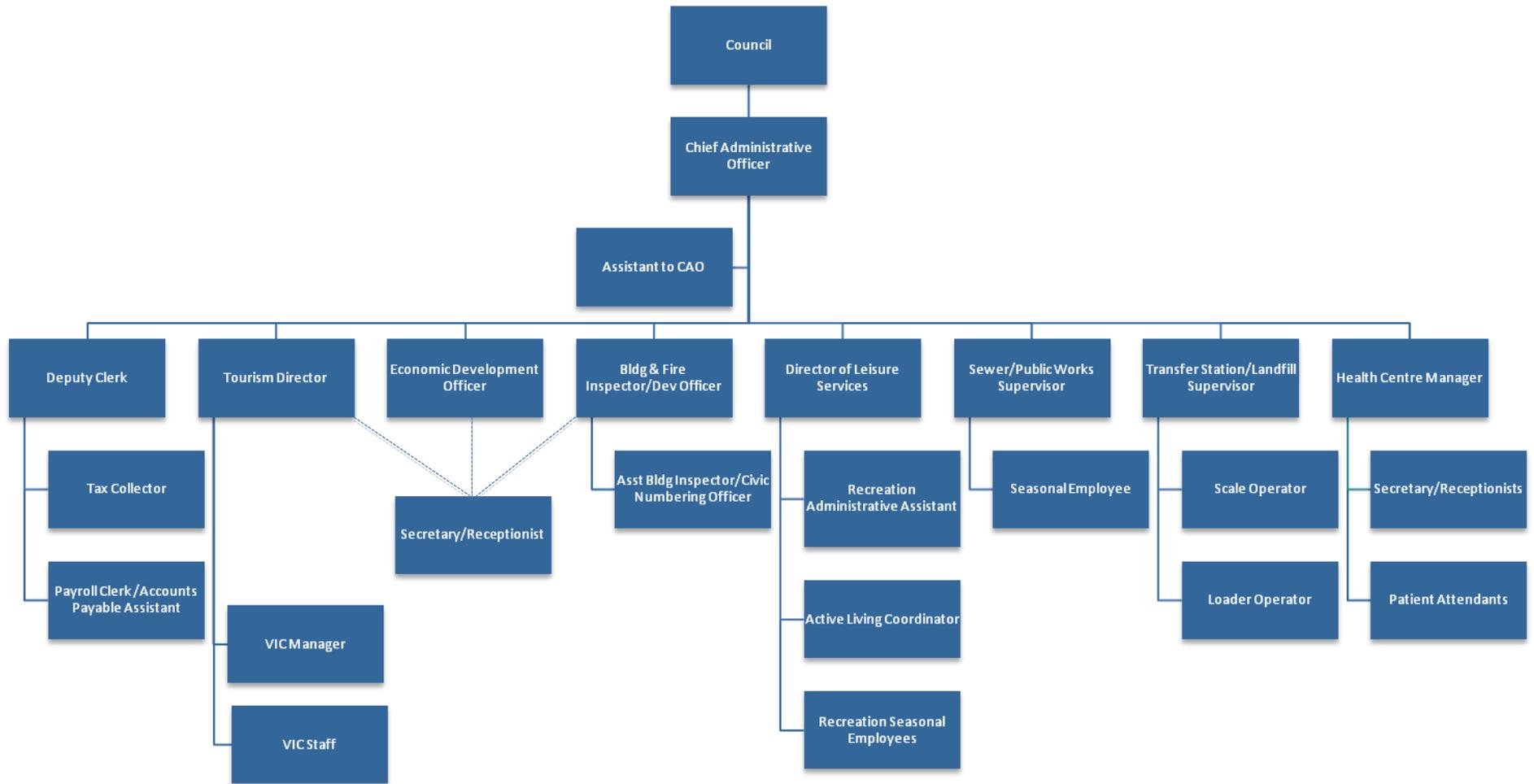
8.3 Existing Staff Organizational Chart

The Municipality is managed by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who is appointed by Municipal Council. The CAO manages the daily operations of the Municipality within the policies and bylaws approved by Council. The CAO has the authority to expend funds and to receive all funds in accordance with the annual budget approved by Council. The CAO is responsible for the hiring and management of all staff employed by the Municipality; and management of all agreements and contracts on behalf of the Municipality. The CAO provides advice to Council on all matters within her responsibility to assist the Council in effective decision-making. The CAO attends all meetings of Council.

In addition to the staff at the Clare Health Centre, the Municipality employs sixteen (16) permanent full-time employees and one (1) term employee (Active Living Coordinator). In addition, the Municipality employs casual, part-time, and seasonal employees as required and budgeted in the Departments of Tourism, Recreation and Public Works. The existing staff organization as depicted by the Municipality is shown in Figure 8.4.

The Municipality's staff organizational chart is typical of local governments, where Department Heads report directly to the CAO, and other staff reports directly to the Department Heads or Supervisors. Municipal Council and staff interviews indicated a perception that departments operate in a "silo" mentality, lacking coordination among departments. Workflow processes become inefficient when that culture exists. The structure of an organization must be developed and operated with a culture that encourages cross-department use of resources, and effective communication to efficiently provide services.

Figure 8.4
Existing Staff Organization Chart



8.3.1 Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

It is important that the number of direct reports to the CAO is limited to enable the CAO to support Council, provide quality time to Department Heads and coordinate resources throughout the organization. Currently, the Municipality's staff structure has nine direct reports to the CAO, one more than the remaining number of staff. As a result, the Study found systemic problems that are creating challenges for the CAO and are negatively impacting communication, productivity and morale within the organization and between Council and staff.

The Municipality currently does not have a CAO Policy that clearly confirms the roles, responsibilities and authority for this position. This creates further challenges and confusion in the roles of the CAO versus Council.

The role of the Administrative Assistant to the CAO requires review to ensure the required level of administrative support is provided to the CAO and Council. Currently, both the Administrative Assistant and the Deputy Clerk play a role in Council and Committee meetings.

8.3.2 Finance Department

Currently there are three staff, plus the CAO, who are involved in the accounting and day-to-day finances of the Municipality. Currently the position of Payroll Clerk/Accounts Payable Assistant is vacant.

Within the Municipal staff structure, there is a recognized lack of professional finance qualifications. As noted earlier in the report, the Study determined there is a lack of financial management processes and key financial policies to ensure regular control of expenditures; maximization of revenues; and regular financial reporting to the Council, CAO, Department Heads and the public.

There is no formal policy to set the process and timeframe for preparation of the annual and capital budgets of the Municipality. Department Heads and the CAO prepare the draft budgets; however, if changes are made to the budgets by Council and the CAO, Department Heads reported they are not normally consulted about the impact of the changes, and may not be notified until after the budgets have been approved. This process removes the accountability and management responsibility from the Department Heads who should be charged with managing and reporting on the progress of their respective departmental finances.

Regular financial reporting to Council, CAO and Department Heads (i.e. budget versus actual comparisons, year end projections, current financial condition of the Municipality) is not currently being done. Regular financial reporting ensures Council, CAO and Department Heads are apprised of any negative or positive financial results and trends on a timely basis.

The external annual audit must be completed on a more timely basis, within three months of year end to provide meaningful information as to the financial condition of the Municipality to Council and, just as importantly, to the public.

8.3.3 Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building Inspection

There is only one full-time employee in each of the Departments of Tourism and Economic Development. A review of the operations of the Departments of Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building Inspection indicated there is an overlapping of vision and goals in that each of these services contributes to the development of the community of Clare.

8.3.4 Public Works and Transfer Station

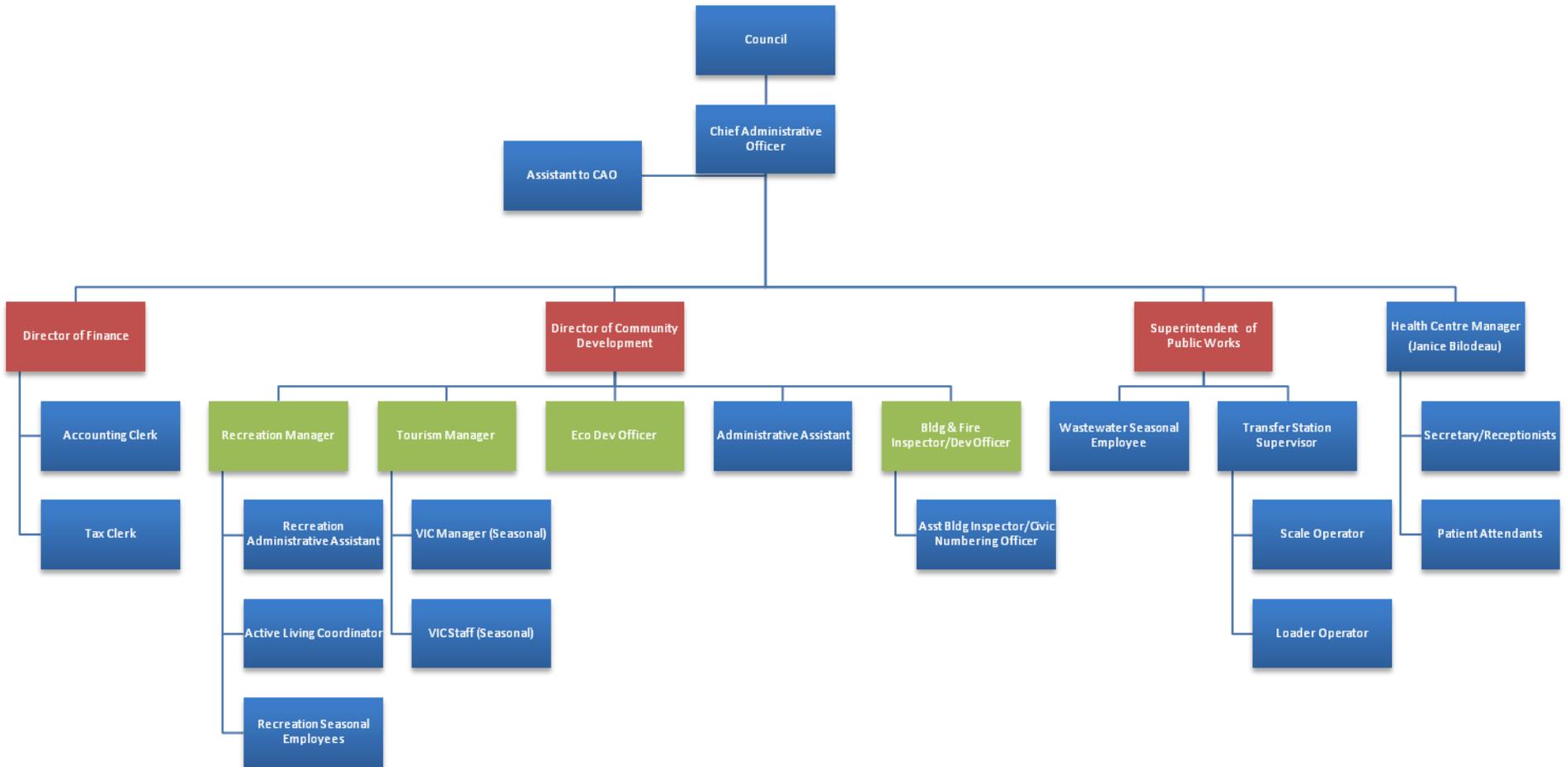
The Sewer/Public Works Supervisor and the Transfer Station Supervisor both report directly to the CAO. This requires time of the CAO to participate in issues affecting these areas of operations.

The Municipality is the owner of several facilities that are key to the delivery of services (i.e. Municipal Office, Medical Centre, recreation facilities, former Legion building, transfer station facilities, Search and Rescue building, Library, EcoPark and Rendez-Vous de la Baie space at the Universite (although owned by the Universite). The Municipality will be tendering for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant in Weymouth in 2015, and developing a trail adjacent to the Universite de Saint Anne. The management and responsibility for facilities falls to a number of employees in the organization, including the Director of Recreation, Assistant Building Inspector, CAO, and Supervisor of Public Works. There is no evidence of a coordinated approach to managing municipal facilities.

8.4 Recommended Staff Organizational Structure

The recommended staff structure, shown in Figure 8.5 realigns positions within the organization to address the issues identified above.

**Figure 8.5
Proposed Staff Organization Chart**



8.4.1 Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Supporting Department Heads and monitoring the operations of departments is an important role of the CAO and time must be made available for that role. Time is also required to implement and manage the various strategies and management processes identified above in section 11.0 of this report. The overall management of the organization's Human Resources is also a critical role for the CAO.

Recommendation S1 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Municipality realign reporting responsibilities and adopt the staff organizational structure as shown in Figure 8.5.

Further, that the CAO devote more time to the development and implementation of the management processes identified in Section 11.0 of the report and assume primary responsibility for the management of the organization's Human Resources and implementation of the HR recommendations contained in Section 14.0 of the Report.

There is a need to streamline the responsibilities for all duties related to the administrative support provided to Council and Committees; specifically the preparation of agendas for Council, COTW, and other committees as required, recording and transcribing meeting minutes and other governance related duties.

Administrative support to the CAO and Council, Human Resource Management administrative duties and records management are critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance and administrative structures. The role of the Administrative Assistant requires review to ensure the level of support being provided is meeting the needs of both structures so as to limit confusion over roles and ensure enhanced communication between Council and the CAO.

Recommendation S2 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the job description for the Administrative Assistant to the CAO be updated to include all duties related to the support provided to Council; specifically the preparation of agendas for Council, COTW, and other committees as required, recording and transcribing meeting minutes and other governance related administrative duties.

Further, that the responsibility for all Human Resource Management administrative duties in support of the CAO be assigned to the Administrative Assistant to the CAO.

8.4.2 Finance Department

The current vacancy in the Finance Department provides an opportunity to review how financial management services are provided to Council and the organization as a whole. The addition of a Director of Finance, reporting directly to the CAO, would replace the position of Payroll Clerk/Accounts Payable Assistant. This would address the significant requirement for strong financial expertise in the organization. The financial duties currently being done by the CAO would be transferred to the new Director. Once hired, the new Director would review all financial management, accounting and financial clerical duties and responsibilities to ensure proper financial controls are in place and workloads are appropriately distributed between the three positions in the Department.

Recommendation S3 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the position of Payroll Clerk/Accounts Payable Assistant be deleted and replaced with a new position for a Director of Finance.

Further, that the new Director of Finance assume responsibility for all financial duties currently being done by the CAO and undertake a review all accounting and financial clerical duties and responsibilities for the organization to ensure proper financial controls are in place and workloads are appropriately distributed between the three positions in the Finance Department.

8.4.3 Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building Inspection

The mandates of the Departments of Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building/Fire Inspection all include components that relate the development of the greater community of the Municipality of Clare. Combining the four Departments into a new single Department of Community Development addresses the need to ensure overlapping mandates are coordinated, reduces the number of direct reports to the CAO and eliminates single employee departments. All staff of the former four Departments would be included in the new Department as set out in the recommended organizational staff structure shown in Figure 8.5. A new position of Director of Community Development, reporting directly to the CAO, would be created.

Recommendation S5 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Departments of Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation and Development/Building Inspection be eliminated and a new Department of Community Development be created to be led by the new position of Director of Community Development.

Recommendation S6 – Staff Structure

It is recommended that an internal competition be undertaken to select one of the current Department Heads to fill the position of Director of Community Development. The titles of the positions reporting to the new Director would be changed to Managers.

Further, it is recommended that resources be put in place to provide any training and development deemed necessary to support the new Director of Community Development in assuming the new job duties and responsibilities associated with this position.

8.4.4 Public Works and Transfer Station

The need has been identified to coordinate the management of municipally owned facilities to ensure the efficient use of financial and human resources related to facility management. It is essential that proper qualifications be available to maintain facilities owned by the Municipality. (As stated recently by the Nova Scotia Auditor General re the Bluenose project). This is best accomplished by assigning all facility management responsibilities to the Superintendent of Public Works (formerly titled Sewer/Public Works Supervisor). As a further step to reduce the number of direct reports to the CAO, the oversight and management of Transfer Station staff would become the responsibility of the Superintendent of Public Works. The Superintendent would continue to be responsible for all municipal wastewater systems.

Recommendation S7 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the position of Sewer/Public Works Supervisor be renamed Superintendent of Public Works and continue to be responsible for all municipal wastewater systems, and in addition, assume responsibility for the supervision of the Transfer Station and staff, and assume responsibility for all facilities owned by the Municipality.

Further, it is recommended that resources are put in place to provide any training and development deemed necessary to support the Superintendent of Public Works in assuming these new job duties and responsibilities.

8.4.5 Clare Health Centre

With the creation of the Clare Health Centre facility and associated operations, there is an ongoing responsibility on the part of the Municipality to maintain the facility and manage administrative and operational staff. While not a typical municipal service, Council and the CAO should recognize the Health Centre in the same manner as it does all other departments. Recent human resource issues at the Centre require better communication between Municipal Council, the CAO and the Health Centre Manager. It is important to recognize that employees

of the Health Centre are employees of the Municipality requiring the same level of human resource management as all other municipal staff.

9.0 Management Team

Recommendation S8 – Staff Structure

It is recommended the Clare Health Centre be recognized as a Department of the municipal organization and that the same level of support and resources be provided as are provided to all other municipal departments.

The CAO and Department Heads should not only be responsible for managing the operations of the Municipality, but should also be required to provide information and advice to Council on the future opportunities of the Municipality. It is required that the CAO and Department Heads be engaged to assist Council in creating a future vision for the Municipality.

A formal Management Team does not exist within the Administrative Structure of the Municipality. There is dialogue between the CAO and Department Heads; however, a team culture does not exist due to the lack of regular Management Team meetings. The membership of the Management Team will include the CAO and all direct reports to the CAO; namely the Director of Finance, Director of Community Development, Health Centre Manager and Superintendent of Public Works. The Team will meet regularly to discuss items of interest within and among all Departments. The Team will provide formal, professional advice to Council as requested or deemed necessary by members of the Team. The existence of a Management Team facilitates consistent management practices, sharing and coordination of resources, as well as a forum to identify future challenges and opportunities. Successful Management Teams have a clearly defined Terms of Reference set out in policy, resulting in the creation of a clear and consistent professional corporate culture.

Recommendation MT1 – Management Team

It is recommended that CAO formalize, through policy, the formation of a Management Team to meet regularly for the purposes of sharing information and resources in the organization and to foster the development of a consistent management philosophy across all Departments of the Municipality.

10.0 Staffing Levels and Compensation

An analysis of other similar rural municipalities in southwest Nova Scotia was done to assess the level of staffing in the Municipality. Table 8.2 outlines the criteria used to select the municipalities to be used in the analysis, specifically geography, residential tax burden, area in square miles and population.

Table 8.2
Comparable Municipalities for Staffing Level Analysis

Municipality	Residential Tax Burden	Area (square miles)	Population
Clare	\$824	852	8,319
Yarmouth	\$1,138	585	10,105
Barrington	\$915	632	6,994
Argyle	\$967	1,528	8,252
Digby	\$855	1,655	7,463

The results of the analysis of staffing levels for the five municipalities are shown in Table 7.3.

Table 8.3
Comparative Full Time Staff Levels

Municipality	Admin/ Finance	Public Works	Tourism/ Recreation/ Eco Dev	Building/ Fire Inspection	Other	Total F/T Staff
Clare	5	1	5.6	2.3	4	18
Yarmouth	8	4	5	3	2	22
Barrington	5	1	3	2	2	13
Argyle	6	1	3	3	4	17
Digby	7	2		3	7	19

Other: Clare – Transfer Station (3); Health Centre Manager
 Yarmouth – Building Custodians (2)
 Barrington – Fire Services Coordinator; Landfill Technician
 Argyle – Facilities Coordinator; Municipal Archivist; Heritage Development Office; Senior Safety Coordinator
 Digby – Airport (5); Renewable Energy/Climate Change Coordinator; Coordinator Program Development

Overall, the Municipality's staffing level is within range of comparable rural municipalities in the southwest region of the Province. In Administration and Finance, the Municipalities of Yarmouth and Argyle have a full time IT staff person; and all municipalities have a Director of Finance with the exception of Clare and Barrington. Staffing levels for Public Works and Building/Fire Inspection are comparable. The Municipality invests the highest level of staff resources in Tourism, Recreation and Economic Development of the municipalities surveyed. It should be noted that the Municipality of Digby owns and operates a municipal airport, which employs five additional employees.

A preliminary survey of job descriptions and salaries determined that the salaries paid by the

Municipality are generally in line with those paid by the other similar sized municipalities. A more detailed market survey of salaries would be required as part of a formal compensation structure.

11.0 Strategies, Policies and Work Flow Processes

The workflow processes of an effective and efficient local government are supported by a number of key strategies, polices, and by-laws.

The key strategies

- Long-term strategy for the municipality (Strategic Plan/Corporate Plan)
- Human Resources Strategy
- Recreation Master Plan/Strategy
- Economic Development/Tourism/Culture/Historical Strategy
- Information Technology/Information Management Strategy
- Municipal Planning Strategy/Land Use By-law
- Financial Management Strategy

Key corporate polices include:

- Council Meetings and Procedure Policy
- Committee of the Whole Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Chief Administrative Officer Policy

These documents are important to provide clear direction to Council, the CAO and staff as to the “systems” of governance and administration. It is also important to have key documents in place for public knowledge so residents and potential suppliers are aware of how the Municipality operates. The preparation and administration of the key policies and strategies is the responsibility of the CAO (see *Recommendation S1* above) with support coming from the members of the Management Team.

An Economic Development Strategy and a Municipal Planning Strategy are in place. Although it was indicated that some of the balance of the key strategies are “being worked on”, the completion of the remaining strategies is critical for improved efficiencies. Although the Municipality has completed an Integrated Community Strategic Plan (ISCP), its main focus is to provide information to Municipal Affairs for infrastructure needs and gas tax allocations.

There was no evidence of any of the four key corporate policies being in place, which has caused issues related to communication, workflow and delegation of duties within the organization.

Recommendation SW1 – Key Strategies and Policies

It is recommended that CAO and Management Team ensure the key strategies and policies listed in Section 11.0 are prepared and presented for Council approval.

The development of a Municipal Strategic Plan will provide clear vision and direction for Council and staff on the future of the organization. It will provide public confidence that the Council has a long-range plan. It will provide staff with the confidence that Council and staff are going in the same direction and that there will be clear accountability and responsibility to “get there”. Municipal Council is the leader in setting that direction.

There is little, if any, coordination of work or sharing of information across the organization. This, coupled with the lack of key operational strategies and policies, results in a “silo” culture where productivity, workflows and the delivery of services to the public are less efficient. A recent project assigned to the departments of Economic Development, Recreation, and Tourism provides an opportunity for mutual collaboration, and Department Heads acknowledged that this should be more frequent.

It is difficult for the public and Municipal Council to determine the effectiveness of the delivery of services compared to goals and objectives due to the absence of a Strategic Plan that identifies key strategic objectives, corporate goals, and individual performance goals.

Recommendation SW2 – Strategies and Workflow

It is recommended that Municipal Council champion the development of a Municipal Strategic Plan that will provide clear vision and direction for Council, staff and the public on the future of the organization.

Further, it is recommended the CAO and Council develop a quarterly reporting system for the public that, as a minimum, reports the progress in meeting the goals and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan, reports any deviations from the annual financial plan, and gives an overview of the activities of the previous quarter and expectations for the coming quarter.

Further, it is recommended the Management Team develop key indicators of performance to be included in the quarterly reports to the public and built into the employee performance evaluation system.

12.0 Communication

Communication among employees, between employees and their supervisors, between the CAO and Department Heads and between Council and the CAO is vital for efficient operations and the delivery of quality services to the public.

Equally important is communication with the public and the Municipality's external stakeholders. Communication with the public can be in various forms, ranging from information sharing as part of good customer service, to formal communications related to Council initiatives, services and programs, and emergency notifications. Technology and social media offer opportunities for dynamic and instantaneous communication with the public and external stakeholders. In all cases, information should be timely and flow consistently throughout the organization and into the community.

There are a number of mediums to facilitate internal communications. Regular departmental and organizational staff meetings provide the opportunity for management to keep employees informed about developments and decisions in the organization. Equally important, staff meetings provide the opportunity for upward communication where staff shares ideas and organizational issues with management. Other options include electronic employee bulletin boards, e-mail, and information booklets. Regular communication between Council and staff is facilitated by the CAO, whose responsibility it is to ensure Department Heads are kept abreast of Council decisions and directives. Department Heads in turn are responsible to keep employees informed.

Council interviews indicated lines of communication between Council and the CAO are weak and many Councillors have the perception that communication between CAO and staff, and between Departments, is also weak. The majority of employees rated communication with your co-workers and with their supervisors as either very good or somewhat good. Communication and information sharing between departments was rated lower. Formal organizational staff meetings to share information and receive employee input occur infrequently. Formal departmental meetings occur regularly in some Departments. In other Departments, information is shared informally, which creates concern for some employees and results in inconsistent communication and inefficient use of time. Employees rated communication between staff and Council as being very low.

Recommendation C1 – Communication

It is recommended that the Municipality develop a Communication Strategy for how information sharing will be handled for both internal and external communications.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality adopt a Staff Meeting Policy that will require, at a minimum, regular monthly Departmental staff meetings and semi-annual CAO meetings with all municipal staff.

Further, it is recommended that essential communication skills training be provided to members of the Management Team and all employees of the Municipality.

13.0 Information Management and Technology

Information is abundant. Whether it is hard copy records, electronic data or corporate memory - how well information is managed has a direct impact on the productivity of staff and efficiency of service delivery to the public. Sound and informed decision-making by Council and staff is compromised when information is not easily accessible, timely and questions of accuracy are common. Of equal concern is the loss of valuable corporate memory when a key employee leaves the employ of the Municipality taking valuable information gained through experience that has not been documented.

Hand in hand with Information Management is Information Technology (IT) and “e-government”. These concepts have changed the way organizations operate and deliver services to the public. The expectations of taxpayers are also changing, placing an increased demand on organizations to provide timely, up-to-date and accurate information and services.

The use of IT is fundamental for providing services to the public and facilitating both internal and external communications. The Municipality currently contracts network administration and end user support from an external service provider; however, there was no evidence of any formal planning to manage the Municipality’s IT needs into the future. Development of an IT program is needed to ensure the proper management of the Municipality’s IT infrastructure and resources. In developing an IT program, it will be necessary to undertake a needs assessment to identify the critical business processes, data/information needs and opportunities that exist for enhanced service delivery. Based on the information collected during the assessment, an IT program can be developed that will enable more efficient operations, enhanced service delivery and the timely replacement of technology in a financially

Recommendation IT1

It is recommended the Municipality develop an Information Management Strategy for the management of the Municipality’s information including hard copy and electronic records, as well as corporate memory.

It is recommended the Municipality engage the services of an external IT expert to undertake an IT needs assessment so as to develop an IT program that will enable proactive management of the Municipality’s IT infrastructure and provide for the timely and affordable replacement of IT resources.

responsible manner.

14.0 Human Resources (HR) Review

As part of the organizational study, individual confidential interviews were held with all municipal employees, including the Clare Health Centre Manager. Employees of the Clare Health Centre; however, were not interviewed because the operations of the Centre were outside the scope of the Study.

A questionnaire was used to gather information. Employees were given the opportunity to share any other information they felt was important to be considered as part of the study. Many of the employees expressed their support for the study and their appreciation for the opportunity to participate.

During the interviews, specific attention was given to understanding how the Municipality's human resources are managed in light of HR best practices. Employees were surveyed to gain an understanding of their levels of satisfaction with their jobs, relationships with their Supervisor, salaries, and the availability of training and professional development opportunities. As well, areas of performance management, job descriptions, employee morale and the level of teamwork were examined. The Municipality's HR Policy Manual was also reviewed.

The study findings identified many positive aspects of the Municipality's HR practices; namely a high level of satisfaction with employees' sense of accomplishment at work, support by management for training and professional development and the existence of a comprehensive Human Resources Manual. There were, however; a number of weaknesses identified, which are directly impacting employee morale and productivity. This in turn, negatively impacts the delivery of services to the public. Some of the more serious deficiencies included out-dated and incomplete job descriptions; the lack of regular coaching and feedback from management; poor communication within the organization and with Council; and the performance evaluation process.

The need for succession planning was also identified. Currently, there is no formal plan in place to ensure the smooth transition of corporate knowledge and operations when long-term employees retire. The positions of CAO, Building/Fire Inspector/Development Officer and Deputy Clerk are the most critical positions for which succession planning is required.

Figure 14.1
Components of a Human Resource Strategy



Overall, the Municipality requires a Human Resource Strategy to promote proper HR practices and ensure employees are motivated, productive and held accountable for the job duties and responsibilities assigned to them. Further, a strategy will mitigate the risk to the Municipality of successful claims under Human Rights, Labour or Occupational Health & Safety legislation.

The importance of a HR Strategy cannot be overstated. Employees are a critical resource for delivering municipal services. Strategic HR planning links the management of employees directly to the goals of Council and as a result, employees are better able to understand how their roles tie directly into the achievement of those goals. The implementation of a well-planned HR strategy coordinates human resources, increases productivity, and ensures the Municipality is able to meet its current and future HR needs. And most importantly, an effective HR Strategy ensures employees feel supported and nurtured, and experience high levels of job satisfaction, which are critical for the success of any organization.

The key components of a HR Strategy are shown in Figure 14.1 on the following page. Focus and attention to every component is important for positive and productive workplaces. The following sections explain the various components. Implementation of the recommendations for each component will provide the foundation for an effective HR Strategy for the Municipality.

14.1 Training, Learning and Development

Investing in training, learning and development programs helps employees develop both professionally and personally. An essential skills inventory for each employee, updated annually as part of the Performance Evaluation process, will provide the information necessary to identify the types of training and skills upgrades required for each employee, which in turn will enable the development of individual and organizational training programs. Identifying and providing training enables employees to perform their jobs at the highest level and deliver high quality service to the public.

Recommendation HR1 – Training, Learning and Development

As part of the annual performance evaluation process and review of job descriptions, it is recommended the Municipality develop an annual training program for employees who require certification and skills upgrades.

Further, in addition to specific skills training identified for individual employees, organizational training is encouraged, specifically in the areas of Leadership and Supervisory Training for Department Heads and Supervisors, Building Teams and Teamwork, and Essential Communication Skills for all employees.

Further, during the development of annual operating budgets, it is recommended consideration be given to including appropriate resources to fund identified individual and organizational training and development.

14.2 HR Planning

The stability and sustainability of an organization requires effective succession planning that includes an established process to meet current and future staffing requirements. Council and residents rely on staff to provide services and achieve organizational goals. It is important to think about what would happen to those services or the Municipality's ability to fulfill its mission if a key staff member left or is absent for an extended period of time. Another reason to focus on succession planning is the changing realities of workplaces. The fast pace of technology developments, increasing public demands and impending retirement of baby boomers all have a major impact on workforce capacity.

Recommendation HR2 – HR Planning

It is recommended that the Municipality identify critical positions in the organization and establish succession plans for each of these positions.

14.3 Compensation and Benefits

Compensation consists of more than the salaries employees are paid. It can be defined as all of the rewards earned by employees in return for their labour. These rewards include direct financial compensation (salaries or wages); indirect financial compensation (pension plan, health benefits, paid holidays, etc.); and non-financial compensation (training & professional development, recognition, work environment, etc.). While employees tend to focus on direct financial compensation when contemplating their rewards, for those employees who are relatively satisfied with their salary, it is the non-financial rewards that tend to be more effective for achieving productivity and long-term employee engagement.

There are several key policies that ensure an organization's compensation and benefits are competitive to attract and retain a qualified workforce. The first is a Salary Administration Plan Policy, which establishes levels of compensation that are internally equitable, externally competitive and financially affordable for the Municipality. Second, is an Employee Benefits Policy that outlines entitlement to the Municipality's Pension Plan and Employee Benefit Program for full-time and part-time employees. Finally, there are policies for non-financial compensation such as an Employee Wellness Policy and Employee Recognition Policy.

Recommendation HR3 – Compensation and Benefits

It is recommended the Municipality adopt a Salary Administration Plan Policy setting out the requirement for complete, accurate and up-to date job descriptions, annual performance evaluations for all employees, job evaluations to ensure internal equity and the requirement for regular market salary reviews to ensure external equity for salaries paid to all Municipal employees.

Further, it is recommended the Municipality develop salary scales based on the results of internal job evaluations and an external salary review. Placement on salary levels will be determined from the results of the job evaluation process and movement across steps will be based on an employee's job performance as reflected in their annual performance evaluation.

14.4 Managing People and their Work

Philanthropist and banker, Agha Hasan Abedi is quoted as saying “the conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work”. The fundamentals of good management are that all employees understand what is expected of them; they receive on-going feedback about their job performance; and are provided with the training and skills upgrades required to maximize productivity and provide quality services to the public. Setting clear performance targets and expectations, ensuring employees get objective feedback on their performance and having a personal development plan will drive more effective individual behaviour and increase morale resulting in increased productivity and enhanced service delivery to the public. Strong and trusting workplace relationships are also important for building employee commitment to their work and the Municipality as an organization.

Performance Evaluations

The primary purposes of conducting employee performance evaluations are to motivate employees, monitor their performance, and improve organizational morale. At a minimum, a documented evaluation of employee performance should be done at least once a year. For employees who are performing below acceptable job standards, more frequent documented evaluation is required. When employees are aware their performance is being monitored for recognition or potential monetary reward, their morale is improved and they are motivated to work harder. Performance Evaluations are also an important management tool for identifying employee and organizational training needs. Finally, in the event an employee's performance consistently falls below acceptable job standards, documented Performance Evaluations are

critical to the employer’s legal ability to demonstrate any disciplinary action deemed necessary, up to, and including termination.

While the Municipality has a Performance Evaluation Policy in place, there are inconsistencies in how the evaluations are carried out, specifically related to performance evaluation meetings and the role of the CAO and supervisors.

Coaching

In addition to formal evaluations, day-to-day coaching and regular feedback about an employee’s performance is also very important. Coaching begins by clearly articulating goals and expectations so employees know exactly what they are expected to accomplish. Once goals and expectations are set, the Supervisor provides positive and constructive feedback as frequently as is needed to let employees know they are supported. Recognizing successes and the achievement of goals enhances employee morale and motivation.

Clear expectation, appropriate supervision and regular feedback are the best ways to avoid employee performance issues or concerns. However, despite proactive management, performance issues or concerns will arise requiring a process to address deficiencies in employee performance. An effective process will also ensure any disciplinary action (including termination) is defensible.

Recommendation HR4 – Performance Evaluation Process

It is recommended, on at least an annual basis, supervisors prepare and conduct a formal performance evaluation for all employees who report directly to the supervisor that documents the key aspects of an employee’s performance, includes jointly developed work plans and performance objectives for the coming year and identifies any training or professional development required to ensure the employee’s job skills are kept current and/or to meet new job requirements.

Further, it is recommended that training be provided to all Department Heads and supervisors who have responsibility for managing the work and efforts of other employees so as to develop their skills in planning the work for the employees they supervise; and, enhance their supervisory skills in managing the performance of their employees. Also, that the training includes best practices for conducting performance evaluation meetings and addressing employee performance that falls below job standards.

Further, that Council conduct a formal review of the CAO’s performance on an annual basis.

14.5 Getting the Right People

Staffing is all about hiring the right people with the right skills who have the capacity to embrace the culture of an organization. A proper and complete recruitment and selection process can be expensive and time consuming. Hiring mistakes are a huge financial burden. The cost is compounded when a hiring mistake erodes employee morale and disrupts the workplace. A proper and complete hiring process that is fairly conducted will avoid expensive and reputation damaging Human Rights claims. Once hired, it is important that new employees receive the proper orientation, not only to learn their duties and responsibilities, but to also be introduced to the organization and its policies and procedures. An effective orientation will also make the new employee feel comfortable, helping them to learn about their role and the organization's culture and values.

The Municipality has comprehensive policies for the recruitment and selection of new employees. Despite having a Staff Orientation Policy, the study found very few new employees received a formal orientation to the organization; and in some cases, lacked up-to-date job descriptions and received little if any training for the new position they were hired to fill.

Recommendation HR5 – New Employee Orientation

It is recommended the Municipality undertake a review of the HR Policy for Staff Orientation and update where necessary to ensure new employees feel welcome, are aware of organizational policies and practices and have a complete understanding of their role, duties and responsibilities.

14.6 Keeping the Right People

Following the investment to recruit, orient and train qualified employees, it is important to ensure the management and organizational HR practices support the retention of those employees. Employee engagement is the commitment and energy that employees bring to their job and is a key indicator of employee dedication to the organization. Employees who feel satisfied and safe are more engaged and in turn, more loyal and productive.

Employee recognition must be a sincere and heartfelt acknowledgement of an individual or team's behaviour, effort and accomplishments in the performance their job duties and responsibilities, and the positive contributions they make to the workplace in general. The benefits to the organization are numerous; the obvious being improved employee motivation, morale and loyalty. Other benefits include a greater sense of ownership of one's work and employee retention.

Recommendation HR6 – Employee Recognition Policy

It is recommended the Municipality develop an Employee Recognition Policy where employees who achieve targets and performance goals, or significant milestones in their career are recognized and celebrated by their peers and Council.

14.7 Workplaces That Work

The management of an organization's human resources has a direct effect on an organization's culture and productivity. In addition to the responsibility to manage employees' work, Department Heads and Supervisors also have a responsibility to motivate, coach and mentor the employees reporting to them in a way that supports a positive and supportive work environment. This in turn creates an organizational culture where employees feel recognized, valued and safe. As noted previously, it is recommended that Department Heads and supervisors be given the necessary supervisory training to effectively manage all employees reporting to them.

The culture of an organization is directly influenced by its history, management philosophy and employee core beliefs about how the workplace operates. Key aspects of the workplace that impact organizational culture include support for employee work/life balance, how conflict in the workplace is resolved, tolerance for breaches in professional conduct, safety and the overall physical, emotional and spiritual wellness of employees.

Employee morale is one of the key indicators of the health of a workplace. Defined as the emotions, attitude, and the overall outlook of employees in the workplace, morale directly impacts an employee's productivity. Employees that are happy and positive at work are considered to have high morale and higher levels of productivity. Dissatisfied employees who feel negatively about aspects of their work environment have low morale and often perform below required job standards. In the confidential interviews, a significant number of employees indicated the morale in the municipal offices could be improved.

Teamwork is another indicator used to measure the health of a workplace. Teamwork occurs when a group of people work together cohesively, towards a common goal, creating a positive working atmosphere, and support each other to combine individual strengths to enhance team performance. The results are better problem solving, greater productivity and more effective use of resources.

Many of the services and programs delivered by the Municipality require employees to work as a member of the team. The level of teamwork varies across the organization. Workplaces outside the municipal offices experience high levels of teamwork. There were differing perceptions of teamwork within the municipal offices with at least half of the employees indicating they felt teamwork could be approved.

Recommendation HR7 – Teamwork

It is recommended that team building training be provided to Department Heads and non-management employees to build employees' skills and abilities in teamwork and develop an organizational culture for working in teams.

14.8 Policy Framework

Every employer must understand and comply with employment related legislation and regulations such as Labour Standards, Human Rights and Occupational Health and Safety. At a minimum, HR policies must comply with employment legislation; however, it is not uncommon for the policies to exceed these minimum requirements. Since HR policies communicate organizational values, it is important that they support the spirit and intentions of Council and management for how the workplace will be managed. Consistency in how policies are administered is critical to employee buy-in and the development of a positive, productive workplace culture.

HR policies should be easily accessible by management and employees. These policies are important to ensure all employees, and the workplaces in which they work, are managed in compliance with minimum legal requirements and management decisions and actions are consistent, uniform and predictable across the organization. Once adopted, HR management policies should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure changes to employment-related legislation and/or new developments in HR management practices are incorporated into the Municipality's HR management policies.

The Municipality's HR Policy Manual was adopted by Council in October 2011. The Manual is comprehensive and includes policies related to the staffing process, performance management, training and professional development, leaves of absence, service awards, employee conduct and grievance procedure, compensation and equal opportunity. There was no evidence Municipality's HR policies are being reviewed on a regular basis.

Recommendation HR8 – HR Policy Framework

It is recommended that a formal process for the review of all HR Policies be developed to ensure changes to employment-related legislation and/or new developments in HR management practices are incorporated into the Municipality's HR Policies.