



City of Hamilton

AUDIT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REVISED

Meeting #: 24-016
Date: September 19, 2024
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Location: Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Tamara Bates, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 4102

1. CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(Added Items, if applicable, will be noted with *)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 September 5, 2024

5. COMMUNICATIONS

6. DELEGATION REQUESTS

7. DELEGATIONS

8. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

*8.1 Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide)

*8.1.a Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide)
- REVISED

9. CONSENT ITEMS

9.1 Annual Tax Arrears as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24020) (City Wide)

9.2 Annual Assessment Appeals as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24021) (City Wide)

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

*10.1 Governance Review Sub-Committee Report 24-001 (September 13, 2024)

11. MOTIONS

11.1 Ward 2 Community Grants - Q3 2024 - 2 (Ward 2)

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

*12.1 Ward 13 Community Grants Q2/Q3 2024

(A request to waive the rules will be introduced.)

13. GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS

14. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

15. ADJOURNMENT



AUDIT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MINUTES 24-015

9:30 a.m.

September 5, 2024

Council Chambers

Hamilton City Hall

Present: Councillors T. Hwang (Chair), J. Beattie (virtually), B. Clark, C. Kroetsch, M. Tadeson, A. Wilson, and M. Wilson (virtually)

Absent with

Regrets: Councillor M. Spadafora – Personal

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. CONSENT ITEMS (Items 9.1-9.3)

(Tadeson/Kroetsch)

That the following Consent Items, be received:

- (a) Annual Employee Absence Report 2023 (HUR24005) (City Wide) (Item 9.1)
- (b) Community Benefits Charges Reserve Status Report as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24007) (City Wide) (Item 9.2)
- (c) Development Charges Reserves Status Report as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24043) (City Wide) (Item 9.3)

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

2. Development Agreement Surety Bonds (FCS21056(b)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) (Item 10.1)

(Kroetsch/A. Wilson)

- (a) That the Development Agreement Surety Bond Policy (FPAP-DA-001) and the accompanying Development Agreement Surety Bond Language Template, attached as Appendix "A" to Report FCS21056(b), be amended as identified;
- (b) That staff be directed to allow developments which provided security prior to June 9, 2021, currently secured with a letter of credit or cash security, to replace the existing security with a surety bond, provided:
 - (i) The applicant submits an application form (Appendix "B") and a non-refundable application fee;
 - (ii) The applicant agrees to pay any third-party costs related to the approval of the application (e.g., legal fees, registration fee, title search);
 - (iii) The application is subject to joint approval by the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development (or designate) and the City Solicitor (or designate);
- (c) That the application fee applicable to allow developments currently secured with a letter of credit or cash security which provided security prior to June 9, 2021, to replace the existing security with a surety bond be:
 - (i) Established as \$300 for the 2024 calendar year;
 - (ii) Referred to the annual user fee by-law for 2025 and future years;
 - (iii) Credited to the Development Engineering Administration (45408 812015).

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

3. Fencing at 42 Mary Street (Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services) (Ward 2) (Item 11.1)

(Kroetsch/A. Wilson)

WHEREAS, the management of 42 Mary Street was transferred from the City of Hamilton in partnership with Urban Native Homes to Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services in 2016;

WHEREAS, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services receives financial support from the City of Hamilton through the Commercial Rent Supplement Program;

WHEREAS, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, as an affordable housing provider, does not have sufficient funding to take on emerging capital improvements;

WHEREAS, residents at 42 Mary Street have an outdoor seating area for gathering at the corner of Mary Street and King William Street;

WHEREAS, the outdoor seating area is frequently used as a shortcut, which makes it difficult for residents to enjoy;

WHEREAS, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services hired Davis Fences to provide a quote to install a fence along the property line at 42 Mary Street, which was quoted at \$15,243.70, inclusive of HST.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

- (a) That costs associated with installing a fence at 42 Mary Street be funded from the Ward 2 Special Capital Reinvestment Reserve 108052 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$16,000; and
- (b) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute any required agreement(s) and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

4. Financial Support for CityHousing Hamilton Capital Projects (Ward 2) (Item 11.2)

(Kroetsch/Hwang)

WHEREAS, CityHousing Hamilton (CHH) does not have sufficient funding to take on emerging capital updates and repairs to their many buildings in Ward 2;

WHEREAS, CityHousing Hamilton owns the following properties in Ward 2:

- (i) 95 Hess Street South, a 291-unit singles building built in 1968;
- (ii) 181 Jackson Street West, a 265-unit singles building built in 1968;

- (iii) 206 Jackson Street East. a 30-unit mixed singles/family building built in 1974;
- (iv) 226 Rebecca Street, a 199-unit seniors building built in 1971;
- (v) 55 Hess Street South/181 Main Street West, a commercial mall and office space connecting 200 Jackson Street West and 191 Main Street West, a 467-unit seniors complex built in 1973; and,
- (vi) 185 Jackson Street East, a 50-unit one and two bedroom building built in 1991

WHEREAS, CityHousing Hamilton recognizes that its tenants, both residential and commercial, deserve structural and cosmetic upgrades to improve the overall quality of life for all by promoting well-being, safety, and community engagement;

WHEREAS, CityHousing Hamilton staff obtained the following quotes and estimates for necessary capital updates and repairs:

- (i) Community Room flooring replacement at 226 Rebecca Street for \$12,311.35;
- (ii) Community Room upgrades at 226 Rebecca Street for \$24,916.37;
- (iii) Balcony and railing replacement at 181 Jackson Street West for \$500,000;
- (iv) Lobby floor replacement at 181 Jackson Street West for \$11,526.00;
- (v) Community garden upgrades at 181 Jackson Street West for \$12,062.75;
- (vi) Pigeon netting at 181 Jackson Street West and 95 Hess Street South for \$166,800;
- (vii) Metal out handrail replacement at 95 Hess Street South for \$1,506.04;
- (viii) Community Room floor replacement at 185 Jackson Street East for \$11,300;
- (ix) Hallway flooring replacement at 206 Jackson Street East for \$11,100;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the CityHousing Hamilton Capital Funding be funded from the Ward 2 Capital Re-Investment Reserve #108052 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$850,000; and
- (b) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute any required agreement(s) and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

- YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
- YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
- YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
- YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
- YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie

YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda:

6. DELEGATION REQUESTS

6.1 Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds (for today's meeting)

(Tadeson/Kroetsch)

That the agenda for the September 5, 2024 Audit, Finance and Administration Committee meeting, be approved, as amended.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

(i) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings (Items 4.1-4.2)

(A. Wilson/Tadeson)

That the following Minutes be approved, as presented:

- (1) July 11, 2024
- (2) August 21, 2024 (Special – Development Charges Hearing)

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch

YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(d) DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 6)

- (i) Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds (for today's meeting) (Added Item 6.1)**

(Tadeson/A. Wilson)

That the Delegation Request from Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds, be approved for today's meeting.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(e) DELEGATIONS (Item 7)

- (i) Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds (for today's meeting) (Added Item 6.1)**

Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, addressed Committee respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds.

(A. Wilson/Kroetsch)

That the Delegation from Michelle Diplock, West End Home Builders' Association, respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds, be received and referred to the consideration of Report FCS21056(b), respecting Development Agreement Surety Bonds (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item).

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang

YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(f) GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS (Item 13)

(i) Amendments to the Outstanding Business List (Item 13.1)

(A. Wilson/Beattie)

That the following amendments to the Outstanding Business List, be approved:

(1) Items Requiring a New Due Date:

(a) Feasibility of a Bring Your Own Device Policy

Added: March 23, 2023
Current Due Date: January 1, 2024
New Due Date: March 31, 2025 (Q1 2025)

(2) Items Considered Completed and to be Removed:

(a) Development Agreement Surety Bonds (FCS21056(a)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) - REVISED

Added: August 17, 2023
Addressed as Item 10.1 on today's agenda

(b) 2024 Development Charges Background Study and By-law Update - Open House Feedback (FCS23103(a))

Added: March 27, 2024
Addressed as Item 6.1 and 6.1(a) on the April 4, 2024 (Special) agenda

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(g) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

(Tadeson/M. Wilson)

That, there being no further business, the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee, be adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
ABSENT - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

Respectfully submitted,


Councillor Tammy Hwang, Chair
Audit, Finance and Administration
Committee

Tamara Bates
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk



Hamilton

CITY OF HAMILTON
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

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|---------------------------|--|
| TO: | Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | September 19, 2024 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Domenic Pellegrini CPA, CMA, CIA (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2492 Charles Brown CPA, CA (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4469 Brigitte Minard CPA, CA, CIA, CGAP, CFE (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3107 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Brigitte Minard, Deputy Auditor General for Charles Brown, CPA, CA Auditor General Office of the Auditor General |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Management Response, as detailed in Appendix “B” to Report AUD24005 be approved; and
- (b) That the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development, the General Manager of Public Works, the General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services, and the General Manager of Community Services be directed to implement the Management Responses (attached as Appendix “B” to Report AUD24005) and report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee by March 2025 on the nature and status of actions taken in response to the audit report.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide)
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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) performed an audit of Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licences.
- The OAG finds that the City of Hamilton has significant room for improvement in the governance and administration of leases and licenses.
- The OAG made 35 recommendations in this report to address the audit findings.
- Management agreed with all 35 recommendations and provided management responses for each recommendation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) performed an audit that evaluated and assessed the administration of leases and licences for efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with City policies, guidelines and legislation, including whether systems and practices are providing the City with reasonable assurance that its assets are being appropriately safeguarded, and revenues maximized.

The OAG finds that the City has many opportunities to strengthen lease and licence governance and management at the City of Hamilton.

From a systems perspective, the applications used for leases/licence administration do not offer the complete functionality of a fully integrated solution. They are vulnerable to untraceable changes to the information and do not integrate with the financial systems used corporately, which affects the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness respecting the tracking of invoicing, receipt of payment, and account status. In all systems we observed data that was incomplete or not up to date, and data that was in disagreement when compared between applications.

In reviewing how leases/licences administration is organized, we found the administration to be inefficient, prone to error, and there are missed opportunities. The analysis in our detailed findings shows that there are numerous problems occurring in lease administration sufficient to suggest the current approach is not serving the City's needs, and should be reorganized, including serious consideration being given to a more centralized approach.

From time to time the City will lease or licence space at below market rental rates to a party that is a community group, charity, or not for profit entity. In our view, management needs to review and renew the current criteria and procedures for below market rental, looking for improvement opportunities toward achieving greater consistency and compliance with existing City policy, and toward a more transparent and accountable

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SUBJECT: Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide)

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process. The delegations of authority for lease/license transactions needs updating and should be maintained in official policy documents that are readily available.

For effective administration, it is important to have a comprehensive leasing policy, as some other jurisdictions have. While the City does have some procedures, roles and criteria developed for specific aspects of lease administration, they are not as robust or fulsome as they could be and are generally lacking in detailed or standard operating procedures.

In a review we conducted of data accuracy stored in the various applications used for administration, we found a large number that required adjustment as they were erroneously recorded. We concluded that the accuracy of lease information is not reliable, and not kept up to date. In addition, we found that overholds - leases that have expired and continue on a month to month basis until a new lease is signed - need to be dealt with more expeditiously.

We found the processes for collection of rents and fees for leases and licences, including overdue or unpaid amounts, to be inherently weak, and inadequate to ensure full collection and restoration of arrears on a timely basis. In analyzing the status of arrears (rental payments long past due) at the date of our audit, we found that the accumulated arrears and rental losses or revenues unlikely to be fully collected to be approximately **\$1.2 million**.

Our full report contains several case studies of administration challenges.

The OAG made 35 recommendations in this report to address the above-noted issues.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable.

PREVIOUS REPORTS SUBMITTED – Not Applicable.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: None.

Staffing: None.

Legal: None.

SUBJECT: Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005) (City Wide)

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) had a Real Estate Audit – Leases and Licensing Audit on the OAG Term of Council Work Plan 2023-2026 (AUD23012).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Real Estate Management Plan (Report CS0190)

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Appendix “B” to Report AUD24005 includes responses for management responsible in the Corporate Real Estate Office, Financial Services Division, Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Division, Legal and Risk Management Services Division, Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division, and Recreation Division.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The audit objectives were to assess whether the administration of leased and licensed City-owned properties is efficient and effective, and compliant with City policies, guidelines and legislated requirements. The audit also evaluated whether the systems, practices and procedures being followed are providing the City with reasonable assurance that its assets are being appropriately safeguarded and controlled, and that revenues to the City are maximized where applicable.

The Office of the Auditor General found that there is significant room for improvement in the governance and administration of leases and licenses. The Audit Report summarizing our findings can be found at Appendix “A” to Report AUD24005.

The OAG made 35 recommendations to address the key audit findings, with a focus on data collection and financial reporting, maximizing and collecting revenues, and related process improvements in the administration of leases and licences, these can be found in Appendix “B” to Report AUD24005.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION – Not Applicable

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report AUD24005 – Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit Report

Appendix “B” to Report AUD24005 – Recommendations and Management Responses

Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit



September 19, 2024

Domenic Pellegrini, Senior Audit and Investigations Specialist

Brigitte Minard, Deputy Auditor General

Charles Brown, Auditor General

Office of the Auditor General



Hamilton

OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

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Executive Summary

- 1 The objectives of this audit were to assess the administration of leases and licences for efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with City policies, guidelines and legislation, including whether systems and practices are providing the City with reasonable assurance that its assets are being appropriately safeguarded, and revenues maximized.
- 2 A lease is a legally binding contract outlining the terms under which one party (the lessor) agrees to rent a property it owns to another party (the lessee). In Ontario, a lease usually confers exclusive possession of a property to the lessee. A licence is also a legally binding contract, but does not confer exclusive possession, rather it gives the licensee the right or privilege to enter and use the licensor's property in a certain manner. The audit focused exclusively on lease-out arrangements or revenue leases/licences where the City acts as a landlord.
- 3 There are several actors involved in the administration of leases and licences. They include Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO), Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division (CFEM), various program areas (primarily Recreation Division – REC), and Legal Services.
- 4 Through our audit process, we developed a number of observations and findings.
- 5 From a systems perspective, lease and licence administration is carried out primarily through ARCHIBUS, TRACKER (SharePoint site), and Legend software. We observed that one significant drawback of ARCHIBUS is that most of the information is not write-protected and therefore vulnerable to being changed without any trace as to the source and timing of the change. Further, it does not offer the complete functionality of a fully integrated lease administration solution. None of the systems used for leases and licences integrate with the financial systems used corporately, which affects the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness respecting the tracking of invoicing, receipt of payment, and account status. In all systems we observed some data that was incomplete or not up to date, and data that was in disagreement when compared between systems.
- 6 In reviewing how leases/licences administration is organized, we found there was some documentation to clarify certain aspects of the roles, responsibilities, and processes of coordination between the various parties. However, in practice we found the administration to be inefficient, prone to error, and there are missed opportunities. The analysis in our detailed findings shows that there are numerous problems occurring in lease administration sufficient to suggest the current approach is not serving the City's needs. CREO has recognized that there are issues and inherent risks in the current approach, and they have considered centralizing lease administration. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) concurs

this could be advantageous as a viable way forward for meaningful improvement. We also note in the report some improvements that could be made in the CREO/CFEM agreement, and we cite the development of a business agreement between CREO and REC as an opportunity. In general, we concluded that the City has a fragmented system of managing leases and licences, and the current approach to maintaining reliable data needs much improvement.

- 7 From time to time the City will lease or licence space at below market rental rates to a party that is a community group, charity, or not for profit entity. While there are criteria for such decisions, we noted that procedures supporting these criteria, including the documentation and analysis could be more robust. With any space that is rented at below market rent there is an implied subsidy in the difference between fair market value and actual rent. In our view, management needs to review and renew the current criteria and procedures for below market rental, looking for improvement opportunities toward achieving greater consistency and compliance with existing City policy, and toward a more transparent and accountable process.
- 8 We also observed the need for update to the delegations of authority for leases and licences, and for ensuring their inclusion in official policy documents.
- 9 One key tool used by administrators of leases and licences is a comprehensive agreement between the parties, and we observed that the agreements currently under administration can vary considerably in form, content, and language. In 2015 Recreation (REC) decided to improve their administration of licences toward achieving a greater level of uniformity, and improving oversight and due diligence, by standardizing their agreement structures. However, for leases this has not happened, and we have observed that there are agreements that have not kept up with evolving standards, including some that have been in place since pre-amalgamation and that need to be brought into consistency with current City policies and best practices for lease administration. We concluded that CREO would benefit from efforts to standardize agreements as much as possible. This would facilitate uniformity, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of contract management, and ease the burden of legal review and oversight.
- 10 For effective administration, it is important to have a leasing policy. A comprehensive leasing policy establishes the key policies, requirements, roles, decision criteria, procedures, guidance, and checklists that seek to enable sound lease administration. The benefits include maintaining of institutional knowledge, training, generating sufficient awareness of requirements amongst all involved parties, supporting City objectives, more assured compliance with City requirements and legislation, greater transparency and accountability, fairness in business dealings, and value for money. While the City does have some procedures, roles and criteria developed for specific aspects of lease

administration, they are not as comprehensive or fulsome as they could be and are generally lacking in detailed or standard operating procedures.

- 11 We are aware of another municipal jurisdiction having a comprehensive policy framework supported by defined procedures that explain how the key requirements of leasing policy are to be met. Given there is contemplation of reorganization of leasing responsibilities to improve consistency and effectiveness of service delivery, it makes sense to suggest that, once directions have been decided, the development of a policy framework and set of standard operating procedures be undertaken.
- 12 In a review we conducted of data accuracy in the system(s), we found a large number that required status adjustment as they were erroneously recorded. Specifically, we found that of 85 active leases, there were 31 (or 36%), not 18, in overhold – which is to say that 31 agreements had expired and gone into month-to-month tenancy pending a new agreement. We discovered that 65% of these overholds were three (3) or more years in overhold status. We therefore concluded that the accuracy of lease information is not reliable, not kept up to date, and overholds need to be dealt with more expeditiously. Further, there were examples of overholds that simply went into effect at then-existing rent which bears risk of revenue leakage or loss.
- 13 For licences, the level of data challenge was similar. Actual licences in overhold were 97 vs 34 in the system, with 74% of them having been in overhold for longer than three (3) years, including one that had been in overhold for more than 15 years with no adjustment to monthly rent.
- 14 In addition, we encountered discrepancies between ARCHIBUS and TRACKER data for the same properties and identified a need for more proactive reporting/notification of upcoming and time sensitive administration requirements such as agreement expiry, renewal, overhold, rent escalation etc.
- 15 As part of the audit, OAG evaluated procedures for rent collection and arrears management. For leases, rent collection is performed by the City's Corporate Finance function – specifically, Accounts Receivable (AR Finance). It is a cumbersome process because it relies on AR Finance coordinating with program areas and involves a financial system that is not integrated with lease administration systems, making the process vulnerable to human error, delay, and inconsistency, particularly when accounts get into arrears. The system of collection for **licences** operates differently than leases and is conducted through multiple channels and processes that include the use of the Legend software and spreadsheets that facilitate the tracking of rents/fees.
- 16 Overall, we found the processes for collection of rents and fees for leases and licences, including overdue or unpaid amounts, to be inherently weak, and

inadequate to ensure full collection and restoration of arrears on a timely basis. OAG believes this is due to the lack of robust process, weak accountability, poor "line of sight" into the status of receivables, and lack of timely action when confronted with collection issues. Some of the challenges are rooted in the fact that responsibilities are dispersed amongst multiple parties and multiple tools, with few incentives to engage in aggressive collection efforts.

17 In analyzing the status of arrears (rental payments long past due) at the date of our audit, we found that the accumulated arrears and rental losses or revenues unlikely to be fully collected to be approximately **\$1.2 million**. In investigating the circumstances, we found various types of issues and problems contributing to such significant arrears and losses including delays in invoicing – in some cases from 10 to 22 months; tax arrears arising from untimely action by the City; and a licence agreement that was forgotten about for 4 years. In fact, we found six (6) examples of tenants not being invoiced for multiple years. There was also a case where a tenant continued to be invoiced and collected from for 33 years after the lease had been vacated. We describe some specific cases in our report.

18 OAG made 35 recommendations in this report.

Audit Objectives

- 19 The primary objectives of this audit were to assess whether the administration of leased and licensed City-owned properties is efficient and effective, and compliant with City policies, guidelines and legislated requirements. The audit also evaluated whether the systems, practices and procedures being followed are providing the City with reasonable assurance that its assets are being appropriately safeguarded and controlled, and that revenues to the City are maximized where applicable.

Background

- 20 In the course of conducting an investigation into another matter, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) obtained information suggesting that the City's practices with respect to the administration of leases and licences were not up to date, and that this has resulted in higher risk and/or losses to the City, including that rents were not being collected on a timely basis, or not at all. In the past 4 years annual revenues from leasing and licensing of City space has ranged from \$1.7M to \$2.2M per annum.

Lease versus Licence

- 21 A lease is a legally binding contract outlining the terms under which one party (the lessor) agrees to rent a property it owns to another party (the lessee). In Ontario, a lease usually confers exclusive possession of a property to the lessee. This exclusive right of possession may exist even if the lease imposes some restrictions, such as how the property may be used.
- 22 A licence with respect to real property normally does not confer exclusive possession to the licensee. It only gives the licensee the right or privilege to enter and use the licensor's property in a certain manner or for a specified purpose. It is a personal right between the licensor and licensee and does not create any estate or interest in the property. A licence grants permission without which the use of such property could be considered a trespass.
- 23 In practice, a lease is appropriate where the City is acting as a landlord, and intends to confer exclusive possession, as for example when renting property to a tenant that is a commercial enterprise. The use of a lease affords the tenant statutory protection under landlord/tenant legislation and ensures due process in how matters between the landlord and tenant are to be handled.

Organization

- 24 The administration of leases and licences is the responsibility of several actors.
- 25 The City's Recreation Division deals almost exclusively with licence agreements and administers the use of sports fields, recreational facilities, old town halls and community centres. The Recreation division also acts as a conduit with both School Boards for the use of the City's open spaces. The Recreation Division does not generally enter into lease agreements.
- 26 The City's Facilities Planning & Business Solutions Section is part of the Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division (CFEM) of Public Works. It primarily deals with lease administration applicable to buildings and properties in the Public Works portfolio. This section also utilizes facility use agreements when renting space over the short-term. This section, often referred to as Facilities Management (FM), also manages the storing and tracking of all real estate agreements (i.e., leases, licences, facility use agreements, easements, etc.) through ARCHIBUS, a system used to manage and administer leases, licences and properties (including facilities management).
- 27 The Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO) is part of the City's Economic Development Division. The CREO manages the commercial lease transactions and provides front-end lease administration. The Office is involved in negotiating more complex leases and licence transactions. It is also engaged in tidying up lease and licence documents; the administration of agreements that cannot be done by FM; and much of the communications with Accounts Receivable regarding rent collections.
- 28 One staff person in each of the above areas is responsible for the administration of leases and licences. In addition, solicitors from Legal Services assist with the drafting and finalization of various agreements and provide advice with respect to agreement interpretation and disputes or issues of various kinds.

Scope

- 29 The scope of the audit was limited to leases and licences administration, and more specifically those found in the ARCHIBUS database as at December 23, 2022. The audit focused exclusively on standard **lease-out** arrangements (i.e., revenue leases where the City is a landlord) and did not review administration of lease-in arrangements (where the City is a tenant) or non-standard leases that involve complex arrangements or consideration.
- 30 Further, the audit sampled those revenue leases and licences whose status was either Active, Overhold or Recurring. An Active lease or licence is defined as one

that has not reached its expiry date - as these are the ones OAG considered currently in force for the purposes of the audit. Overhold refers to leases or licences whose agreement has expired. These may be referred to as month-to-month leases or licences. In the case of our sample, the expiry/termination/end date occurred before December 31, 2022, but the tenant continued to occupy the property with the City's consent. A Recurring lease is one where the overhold period has been extended indefinitely.

- 31 The OAG interviewed management and staff affiliated with the CREO, Facilities Management, Recreation, Legal Services, and Finance and Administration. The OAG also examined a variety of lease and licence agreements, Delegated Authority documents, consultant reports, audits, and the ARCHIBUS and TRACKER systems. The information collected was then analyzed and is presented in our findings below.

Detailed Findings

The Systems - ARCHIBUS and TRACKER

- 32 There are two main systems used to administer lease arrangements – ARCHIBUS and TRACKER (SharePoint site). (Note that for **licensing** there is another system called Legend that is used by Recreation Division to administer licenses. It is discussed in the next section of the report).
- 33 ARCHIBUS is an Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS). It is designed to provide detailed information and insight into facility operations including real estate, infrastructure, buildings, physical assets, and project data. In the City of Hamilton this system is mostly managed and used by the Facilities Section of the City's Facilities and Energy Management Division. It is also used by the Corporate Real Estate Office to keep track of various transactions carried out by this section including information about various lease and licence agreements. This information may be accessed by searching ARCHIBUS via File Number, Property Roll Number, Street name and Number, Key Words (i.e., lessee and/or licensee's name), or by the Real Estate staff that entered the data. Real Estate staff are responsible for entering and maintaining the lease and licence records. This includes ensuring that the various "Details" tabs in ARCHIBUS are up to date. These tabs are Appraisals, Circulations, Sales, Purchases, Licence Agreements, Leases, and Mail. When updating licence and lease agreements, Real Estate staff can provide general information such as lease and licence terms and conditions as well as linking the Delegated Authority (DA) document. (Note: The DA document is a memo issued by the Corporate Real Estate Office stating that it has approval for the lease or licence agreement.) The DA is sent to the Ward Councillor, as well as to City managers and staff in various City divisions and sections impacted by the lease or licence. It also summarizes the major terms and conditions of the actual lease or licence agreement itself. This information is necessary for lease and licence contract management.
- 34 One drawback with ARCHIBUS as it's currently used is that most of the information is **not** write protected. The system is vulnerable to (not secure from) undetectable editing. For example, the information in ARCHIBUS may be viewed and edited by anyone using the City's eNet with access to ARCHIBUS' Real Property and Lease Management Portal. While individuals with such access is limited to some staff in the Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO) and Facilities Management and Corporate Programs (FM) these individuals can make changes to some of the information on many of the fields on the various ARCHIBUS screens. The information may be changed without any trace as to who made the change and when it was made. The fields that could be changed include the term

dates, the staff assigned the file, the file status, and the comments. In addition, the approval document and lease and licence agreement documents normally attached to the file could be added or removed. The recent cybersecurity incident experienced by the City only elevates the importance of being able to secure system data and to log and track changes and their origins.

35 Further, the ARCHIBUS system, in its current state of deployment, does not offer the complete functionality of a fully integrated lease administration solution. For example, it cannot reliably provide notification reports of leases coming to end of term or deliver the functionality of a "rent roll."

36 A **Rent Roll** is a tool that can be used by management to monitor the status of each lease and licence. The Rent Roll includes:

- an identification number,
- monthly rent amount,
- lease/licence commencement date,
- date that payments are to be made or come due,
- expiry date,
- renewal options,
- free rent period (if applicable), and
- delinquent payments.

37 Corporate Facilities provided a log, listing all of the City's leases and licences that was obtained off the information available in ARCHIBUS. This log only listed the data referred to in the first six bullets above. It did not include data on delinquent payments. This information can only be provided by Accounts Receivable (AR). Therefore, a Rent Roll as described above is not available. Management responsible for leases have no way of knowing which lessees are delinquent in remitting payments unless they are informed by Accounts Receivable.

38 TRACKER is another method used by CREO, Financial Services (i.e., Finance and Admin) Facilities Management, and Legal Services to track the documentation and execution of real estate transactions, including lease and licence agreements. Legal Services staff especially appreciate using this application as it keeps the relevant information that they need at hand, such as tenant's name, property location, attached lease or licence, and highlights unusual terms in the lease or licence. TRACKER was developed in house with the assistance of the City's Information Technology Division using the SharePoint platform. Unfortunately, TRACKER only contains leases and licences with a start date of 2019, or later. Therefore, it cannot provide a complete listing of the City's lease and licence agreements. In addition, we found discrepancies between information stored in

TRACKER and information in ARCHIBUS. In our view, an expanded use of SharePoint technology would be beneficial and should include separating the ability to make changes to the data and for ensuring the information is up to date and complete from those that use the lease and licence information in the system (ARCHIBUS), as well as the system tracking/logging of those who made the changes and when they were made.

- 39 Overall, these observations lead one to think it could be advantageous for the City to procure an integrated solution for lease administration. The alternatives to this approach would be to enhance the ARCHIBUS system, and/or TRACKER, or to explore the use of the City's Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) system that is being implemented across Public Works, for its feasibility in delivering improved functionality for lease administration, including agreement and rent status, notifications and administration of collections. It is our understanding that there has been no such assessment of EAM, nor is one planned. While a use case was developed to find a solution for the tracking of lease agreements, EAM has not been in consideration for replacement of ARCHIBUS' current level of functionality with respect to leasing, nor as a system that could offer an improved level of service, which OAG believes to be an important consideration.

(See Recommendation 1 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Accountability and Transparency for Lease and Licence Administration

- 40 As explained earlier in this report, the administration of leases and licences takes place through the actions of at least four players – Recreation Division, Facilities Management, Corporate Real Estate Office, and Legal Services.
- 41 For leases, there is a shared administrative responsibility between Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO) and Facilities Management (FM). There is a "Business Agreement" between CREO and FM that describes the various roles that each party plays in the entire process. According to that agreement, after a joint process to determine whether occupiable City space is available to third party tenants, it is CREO that acts as leasing agent, and is responsible for finding a tenant and negotiating and completing an agreement. After fulfillment by CREO of all the documentation requirements of the lease, they are provided to FM who is responsible for lease administration throughout the tenancy, including resolution of any issues or disputes. FM is also responsible for providing, by using ARCHIBUS, the necessary information to CREO for tracking of lease rates, escalations, renewals, notification requirements, termination dates etc. on a monthly basis.

- 42 While the description, as documented, does seem to provide evidence of clear and unambiguous intent and processes that function smoothly, in actual practice, we have observed this approach to be inefficient, prone to error, and missed opportunities. In our view, the contributing factors to dysfunction begin with the reality that the different "actors" involved in lease administration have unique pressures, different priorities, skill sets, and knowledge. Also, the reality is that the procedures followed in practice do not strictly adhere to the processes and responsibilities as described, blurring the lines of responsibility and accountability. Further, as one can see from our analysis later in this report, there are numerous problems occurring in lease administration sufficient to suggest that the current approach is not serving the City's needs.
- 43 One solution that has been discussed amongst the parties is the gathering of lease administration into one centralized function that will assume all or most of the responsibility. CREO has recognized that there are issues and inherent risks in the current approach to administration and accordingly retained a consultant – an expert in real estate administration – to make recommendations for improvement. One of the consultant's main conclusions was for the City to centralize lease administration. In our view, this could be advantageous in terms of improving consistency and professionalism, and in resolving some of the current issues and lowering the risks that poor oversight of leases currently bears. It is our conclusion that CREO, in consultation with its partners, is in the best position to determine the merits of a centralization alternative. Regardless of the direction they choose to go, however, we would advocate that the status quo is not a viable way forward for meaningful improvement, and alternatives do need to be identified to address existing gaps so that there is more effective coordination of administration.
- 44 We also noted improvements that could be made with respect to the agreement between FM and CREO that defines roles and responsibilities. For example, it is stated in the document that various lease administration parameters will be tracked and reported to CREO on a monthly basis. However, we found little evidence that this was being done. It is also stated with respect to renewals that "where there are no salient changes or negotiations in terms, conditions or mutual agreement required, FM will proceed, in consultation with CREO to complete the renewal." This begs the question of what the process is for identifying the changes to terms and conditions that ought to be pursued. Further, there is no clarity with respect to the circumstances under which Legal Services should be involved and by whom.
- 45 For licences, it is our understanding that Recreation Division is meant to be the primary administrator. However, it does not appear that there is any formal documentation or "Business Agreement" between Recreation Division (REC) and CREO as there is between FM and CREO to clarify roles and responsibilities, including information sharing and data management. In the absence of such an

agreement, and based on our observations, it is unclear then exactly how responsibilities are divided with respect to licences, or how the data management is meant to evolve. Currently, there is no single source of data for licences. Licence administration data is maintained on two (2) systems – ARCHIBUS and Legend, and there are some licences we found active in ARCHIBUS not in Legend and some active in Legend not in ARCHIBUS. In addition to this being very difficult to ensure a complete and accurate listing of licences, we also observed that while REC is primary for administration of licences, there were some licences that were being maintained by CREO.

- 46 Our overall conclusion was that the City has a very fragmented system of managing leases and licences and that the current approach toward maintaining reliable data needs improvement.

(See Recommendations 2-5 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Administration of Below Market Rents

- 47 From time to time the City will lease or licence space at below market rental rates to a party that is a community group, charity, or not for profit entity. In the Business Operating Agreement between CREO and FM there is guidance provided that supply the criteria that must be met for City facilities to be considered "eligible" for lease/licence at below market. In general, these parties must be not for profit entities whose activities support City objectives, are providing 50% or more of their resources toward serving City residents, and whose mandates are not the responsibility of other levels of government. While having such criteria is an important step toward accountability and sound management, we noted that procedures supporting these criteria, including the documentation and analysis could be more robust. In some of the files examined there was little analysis regarding the decision, and an absence of financial assessment on the parties wishing to rent City space. Further, there does not seem to be any account taken of the possible interest of other groups, in the criteria that have been established.
- 48 With any space that is rented at below market rent there is an implied subsidy in the difference between fair market value and actual rent. This was confirmed in the fact that, in our research, we found that according to the approved policy in October 2001 report CS01090 "except where Council specifies otherwise, all City of Hamilton real property transactions, including leases, will be based on fair market value, even when the other party to the transaction is another level of government, public sector agency, or non-profit organization providing services to City residents. In the latter case, the City may choose to use its **grant process** to wholly or partially offset the amount involved."

49 This policy was modified by Council in November 2004, pursuant to recommendations contained in report PD04303 that provided guidance that would be followed in granting below market rents. Policies, principles and procedures were developed as part of a Real Estate Portfolio Management Strategy. The key criteria and principles recommended that property may be leased at below market if deemed to be in the public interest by Council and is subjected to a business case that establishes the lost revenue (implied subsidy) and justifies use by a community group. The criteria actually implemented applied four tests:

- the lessee must be a non-profit,
- it must demonstrate that more than 50% of its resources serve Hamilton residents,
- its services will further City objectives,
- there is no resulting subsidization of services supported by other levels of government.

50 In our view, the modified process begs the question of how it fully meets the recommendations of report PD04303, including a business case/financial impact analysis, and that Council deems the arrangement in the public interest. Also unclear is how the approach ensures the level of transparency befitting a grant or subsidy, and fairness in the accommodation of possible competing interests amongst parties that may wish to rent City space at below market rates.

(See Recommendations 6-7 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Delegations of Authority (DOA)

51 As part of this audit OAG reviewed the delegated authorities that are in place for the approval of leases and licences.

52 For leases, the original authorities come from Committee of the Whole Report 01-029 which was amended in 2004 by PD04303. According to these documents, the authority to approve lease of land, including renewal or expiry of leases rests with the General Manager (or designate), for terms that do not exceed 5 years and are satisfactory to Legal Services, for a value of up to \$150,000. The City Manager has authority up to \$250,000 above which Council approval would be necessary. The delegated authority is silent, however, on what authority is required under the circumstances where a below market rent is to be granted, where the quantum of implied subsidy could be a significant amount.

53 For licences, according to the February 2015 report CES15002, the delegated authority rests with the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services

(or designate) to an amount not exceeding \$10,000 per year and not exceeding five (5) years. In this case, there is no provision for a higher level of authority i.e., the City Manager, nor is there any DOA guidance when the amount being charged is not representative of market conditions and therefore imply a level of subsidy.

54 We also note that it would be beneficial from a transparency perspective for these DOA limits to form part of the City's real estate leasing and licensing policy framework.

(See Recommendation 8 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Standardized Agreements

55 A key tool to have in the administration of leases and licences is a comprehensive agreement between the parties. An up to date, detailed agreement offers the City the best possible efficiency of administration and protection from loss, adversity or other risks, in addition to minimizing disputes and misunderstandings with the tenant/licensee.

56 We observed that the agreements currently under administration can vary considerably in form, content and language. Some of this is due to the fact that the particular situations under each contract will vary according to circumstances and type of agreement. In other cases, they exist because the City still maintains older agreements that were executed years ago under different conditions and administrations, and have become out of date due to evolving standards for lease agreements, new legal precedents, and changing City policies.

57 For licences, the Recreation Division in 2015 was facing significant issues with inconsistency in their agreements due to, in some cases, an absence of standardized terms and conditions, or in others, an absence of agreements at all. So, they decided to improve their administration of licences toward achieving a greater level of uniformity and to improve their oversight and due diligence by standardizing agreement structure and content. In consultation with Legal Services, they developed standard template agreements and have been transitioning these agreements over time to the new formats.

58 For leases, this has not happened and we have observed that there are agreements that have not kept up with evolving standards, including some that have been in place since pre-amalgamation and that need to be brought into uniformity with current City policies, and best practices for lease administration. For example, we found agreements that were not reflective of current City policy with respect to financing charges for late payment (prime plus 2%), or that were

inadequate by contemporary standards regarding insurance requirements, indemnification, dispute resolution, audit rights or penalties.

59 Some agreements that come to end of term have not adequately provided for overhold through a provision that provides for automatic escalation of rent which can result in rents failing to keep up with the market.

60 We concluded that CREO would benefit from efforts to standardize agreements as much as possible. This would facilitate uniformity, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of contract management, and ease the burden of legal review and oversight. Variations that are needed to address unique situations would not only stand out, but would then receive focused attention, and eventually become a source of knowledge that could be applied to special circumstances and equip administrators with greater contract management expertise.

(See Recommendations 9-10 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Policies and Procedures Framework

61 For effective and efficient leasing administration, it is important to have a leasing policy. A comprehensive leasing policy establishes the key policies, requirements, roles, decision criteria, procedures, guidance, and checklists that seek to enable sound lease administration. The benefits include maintaining of institutional knowledge, training, generating sufficient awareness of requirements amongst all involved parties, supporting City objectives, more assured compliance with City requirements and legislation, greater transparency and accountability, fairness in business dealings, and value for money.

62 While the City does have some procedures, roles, and criteria developed for some specific aspects of lease administration, they are not as comprehensive or fulsome as they could be and are generally lacking in detailed or standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures are those meant to cover off all the key elements of administration of leases and are used to explain how key requirements of leasing are to be administered, including the monitoring of financial transactions and compliance with terms and conditions. Some of the general areas of coverage we would expect to see in terms of these procedures include decision to lease, rent determination, operating cost recovery, in-kind lease agreements, delegation of authority, below market rents, invoicing, collections, agreement compliance, monitoring of terms and conditions, reporting, dispute resolution, renewal, termination, property maintenance, data management, roles/responsibilities, overholds, subleasing, insurance, indemnification etc.

63 We are aware of another municipal jurisdiction having a comprehensive policy framework supported by defined procedures that explain how the key requirements of leasing policy are to be met. Additionally, we realize the CREO is contemplating the reorganization of leasing responsibilities to improve consistency and effectiveness of service delivery. Therefore, it makes sense to suggest that, once directions have been decided, the development of a policy framework and set of standard operating procedures would make a valuable contribution to the transitioning to the new model of delivery, while at the same time improving current processes.

(See Recommendation 11 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Review of Lease Agreement Status

64 OAG reviewed an extraction of lease agreement data from ARCHIBUS as of December 23, 2022. According to the system, there were **366** lease agreements with different types of status as of that date. This includes leases where the City is the landlord as well as those where it is the tenant.

65 Not counting a considerable number of leases no longer under administration due to their being expired or terminated, we broke it down into the following, which shows there were 85 that would be considered current City-as-landlord leases:

Table 1: Current Breakdown - Active, Overhold and Recurring Leases in ARCHIBUS as of December 23, 2022

| STATUS | City Is: | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| | Landlord (Original) | Landlord (Revised) | Tenant | Other | Total |
| Active | 65 | 54 | 37 | 8 | 99 |
| Overhold | 18 | 31 | 6 | 1 | 38 |
| Recurring | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 85 | 85 | 43 | 9 | 137 |

*Other - the City is either both Tenant/Landlord, or the status was not stated.

66 Based on our analysis of lease-outs (landlord leases), we found a large number that required status adjustment as they were erroneously recorded as being active when their actual status was overhold (Table 1, Landlord (Original) vs Landlord

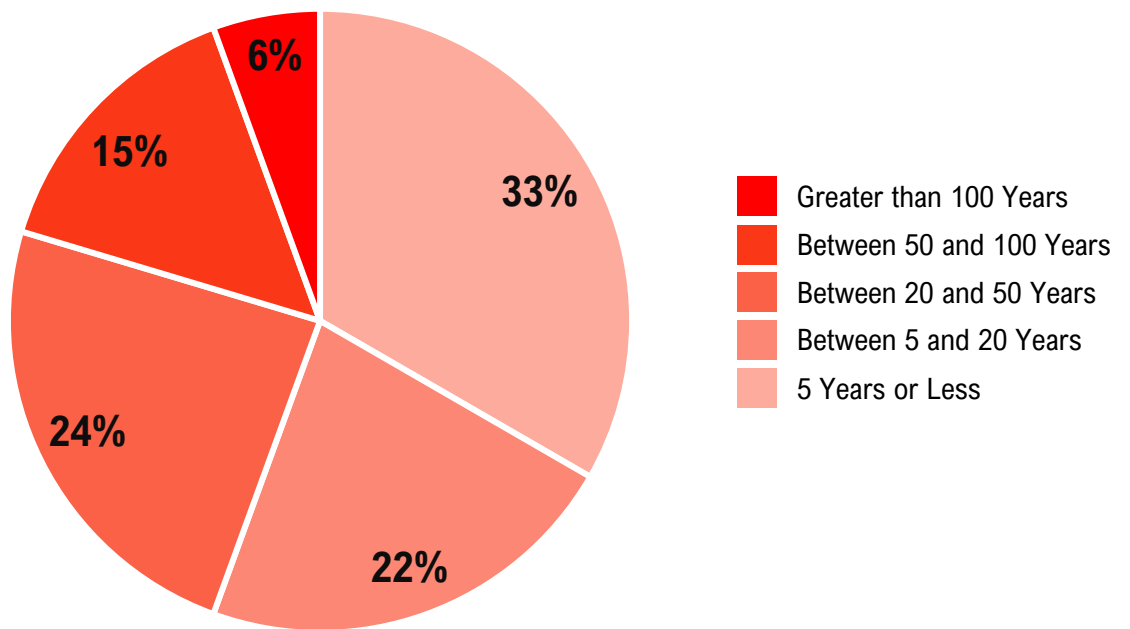
(Revised)). Overhold is triggered when a lease expires, and tenancy continues on a month-to-month basis pending renegotiation.

67 As far as the length of term of leases is concerned, those 54 that are in the "active" category (within the agreement period) have considerable variation (Table 2):

Table 2: Active Leases, Length Lease Term in Years

| Active Leases, Lease Term – Length in Years | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 100 Years | 3 | 6% |
| Between 50 and 100 Years | 8 | 15% |
| Between 20 and 50 Years | 13 | 24% |
| Between 5 and 20 Years | 12 | 22% |
| 5 Years or Less | 18 | 33% |
| Number of Active Leases | 54 | 100% |

**54 Active Leases -
Lease Term Length in Years**

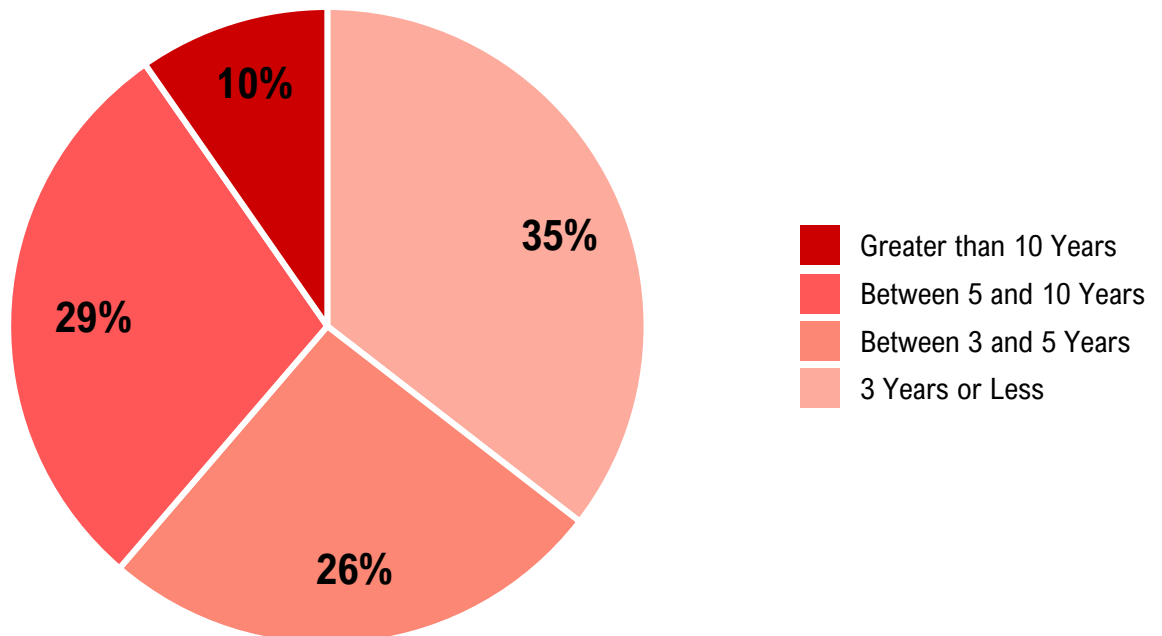


- 68 As far as the revised numbers in Table 1 are concerned, where the City acts as landlord, one can see that of the 85 leases that are in force, a substantial number, 31 (or 36%) are on overhold, meaning they need to be formally renewed.
- 69 Of the 31 leases on overhold that need to be renewed, 65% had been on overhold for 3 years or more (see Table 3 below) .

Table 3: Leases on Overhold including Active and Recurring past Termination Date - Years in Overhold

| Leases on Overhold including Active and Recurring past Termination Date - Years in Overhold | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 10 years | 3 | 10% |
| Between 5 and 10 years | 9 | 29% |
| Between 3 and 5 years | 8 | 26% |
| 3 years or less | 11 | 35% |
| Total | 31 | 100% |

31 Leases on Overhold including Active and Recurring Past Termination Date - Years in Overhold



- 70 From these observations we concluded that the accuracy of lease information is not reliable, and not kept up to date. Additionally, overholds need to be dealt with on a more timely basis.
- 71 Further, we found examples where the overhold was renewed at then-existing rent, which works in favour of the tenant since it is reasonable to presume there should be increases reflecting fair market value which do not get addressed in a timely fashion because of the associated protracted process, resulting in lost revenue to the City. This is one area where having appropriate legal language and a clause that escalates the rent on expiry into overhold would be beneficial to the City.

Some Examples

- 72 Clearly, the risk with having significant numbers of leases on overhold for long periods of time is revenue leakage. If the rent paid by the lessee is not increased to keep up with inflation and market prices, over time, the City could lose material amounts of revenue. Accordingly, we analysed 20 leases that had been on overhold for three years or longer from Table 3 above. Our review showed that in thirteen of these leases there was a provision in the lease agreement itself to increase the rent payment either by the rate of inflation or by a set amount. In four of the 20 cases the rent payable was nominal (\$1 per year). Obviously, for these, it was of little consequence that rent payable should increase by a set amount each year. However, in three of the 20 cases reviewed, the original agreement did not set a requirement to increase the rent by any prescribed amount each year. One of these leases has been on overhold for five years, the second has been on overhold for eight years, and the third by for nine years. As such, the City has lost money on three of the 12 leases (25%) that have been on overhold for five (5) years or longer.

Licences

- 73 OAG also reviewed an extraction of licence data from ARCHIBUS showing **400 licence agreements** with different types of status - active, overhold, recurring, superseded, expired, terminated, cancelled, and vacated.
- 74 Only active, overhold, and recurring leases are considered current, meaning they are still in effect and require staff monitoring and administration.
- 75 Accordingly, we analysed the number of licences that were in force (active, overhold, recurring) which was 179 as shown below in Table 4. However, within the breakdown of the 179 we found a large number of licences that required status adjustment as they were actually in overhold as opposed to active (within the agreement period) status. Essentially, ARCHIBUS was not up to date with respect to licence data. The revised numbers are also shown below in Table 4.

Table 4: Current Breakdown - Licences in ARCHIBUS by Portfolio

| | | | Portfolio falls under the following sections: | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|---|-------------|------------|----------|----------------|-----------|
| STATUS | Original Number | Revised Number | Corporate | Real Estate | Recreation | Parks | Not Identified | Other |
| Active | 131 | 81 | 13 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 45 | 5 |
| Overhold | 34 | 97 | 11 | 19 | 45 | 5 | 12 | 5 |
| Recurring | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 179 | 179 | 24 | 26 | 53 | 9 | 57 | 10 |

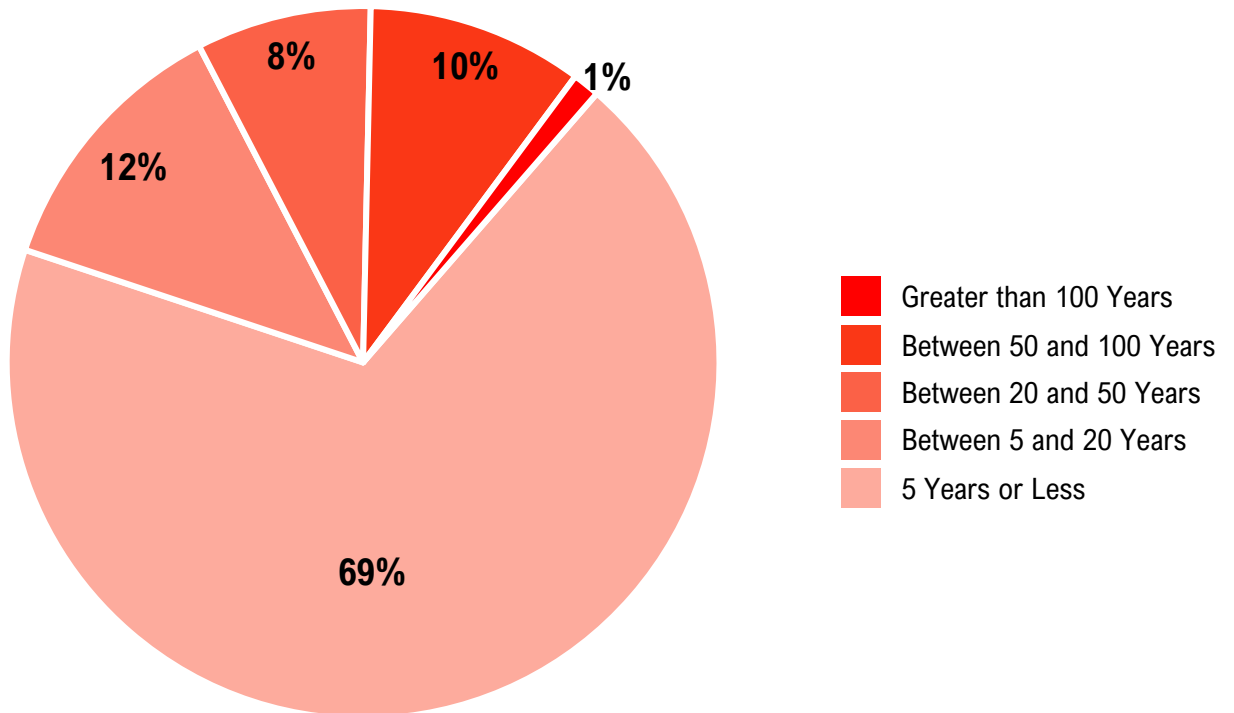
- 76 The list of licences was broken down by portfolio holder (responsible Division/Section). In Table 4 above, we noted that a portfolio holder was not identified for 57 licences – this information was not entered in ARCHIBUS.
- 77 As far as the length of term of licences is concerned, those that are in the “active” category (within the agreement period) have considerable variation:

Table 5 - Active Licences - Length of the Term

| Licence Term – Length in Years | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 100 Years | 1 | 1% |
| Between 50 and 100 Years | 8 | 10% |
| Between 20 and 50 Years | 6 | 8% |
| Between 5 and 20 Years | 10 | 12% |
| 5 Years or Less | 56 | 69% |
| Number of Active Licences | 81 | 100% |

Note: 19% of Active licences have a term of 20 years or more.

**81 Active Licences -
Lease Term Length in Years**

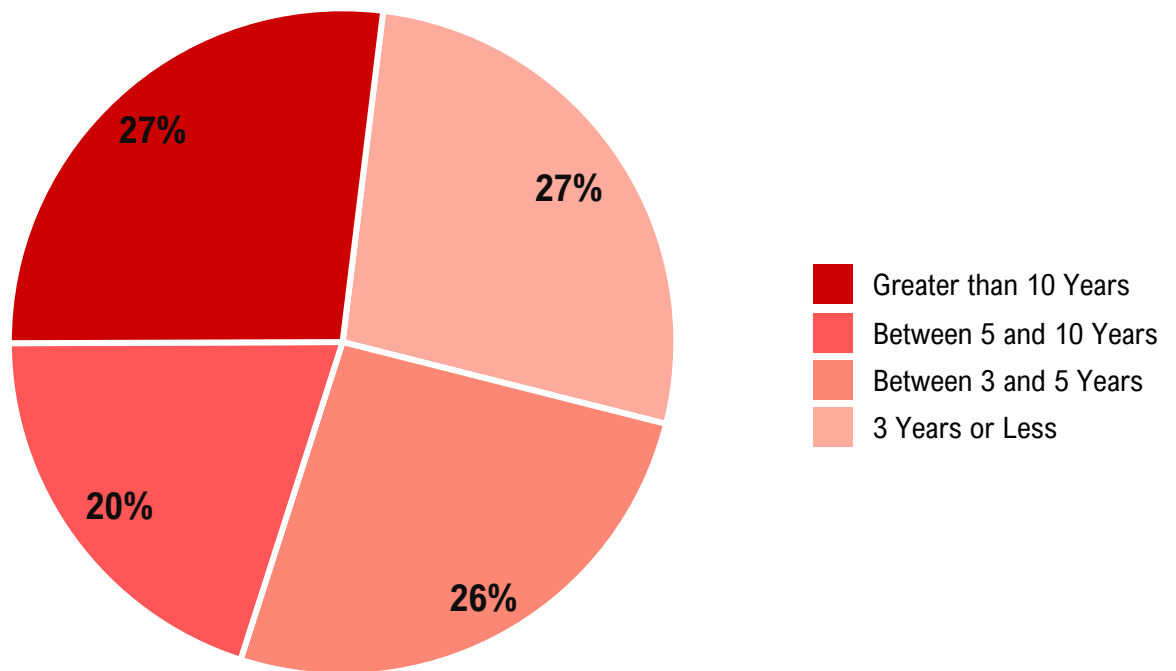


- 78 As noted in Table 5 above that of the 81 active licences listed in Table 4, 69% are for a term of 5 years or less.
- 79 From Table 4 above one can also see that a substantial number (97) of licences are in overhold. These comprise 54% of the in-force licences.

Table 6: Licences on Overhold – Years in Overhold

| Licences on Overhold, including Active and Recurring past Termination Date – Years in Overhold | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 10 Years | 26 | 27% |
| Between 5 and 10 Years | 20 | 20% |
| Between 3 and 5 Years | 25 | 26% |
| 3 Years or less | 26 | 27% |
| Total | 97 | 100% |

97 Leases on Overhold including Active and Recurring Past Termination Date - Years in Overhold



- 80 From Table 6 above one can also see that a substantial number of licences (97) are in overhold. These comprise 54% of the in-force licences.
- 81 Of the 97 licences on overhold that need to be renewed, about 73% have been on overhold for more than 3 years (Table 6).
- 82 From these observations we concluded that the accuracy of licensing information is not reliable, and not kept up to date, and overholds need to be dealt with more expeditiously.

Other Observations

Licence for 15+ Years With No Increase In Rent

- 83 As was noted for leases, having licences on overhold for a long period of time without appropriate renewal increases the risk of revenue leakage. An example of such a case is the licence agreement between the City and a private corporation for a large City lot (175 feet by 234 feet).
- 84 Originally this licence covered a one-year term from November 1, 2006 to October 31, 2007. The original fee was \$1,350 (+HST) per month. The licence agreement was renewed for a second year starting November 1, 2007, until October 31, 2008 with the fee increasing to \$1,400 (+HST) per month. A comment in ARCHIBUS simply states that further renewals are the sole prerogative of the City with the agreement of the Ward Councillor. In 2023, almost 15 years later, the same licensee is still paying \$1,400 per month. In addition to this, although the agreement indicates that the licensee is responsible for paying realty taxes, the City's Tax Section noted that taxes have not been paid as MPAC ruled this property to be tax exempt. The City's Tax Section has not been able to determine when this tax exemption was last reviewed by MPAC. As was the case with overhold leases, there is no documentation in ARCHIBUS indicating whether the rate charged is fair compensation for the use of this location, and there is no procedure directing staff to renew expiring agreements in a timely manner.

Inconsistency Between ARCHIBUS and TRACKER

- 85 There have been **66 new leases** added to ARCHIBUS since January 2019, yet only **52 leases** added to TRACKER in the same period. Although more leases have been added to ARCHIBUS than to TRACKER it was surprising to note that there are 26 leases in ARCHIBUS that are not found in TRACKER, and 12 leases

were found in TRACKER that were not found in ARCHIBUS. There is no single source of the truth for leases.

- 86 There have been **65 new licences** added to ARCHIBUS since January 2019, and **64 licences** added to TRACKER in the same period. However, when accounting for CityHousing Hamilton licences that are reflected in ARCHIBUS, and not on TRACKER, as well as new licences added to TRACKER that are pending in ARCHIBUS, the discrepancy is larger– 16 licences are in ARCHIBUS that are not on TRACKER, and 15 licences are on TRACKER but not in ARCHIBUS. Therefore, neither TRACKER nor ARCHIBUS may be relied upon as a complete and accurate record of all licences. There is no single source of the truth for licences. This reiterates the point made earlier in this report regarding the need for accurate data to be maintained.

Need for Proactive Reporting Systems – Notification/Tickler Reports

- 87 One weakness we encountered was the need for more formal, proactive reporting of upcoming and time sensitive administration requirements. This is one factor that has contributed to delayed administration and lack of timeliness in administering renewals, which in turn has led to a proliferation of agreements in overhold for prolonged periods of time. One such report that is used in lease administration is a notification or tickler report - a log that tracks and provides advance notice of key lease dates. The report must be comprehensive and current. The information on this report can be obtained from various sources i.e., Excel worksheets, SharePoint forms or reports, or lease administration software.
- 88 A confounding factor is that to produce Tickler reports, ARCHIBUS requires that the Defer Date and the Renewal Date fields be complete and accurate. As this is not always the case, Tickler reports that rely on this data may not always be produced, or they may be inaccurate.

(See Recommendations 12-15 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Rent Collection and Arrears

- 89 The invoicing and collection of **lease revenue** is performed by the City's Accounts Receivable Section in the Financial Services Division (AR Finance). The efficacy of this process is reliant on program areas to supply the necessary information to AR Finance, who do not invoice and collect fees unless informed to do so. The tool used to inform AR Finance is the Request for Invoice (RFI) form. This

document is prepared at the beginning of the lease, by staff in the various sections or divisions that are responsible for administering leases - CREO, Facilities Management (FM) or Recreation, and on occasion Finance. AR Finance normally issues invoices electronically, a process which records the amount of receivable due to the City in the PeopleSoft financial system. ARCHIBUS (the system used for lease administration) and PeopleSoft (the City's financial system) are not connected in any way. In order to verify that any collected or collectable lease revenue is consistent with the amounts specified in the agreements, these amounts must be traced back to an RFI document and/or what is recorded in ARCHIBUS as the monthly rent, which is a manual process. The financial system not being integrated with lease administration systems makes the process vulnerable to human error, delay and inconsistency.

- 90 The system of **collection for licences** is administered differently than leases and is conducted through multiple channels and processes that include the use of the Legend software application and spreadsheets that facilitate the tracking of rents/fees. Except for a few instances, there is no RFI process that requires going through the corporate AR Finance procedures as there is for leases. Generally, the administration of collections is the responsibility of program areas. In addition, there is much less revenue to manage, on the order of \$100K annually. This is due to the large volume of licences in which the use of facilities is provided at nominal (below market) rents/fees.
- 91 A significant problem with the administration of licence revenue is that there is no "one line of sight" into the collective status of all receivables which exacerbates the challenges with managing collections on a timely basis. For example, we asked for an aged receivables report on licences that would tell us the latest status of licence fee collection. We expected such a report to be "readily available" as it is considered a standard tool for administration of receivables in most industries. However, we were unable to obtain one which tells us that important aspects of oversight are systemically lacking. Additionally, there is no involvement by AR Finance in any receivables monitoring as there is with leases. In our view, there should be a monthly ageing report of receivables that is made available to program managers and AR Finance so that they can be alerted to long overdue accounts that could run into collection difficulties.
- 92 Overall, we found the processes for collection of rents and fees for leases and licences, including overdue or unpaid amounts, to be inherently weak and inadequate to ensure full collection and restoration of arrears on a timely basis. OAG believes this is due to the lack of a robust process, poor accountability, poor "line of sight" into the status of receivables, and lack of timely action when confronted with collection issues. Some of the challenges are rooted in the fact that responsibilities are dispersed amongst multiple parties and multiple tools, with few incentives to engage in aggressive collection efforts. For example, as

described in the following section, collection of overdue accounts requires close coordination between AR Finance and the program areas, which is very much dependent on timely action by program area staff. Further, the current process for allocating the associated lease revenues allows recognition and credit to the program area even when lease revenue has not yet been collected or has been overdue for months. In our view, this offers little incentive to be appropriately responsive to overdue account situations. We also found that for leases and licences there is not a robust process for monitoring of receivables by the program areas on a timely basis. We also found inconsistency in how financing charges for late payment are administered – in some cases not applying the rate pursuant to City policy, in others not applying any rate at all.

Leases: Current Collection Process for Bad Debts/Arrears through AR Finance (Accounts Receivable)

- 93 While most lessees adhere to the terms of their agreement and pay their rent on time, some do not. Since AR Finance is responsible for the billing and collection of the rent, AR Finance attempts to collect the arrears incurred. The first step is a reminder phone call. If the rent payments are still not received, AR Finance contacts the FM section to inform them that the lessee is behind in their payments. Occasionally FM is already aware of the arrears as they often have been communicating with the lessee. In other occasions, this will be new information to FM. In either case, FM will reach out to the lessee to investigate and if needed to arrange payment terms. This process involves negotiations between the lessee, FM and often also Legal Services. As each case is unique, this process can take weeks or even months. AR Finance is not informed about the negotiation unless the lessee is refusing to negotiate, or negotiations break down. Once AR Finance is advised of this, they begin the collections process by issuing the collections letter. If payment is still not forthcoming a collection agency is engaged.
- 94 Finally, if the collection agency determines that the arrears are uncollectible, they are written off. However, since rent is being credited as revenue to the program, division or section when the invoice has been completed, there is often no urgency for program, FM and/or the CREO to declare the unpaid rent uncollectible. As such, it sometimes takes years before the unpaid rent is declared bad debt and included in the Accounts Receivable write off reports presented to and approved by Council. It was noted in one case that approximately \$48K in uncollected rent due between July and November 2014 was not collected. This bad debt was not written off until March 2023.

(See Recommendations 16-18 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Accumulated Arrears: Revenues Lost or Unlikely to be Fully Collected

- 95 In the following analysis we cite a number of cases of uncollected rents and arrears, and a very large quantum of lost or “unlikely to be collected” revenues that form the basis for our conclusions. In one particularly egregious case licence fees were not collected for four years.
- 96 The summary below in Table 7 shows the uncollected rents/fees as of our audit sample date.
- 97 Out of 85 leases that were actively being managed, 8 experienced collection issues, 5 of which have accumulated significant arrears that had not be collected. Similarly, for licences, out of 131 active licences, 11 experienced collection issues, all of which have accumulated significant arrears.
- 98 The accumulated arrears and/or lost revenue or revenue that is unlikely to be fully collected was approximately \$1.2M.

Table 7: Arrears and/or Lost Revenue

| Arrears and/or Lost Revenue | Number | Amount (\$) |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Leases | 2 | 720,000 |
| | 1 | 152,000 |
| | 1 | 30,000 |
| | 1 | 20,500 |
| Licences | 6 | 51,300 |
| | 1 | 6,200 |
| | 3 | 195,200 |
| Total Uncollected | | \$1,175,200 |

- 99 A discussion of the various cases of arrears is illustrative of the issues that have contributed to the problem.

Case 1: Company A

Arrears of \$720K Accumulated in Four (4) Years

- 100 Case 1 involves a company that leased two (2) properties comprising 93,000 sq. ft. of total space and a licence for the use of 2 acres. At the time of audit, Company A was in arrears to the City for \$720,000 which had accumulated over four (4) years of intermittent and incomplete monthly payments. At the time of audit it was in litigation over its debt to the City.
- 101 For the two leases, the commencement date was April 1, 2019. This was well before the agreements were actually signed by the City on May 10, 2019. Following the May 10 signing, a first invoice was then issued on July 3, 2019 for the payment due August 1 with no accounting for the four months due at that point. A subsequent invoice was issued on July 24 for the retro payments due on April 1, May 1, June 1, and July 1. On August 7th, the tenant paid only \$10,000 of the total \$88,703 invoiced. Therefore, by the end of August 2019, not even two months after the first invoice was issued, this tenant was already \$79K in arrears.
- 102 For the licence, the agreement commencement date was July 1, 2019. This was a week before the City actually signed the agreement – July 8, 2019. It then took nine months before the tenant was first invoiced for the use of the land at this property. The invoices were issued by the City on April 2, 2020, at a point in time when the tenant was already \$55K in arrears.
- 103 In addition to these issues there were other red flags regarding this account. At first signing, the lessee's address was not a business address, rather it "care of" their law firm. Subsequently, this address was changed to a non-existent address, and following that, to the address of a separate company. In reviewing the file, we found no evidence of any background or credit checks being performed prior to contracting the lease.
- 104 As time went on there were long delays before actions were being taken on recovery of arrears and larger and larger arrears were accumulating.
- 105 By February 3, 2020, the arrears totaled about \$200K not including interest charges. The City did receive a \$10K cheque on February 6, 2020, and two more cheques totaling \$29.5K on February 19, 2020. Within two days the bank notified the City that the latter two cheques were NSF (not sufficient funds). A complicating factor was the tenant's then-claim that they had spent approx. \$40K to repair a leaky roof on the premises even though such repair was contrary to Section 9 (e) of the lease agreement which states that the City is responsible the structural repair of the roof and exterior walls of the Premises.

106 Unfortunately, the City did not initiate timely eviction and, in this particular case, the delay of enforcement proceedings brought them into the period when the Province changed the Commercial Tenancies Act (CTA) such that commercial evictions were banned beginning May 1, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This ban, initially expected to last until August 31, 2020, was extended by the Province to end on April 22, 2022. The arrears continued to grow until the lease expired and the company left the premises in April 2022. By then the arrears, including finance charges, had reached \$720K. If the "enforcement proceedings" had started much earlier, when it became apparent the tenant could not make payments on a regular basis, the City may have avoided the repercussions of these changes to the Commercial Tenancies Act because of the pandemic, and the City would have avoided a substantial part of the accumulated losses of \$720,000.

(See Recommendations 19-25 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 2: Company B

Invoicing Started 10 Months after the Lease Began

107 Case 2 involves a company that leased 3,336 sq ft of a downtown Hamilton property. At the time of audit, it was in arrears to the City for \$152,000.

108 The commencement date for the lease was September 1, 2021. ARCHIBUS shows that Company B had been the lessee on a prior lease agreement with the City, and under that lease the tenant usually made the payments on time. Therefore, when the new lease agreement was being implemented, there were no red flags indicating a potential risk of default. Additionally, invoicing for the lease agreements was prompt, and usually took place one month before payment was due.

109 Although the invoicing was timely, no lease payments were received from the lessee until June 24, 2022, more than 10 months after the lease began. At the time this first payment was made, almost \$88K was in arrears. By October 25, 2023, the lessee was 18 months behind in payments resulting in arrears of \$141.4K, and they had accumulated an additional \$10.6K in finance charges. Further, it is our understanding that this tenant has not made a payment since March 2023. The City's FMs Manager has requested Legal Services' assistance in helping to recover the arrears from the lessee.

110 We also observed that the information on the lease, specifically the address, was not consistent with the address on the RFI, which showed the property address of the previous lease.

(See Recommendation 26 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 3: Company C and D

Unpaid Taxes due to City's Late Administration

- 111 There were two companies with accumulated arrears of \$30K and \$20.5K that resulted from not meeting lease obligations to pay property taxes.
- 112 Under the Company C lease, there was a change required in the assessment of the property that had to be initiated by the City. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) had originally deemed this property tax-exempt. To change the property's assessment, the City's Taxation Section was to provide MPAC with a copy of the lease agreement, which started on May 1, 2016. However, this change was not initiated until three years after the lease agreement was signed. Further, MPAC did not correct the tax-exempt status until 2022. The result was that property taxes were not paid by the tenant over the entire term of the lease agreement as they would have been had the assessment been administered on a timely basis. Under the Assessment Act, the City is only able to recover taxes owing for the current year and the two prior years (i.e., 2020 to 2022) which it has since done. So, due to inaction initiating the change in assessment, the City lost property tax revenue from May 1, 2016, to December 31, 2019. The City's Taxation Section estimates that the City lost \$45K-\$50K in tax revenue of which the municipal portion was \$27K- \$30K.
- 113 For Company D, the City's Taxation Section indicated that earlier this year they were \$24.4K in arrears on 2022 property taxes. This amount, which included penalty and interest, was paid in full July 27, 2023. However, as of Oct 25, 2023, they were \$20.5K in arrears on the 2023 property taxes.

(See Recommendation 27 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 4: Company E

Delayed Invoicing By City Causing Arrears

- 114 The City leases one of its properties to Company E. The agreement covers a 20-year term from November 1, 2019, to October 31, 2039, and calls for an initial lease fee of \$3,411 plus HST due at the beginning of each month, with a stipulation it will increase annually by the average percentage increase in the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2023, the monthly rent payable rose to \$3,848.88 plus HST. However, as it takes time for staff to obtain the increase in the Ontario CPI and calculate the rate increase, the tenant is not invoiced for the first three months of the year. Once the CPI is available, the tenant is then issued an invoice for the catch-up in three months' rent, and subsequent months are invoiced at the new monthly rate. This practice leaves the City at risk, whereas it would be more beneficial to the City if it was administered differently. For example, the City could

invoice at the old rate until the new rate is calculated, with a one-time adjustment or catch-up adjustment applied over remaining months. A note could be added to the invoices to explain the pending increased rate when it is calculated.

(See Recommendation 28 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 5: Company F

Lateness in Renewal of Agreement and Subsequent Delayed Billing

115 The City entered into a licence agreement with Company F in 2005 to use space in a Community Centre. The term ran for 10 months each year from September 1 to June 30 of the following year, consistent with the school calendar. The agreement ended up being on overhold for 11 years from 2006 to 2017, without adjustment to monthly rent. It was then formally renewed from September 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022, and again from September 1, 2022, to June 30, 2027. The latest renewed agreement indicates that the \$600 fee is to be paid monthly. However, this agreement was not finalized until February 2023, well after it took effect on September 1, 2022. Further, Company F was not invoiced for the entire period from September 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023 until May 17, 2023. By that time, the tenant was nine months or \$5,400 in arrears. AR Finance indicated that as of June 30, 2023, the tenant has paid off the arrears. However, the City could and should have avoided this situation by initiating a new agreement well in advance of the expiry or end date. Further, the City's tardiness in not issuing invoices until well after the extension agreement had been reached in February 2023 contributed to increasing arrears. By failing to renew on a timely basis, and allowing delays in invoicing, the City ended up providing the tenant an interest free short-term loan, and also incurring additional unnecessary risk.

(See Recommendation 15 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 6: Company G

Continuing to Invoice a Vacated Lease for 33 Years

116 In January 2023, Company G emailed the City's AR Finance section asking for clarification on invoices it had received. While the amount was small, it took both Finance and Real Estate two weeks and about 12 emails for staff to conclude that the utility should not have been billed. It turned out that the Company had been invoiced for \$50 plus HST every year since 1990 even though the City had donated the land to the Conservation Authority in July 1990. The City had been invoicing the company despite the fact the lease had long since been vacated. Contributing factors to this error were the absence of a control procedure to ensure timely notification to AR Finance of changes to lease status and further, that ARCHIBUS records are linked to AR Finance records through address

information. At times the address description is not specific enough or may have changed over time. It would be preferable that the linkage be based on agreement number or an equivalent unique identifier, which should also be referenced in each invoice.

(See Recommendation 29 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 7: Company H Licence Agreement Forgotten About for four (4) Years

117 After the City purchased a property in August of 2018, Company H, the existing tenant continued to occupy and use the property. Shortly after purchase, the City prepared a Delegated Authority (DA) document including a Schedule of Major Terms and Conditions showing that the City expected this tenant to pay a licence fee of \$3,000 per month plus HST. The DA was signed off appropriately. However, a **licence agreement** was never completed. The Real Estate staff responsible for this file retired and the file was forgotten. Company H continued to use the property rent free for almost four years. The City was unable to recover rent from this tenant for the period September 2018 to May 2022. In addition, there were payments being received under a utility agreement that is only for \$1,000 per month instead of the \$3,000 per month noted in the DA document. By our estimation the City has lost approximately \$195,200 on this lease.

(See Recommendations 30-31 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 8: Companies I and J Invoicing does not Agree with Licence Terms/Late Renewal

118 We found two instances where the fee that was invoiced by AR Finance was inconsistent with the fee noted in Licence Agreement:

- 1) Company I has a cellular tower agreement with the City. The five-year extension of this licence ran from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2023. The licence fees invoiced by AR Finance were erroneously based on an RFI that did not conform to the agreement. Over the five-year period there was a small (\$40 monthly) discrepancy between the total fees invoiced compared to the fees in the licence agreement.
- 2) Company J entered into a two-year extension of the original licence agreement for the use of a City parking lot from June 1, 2021, to May 31, 2023. The licence fee was \$1,700.00 + HST paid in advance, annually, on June 1st of each year of the term. At the time of this review (late 2023), payment for an extension to this agreement beginning June 1, 2023 was still

being negotiated. This is another example of inadequate lead times. What should be happening is that a renewal is being completed in advance and/or payment being made, and receivable set up according to terms of an overhold clause until the new lease is signed.

(See Recommendation 15 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Case 9: Companies K and L Licensing at Below Market Value

- 119 At the end of 2015, the City entered into a licence agreement with Company K. It involved three parking spaces that were to be used exclusively by the licensee. The licence was \$720 per year (\$60 per month), for 4 years, due in advance, which was received in full at the beginning of the term.
- 120 The licensee, Company K, then sought and obtained the City's agreement to allow it to enter into a sublicense with a third party. Specifically, the City agreed to allow the sublicensee to license half the space for \$720 per year (\$60 per month). In effect, the licensee was able to completely offset the licence fee they were paying to the City by renting out half of the space. Thus, it appears the City lost a potential revenue opportunity of \$2,800 (Greater than this if one considers how much more revenue was received in the next lease which averaged \$5,800/year vs \$720). To further complicate matters, it appears the space was actually being used to service four parking spots, not three.
- 121 When this agreement expired in the fall of 2019, it was replaced by two 5-year licence agreements with two different tenants (Companies K and L). However, the new Delegated Authority document was still based on three parking spaces at this location, instead of the four in actual use, as observed by the OAG. So, while the City did receive much better value for these spaces in the new agreements (\$5,800/year vs \$720/year), it still lost out. One of the tenants was allocated two spaces and paid \$19,340 for five years. This was twice the amount paid by the other tenant (\$9,670) who was allocated and only paid for 1 space, even though there appear to be four spaces in use. We have confirmed on multiple occasions there are four cars parking on the property. This means that the City is potentially losing value of nearly \$9,700.

Case 10: Company M City did not Invoice for 22 months

- 122 Company N entered into a 5-year licence to install telecommunications equipment on City property. The licence fee is due annually in advance. The commencement date of the agreement was May 1, 2021. However, the City did not issue a request

for invoice (RFI) until 22 months into the agreement. In fact, the first payment covering 3 years was sent in by Company M a week before the RFI went out. According to the agreement, late payment fees are supposed to be charged of 12% per annum. In this case, the late payment penalty of approx. \$6,170 was waived as the City received payment before the Company was invoiced. In effect, the City lost value of \$6,170.

Other Issues

123 In addition to the above we found:

- Six examples of tenants not being invoiced for multiple years with a total missing revenue of \$51,372.
- Thirty-three cases where agreements had expired but are still listed as active.
- Six examples where agreements had expired but the licensee remains in place/on-site.
- Four cases where agreements were extended however that information is not reflected in ARCHIBUS (expiration date not updated).
- An active agreement in ARCHIBUS that was not an agreement but a proposal, and another that was active that should have been cancelled or terminated.
- In about 20% of the cases where the City is the licensee, this fact was not readily apparent in ARCHIBUS. The unreliability of ARCHIBUS means it takes more difficult to determine the true nature and status of licences, and whether fees are being collected when they should be.

124 We would also note that in commercial leasing and licensing, other organizations don't generally issue invoices in order to be paid. It may be preferable that automatic payments can be pursued, assuming a system could be set up to facilitate the timely identification of arrears in receivables.

(See Recommendations 32-34 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Lack of Monitoring of Insurance Requirements

125 The lease and licence agreements used by the City have an Insurance and Indemnification clause designed to protect the City against claims for personal injury, death, property damage etc. arising from accidents or events occurring on the leased/licenced property. These clauses are very specific as to minimum insurance coverage limits as well as the different risks covered. The expectation is that the lessee /licensee pay the insurance premium to keep it in force for the

duration of the lease/licence agreement to indemnify themselves and the City. The agreements also have a proof of insurance clause whereby the tenant is to retain certified copies of the insurance policies and is to submit these upon request to the City to verify compliance with this clause.

- 126 City staff are not vigilant in ensuring proper and adequate coverage of its leased/licenced properties. Proof of insurance had not been procured for nine of the twelve licenced properties and five of the eight leased properties reviewed - that is 70% (14 out of 20) of overall cases reviewed. As the City is not vigilant in ensuring proper and adequate coverage of its leased/licenced properties, some of the tenants of these properties facing financial pressures may reduce their insurance coverage or allow it to lapse. Since the City is not regularly checking this coverage, it has placed itself at risk of millions of dollars in liability in the event of an accident at one of the leased/licenced properties.

(See Recommendation 35 in Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005.)

Recommendations

- 127 Please refer to Appendix "B" to Report AUD24005 for a list of Recommendations and the related Management Responses that will address the key audit findings, with a focus on data collection and financial reporting, maximizing and collecting revenues, and related process improvements in the administration of leases and licences.

Conclusion

- 128 The OAG has brought forward 35 recommendations to strengthen lease and licence governance and management at the City of Hamilton.
- 129 The OAG would like to thank the Corporate Real Estate Office team, the Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division, the Recreation Division, and the Legal Services Division. We look forward to following up with management in the future to see the progress of their action plans and their impact on improving the administration of leases and licences at the City of Hamilton.

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Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit

Recommendations and Management Responses



September 19, 2024

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Office of the Auditor General



Hamilton

OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Introduction

The following 35 recommendations will help improve the governance and management of leases and licences at the City of Hamilton.

Recommendation 1

That the Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO) investigate how best to deploy its suite of system solutions, in order to improve the security and reliability of data, and administration of leases. This would involve an assessment of their current state of functionality as against administration needs, the feasibility of making improvements to ARCHIBUS and to the use of SharePoint technology (i.e. TRACKER), vs the costs and benefits of acquiring an integrated solution, and possibly the use of EAM (Enterprise Asset Management) (Appendix A, para. 32-39).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO has begun to investigate system solutions that address real estate and portfolio management functions corporate wide, with a view to lease administration. Connectivity to related facilities operational management and space management, EAM, and critically integration with financial systems, are important elements under consideration. Archibus, once it becomes available, and other tools will be used in the interim, while a business case is prepared for dedicated resources to address the need. Both a permanent solution and interim measures need to be addressed. A business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for permanent solutions.

Recommendation 2

That the City of Hamilton CREO evaluate alternatives to improve the administration of leases and licences including the efficacy of centralized administration and the use of, or enhancement with, software solutions that are available internally or in the marketplace (Appendix A, para. 40-46).

Management Response

Agree.

As noted in the report, recommendations respecting the implementation of a centralized model of lease administration have been provided by an independent consultant. Key to these recommendations is dedicated staff resources to establish the framework, systems and tools necessary to ensure a wholistic approach. A centralized model does not alleviate the need for the integration of supporting functions (legal, finance) and responsibility of "Asset Owners" and "Asset Managers" under the City's new Asset Management framework. Further noted is the report's acknowledgement that there may be circumstances under which elements of administration may functionally reside within a program (e.g., Recreation) area while deploying an overall consistent approach and centralized oversight. A business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for permanent solutions.

Recommendation 3

That CREO work with Facilities Management (FM) to update the Business Agreement to provide greater clarity with respect to responsibilities, and to add detail with respect to Legal Services' involvement and the renewal of leases (Appendix A, para. 40-46).

Management Response

Agree.

Current service level agreements between CREO and CFEM are under review respecting functions, roles, and responsibilities. Integration with Finance and Legal processes will be incorporated.

Estimated Completion: End of Year 2024.

Recommendation 4

That the CREO and the Recreation Division (REC) develop an accountability document or "Business Operating Agreement" to more clearly define cooperative roles and responsibilities with respect to Licence administration (Appendix A, para. 40-46).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO and Recreation will establish appropriate agreements consistent with current operating model and authorities. Integration with facilities management functions, Finance and Legal processes will be incorporated.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 5

That CREO, in partnership with REC, develop a strategy and implementation plan for improving the management of licence data to ensure there is one single source of "truth" and clear accountability for information about the existence and status of licences (Appendix A, para. 40-46).

Management Response

Agree.

REC has initiated an internal review of its licence data. As part of Recommendation #4 workplan, CREO and Recreation will cooperate with CFEM (manages ARCHIBUS system corporately) on data integrity on an interim basis, subject to Management Response 1 and 2.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 6

That CREO management review and renew the current criteria and processes for below market leases and licences, for improvement opportunities and consistency with City policies (Appendix A, para. 47-50).

Management Response

Agree.

The City requires an updated policy related to 3rd party use (lease/licence) of City property; incorporating below market rental scenarios (i.e. not for profit, community groups, etc.), distinct from facility use permits, and standardized agreements; clearly articulating criteria and processes, including roles and responsibilities among City divisions; and addressing capital and operating funding implications. CREO will lead a corporate wide review through the Portfolio Management Committee. In the interim, Recreation will be providing an overview of 3rd Party Agreements entered into and managed by Recreation to Emergency and Community Services Committee by Q4 2024.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2026.

Recommendation 7

That CREO management develop a process for making below market rental arrangements transparent to the public (Appendix A, para. 47-50).

Management Response

Agree.

Currently all below market leases and licences require approval by City Council, including any renewals or extensions, as they effectively represent grants provided by the City. Additional transparency mechanisms (such as annual reporting on the value of granting activity) will be examined and metrics articulated as part of the policy work identified in Management Response 6.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2026.

Recommendation 8

That CREO management review and update the delegations of authority for leases and licences, and ensure their inclusion in its official policy documents (Appendix A, para. 51-54).

Management Response

Agree.

Updated delegations are required for all real estate activities, including lease and licence administration. There is a corporate work program to update delegated authorities across all departments. The most recent real estate delegations will be incorporated into updated policy and a procedure manual (see Management Response 11), and posted on the City's intranet along with other corporate policies (e.g., code of conduct, procurement, etc.).

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 9

That CREO management develop and maintain, in consultation with Legal Services, a standardized form of lease agreement that can be used to apply contractual requirements and legal mechanisms with a desirable degree of uniformity and comprehensiveness, and which also affords sufficient flexibility to allow tailoring for different circumstances (Appendix A, para. 55-60).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO and Legal will work together to update the current precedent library and establish procedures to enforce the implementation of the use of standardized terms and conditions as appropriate. Where possible, a standardized form of lease agreement will be utilized. It should be recognized that each property, tenant, and nature of occupation requires differences in terms and conditions that cannot fully be addressed in a uniform template, so sufficient flexibility will be required to allow tailoring for different circumstances, as noted by the OAG. Some agreements are quite complex and for which a template is inadequate.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 10

That CREO management review older agreements and assess whether they continue to serve the interests of the City efficiently and effectively, and whether the City can and/or should pursue renegotiation, redrafting or termination in accordance with the existing terms (Appendix A, para. 55-60).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO is currently undertaking a strategic review of the City's entire inventory of property, with one lens being site utilization, including third-party use (leases/licences). As part of this process, existing tenancies and property uses are being examined for fit and compatibility with Council priorities and City objectives. Options and tactics to address identified changes are identified and articulated on a case-by-case basis, recognizing that leases and licences are contractual agreements that the City may not be in a position to unilaterally amend. Additionally, when existing agreements are coming up on expiry or renewal, arrangements are reviewed against the City's current priorities and policies, and agreements reviewed against current precedent documents.

Estimated Completion: On-going.

Recommendation 11

That management responsible for lease administration develop and adopt a leasing policy framework supported by standard operating procedures to assist in transitioning their delivery of lease administration and to respond to opportunities for improvement (Appendix A, para. 61-63).

Management Response

Agree.

A leasing policy framework supported by policies and procedures will be developed. A leasing administration policy and procedures manual will also be developed, based on the recommendations provided by an independent consultant and the Recommendations of this Report. As outlined in Management Response 2, a business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q1 2026 for new framework and processes.

Recommendation 12

That all lease and licence agreements include a provision to regularly increase rent payments by a set rate or the rate of inflation should they go into overhold (Appendix A, para. 87-88).

Management Response

Agree.

In accordance with Management Response 9, CREO will work with legal on incorporating a standardized approach and terms for consistent use of overholding provisions within lease and licence agreements to ensure the City's interests are adequately protected. There are certain agreements (Recreation licenses, for example) where annual increases to account for inflationary costs are consistently incorporated. While it is not uncommon to use overholding provisions in agreements to "incentivize" early discussion on renewal/expiry, there are circumstances under which such terms may become either punitive or undesirable (e.g. the City may wish to encourage short-term overholding as an interim measure prior to the City taking back the space for its own use). A leasing policy framework supported by policies and procedures, including information about how to address regularly increasing rent payments by a set rate or the rate of inflation should they go into overhold.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 13

That CREO and its lease/licence administrators develop a process to ensure overholds are dealt with more expeditiously (Appendix A, para. 87-88).

Management Response

Agree.

In alignment with Management Response 11, and utilizing the enhanced tools referenced in Management Response 15, procedures addressing proactive approaches to the end of term will be developed. These procedures will be developed to ensure that overholds are addressed promptly, minimizing delays and potential financial or operational risks. CREO will lead efforts to identify opportunities for streamlining current processes and improving oversight mechanisms. By implementing a more structured approach to lease and licence administration, we aim to increase efficiency and enhance accountability within the organization.

Additionally, as outlined in Management Response 2, we recognize that dedicated resources are crucial to effectively manage and execute these improvements. The successful implementation of these enhancements will require focused staff resources to ensure timely actions and oversight of lease and licence agreements. To address this need, a detailed business case will be prepared and presented during the 2025 Capital

and Operating Budget submissions. This business case will outline the resource requirements necessary to support the proposed changes, subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q1 2026 for new processes.

Recommendation 14

That the accountabilities and processes for updating lease/licence information be strengthened to ensure data is more reliable, and timely, with possibly a more robust use and/or implementation of systems that will more accurately and completely track all necessary parameters of leases and licences information. This should include exploration of enhancements to SharePoint. This information is required by various staff in Real Estate, Legal, Corporate Facilities and Energy Management - Facilities Management and Business Solutions, Finance, and other departments on a more reliable, complete and timely basis (Appendix A, para. 87-88).

Management Response

Agree.

Consistent with Management Response 1, 2 and 5, we recognize the need for more robust and reliable systems to manage lease and licence data effectively. A business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions. CREO has already begun investigating various data management tools and techniques to address the challenges associated with lease and licence administration. In collaboration with key stakeholders, including Legal, Corporate Facilities, Energy Management, Finance, and other departments, CREO will focus on strengthening accountability across all teams involved. This will ensure that the necessary information is accessible, reliable, and updated in a timely manner.

In addition to long-term solutions, we will explore enhancements for potential interim solutions to improve tracking and management of leases and licences. Where possible, interim measures will be considered, and we will implement these approaches as resources become available to ensure that improvements begin even prior to the formal approval of additional resources. By taking these steps, staff aims to improve overall data integrity, enhance inter-departmental collaboration, and ensure that reliable, complete, and timely information is available to all relevant teams.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for systems implementation.

Recommendation 15

That the CREO develop procedures and notification/tickler reports to ensure that staff are alerted in advance when leases or licences are about to expire in order to renew them on a timely basis and ensure uninterrupted payment (Appendix A, para. 87-88, 115, 118).

Management Response

Agree.

The CREO will collaborate with current lease/licence administrators to develop and implement a more enhanced system of proactive reporting and push notifications, complementing and improving the existing ARCHIBUS process. This enhanced system will improve notifications for initiating negotiations, monitoring accounts payable, and managing lease terms related to expiries and renewals. As noted in Management Response 11, interim resources will be sought, and a business case for dedicated resources will be submitted as part of the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget, subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for full systems implementation.

Recommendation 16

That management responsible for lease and licence agreements, working with Accounts Receivable in Finance, develop a more robust and timely process for monitoring rent collection, including considering the monthly use of Rent rolls to help identify and monitor overdue lease/licence payments (Appendix A, para. 93-94).

Management Response

Agree.

Staff among CREO, CFEM, and REC will work with Finance to determine more effective means of monitoring and addressing outstanding accounts on an interim basis, pending more comprehensive changes to systems and processes being developed and implemented, as identified in Management Response 1 and 2.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 17

That management revise the accounting allocation for revenue credits to ensure that revenues that ultimately accrue to responsible departments will reflect actual revenue collected rather than revenue due (Appendix A, para. 93-94).

Management Response

Agree.

Financial Services will conduct a review of accounting treatment and reporting for allocation of revenues to determine opportunities for improving the way in which revenues are recorded and allocated to departments, consistent with the recommendation and in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 18

That management develop a standard process for arrears management that ensures all parties are accountable to affect a coordinated, timely response to rent arrears (Appendix A, para. 93-94).

Management Response

Agree.

This shortcoming had been identified during the consultant's engagement and report. This identified shortcoming is due to systems and processes. Changes in the financial processes need to be implemented and this will be accomplished through a combination of software and process and procedures. To make the requisite changes will require additional resources for which a business case will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for systems implementation.

Recommendation 19

That prior to entering into lease and licence agreements with the City, all tenants be fully and properly vetted, and that key information on these agreements be checked for accuracy and reasonableness before the agreements are accepted and signed off by the City (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO and Legal will review existing lease/licence negotiation processes respecting understanding the tenant/licensee, vetting and information gathering, and risk mitigation strategies. Where enhancements can be made or new tools/techniques deployed, on a continuous improvement review basis, staff training and education will be deployed.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025 and on-going.

Recommendation 20

That clear guidelines be developed outlining how large the arrears outstanding can be before various actions will take place. The process should be robust enough to ensure recovery of arrears proceeds in a consistent, orderly manner, and is completed within a reasonable period of time (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO and Legal will work together to establish standard operating procedures respecting default and outstanding accounts. To develop and implement such guidelines will require additional resources for which a business case will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

The Corporate Real Estate Office (CREO) and Legal Services will work together to develop standard operating procedures related to the management of default and outstanding accounts. These procedures will establish clear guidelines for how arrears are to be handled, including thresholds for the size of arrears that will trigger specific actions. The goal is to ensure a consistent, orderly, and timely recovery of outstanding debts.

The development and implementation of these procedures will require additional resources, such as dedicated personnel and technological support. A business case outlining these resource needs will be submitted for consideration as part of the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget process. Implementation of the guidelines will proceed upon approval by Council. This approach ensures that the necessary framework and resources are in place to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of arrears recovery.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for systems implementation.

Recommendation 21

That standard procedures be developed to ensure that subsequent to entering into a lease or licence, collections begin promptly (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

Current procedures respecting collections are not consistent with industry practices. Consistent with Management Response 15, staff among CREO, CFEM, and REC will work with Finance to ensure timely sharing of information and current procedures are reinforced so that prompt collections is initiated in accordance with lease/licence terms.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 22

That tenants not be permitted to use the leased property until the lease/licence document has been finalized and properly signed off by both parties (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

The principle and policy of "No-lease-no-key" will be reinforced. It needs to be recognized that in a renewal or extension situation, the tenant or licensee, are already occupants.

Estimated Completion: Immediate.

Recommendation 23

That for leases and licences billed monthly, the City consider obtaining security and/or damage deposits when the lessee/licensee signs the agreements (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

In alignment with Management Response 9, CREO and Legal will collaborate to thoroughly review the options and potential implications of introducing security and/or damage deposits for monthly billed leases and licences. This review will consider industry standards, legal considerations, and financial risk exposure. Based on this analysis, a structured framework will be developed to guide decisions on when and how to implement appropriate security measures. Each transaction will be evaluated, considering due diligence, risk assessments, and the specific terms of the agreement to ensure appropriate protection for the City while maintaining flexibility in commercial negotiations.

Estimated Completion: Q3 2025.

Recommendation 24

That the City sign off on lease and licence agreements only after the lessee/licensee has signed off (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

This currently is the general practice with only certain exceptions such as agreements with other levels of government, institutions or extraordinary circumstances. Legal will review current practices and procedures to ensure consistent adherence to the policy, and communication and procedures will be updated where enhancements are identified.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 25

That a procedure be changed/developed so the signed agreements are received by the division/section responsible as soon as practicable and that a record is maintained of when these are received (Appendix A, para. 100-106).

Management Response

Agree.

This is the current practice. The current procedure for communicating and disseminating signed agreements, including documenting receipt, to lease/licence administrators will be reviewed and enhanced as appropriate.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 26

That management consider how best to link lease/licence documents and lease/licence administration software and/or financial systems so that all information noted on an RFI is supported by the lease and/or licence documents (Appendix A, para. 107-110).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO and key stakeholders will examine existing documentation and systems to determine where enhancements to linkages can be made. Interim measures will be taken where possible, and training for administrators reinforced. In accordance with Management Responses 1, 2, 14, 15, and 16, integration of software systems and data are key elements to be addressed in a work program for which a business case will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for interim measures / 2026+ for systems implementation.

Recommendation 27

That a standard operating procedure be developed, and the process followed, so that all agreements where the tenant is required to pay property taxes are monitored on a timely basis to ensure that these funds are being collected in an expeditious manner (Appendix A, para. 111-113).

Management Response

Agree.

Current procedures are in place for the collection of property taxes via A/R billing to ensure HST requirements are addressed and property taxes are collected. While MPAC often takes 2-3 years to catch up on reassessments for new leased locations (in which case tenants/licensees inherit a substantial liability retroactively), the current procedure will be reviewed, enhanced and formalized, and staff trained, to ensure techniques, such as annual reviews, and billing of estimated taxes with end of year reconciliation to actuals, are deployed on a consistent basis.

Estimated Completion: Q2 2025.

Recommendation 28

That the City avoid the practice of allowing rents to accumulate arrears to accommodate the administration of rate changes (Appendix A, para. 114).

Management Response

Agree.

Consistent with Management Response 21, staff among CREO, CFEM, and REC will work with Finance to ensure timely sharing of information and current procedures are revisited so that prompt collections is continued. It should be noted that finance charges (2% over prime) are automatically to unpaid invoices after 45 days.

Estimated Completion: Q1 2025.

Recommendation 29

That a procedure be developed, or system be implemented, for integration of billing and lease status using a unique identifying number to link lease information (currently in ARCHIBUS) records to AR Finance records (Appendix A, para. 116).

Management Response

Agree.

Such Archibus file numberings are presently identified in the completion of RFI's that are sent to Finance (A/R). Software systems integration is currently not available and will be sought with any new or updated systems. Current procedure, subject to Archibus availability, will be reinforced.

Estimated Completion: Immediate.

Recommendation 30

That management responsible for leases and licences undertake a regular periodic (monthly or quarterly) review of all lease and licence files to ensure that they are being properly managed and that they have not been overlooked/forgotten (Appendix A, para. 117).

Management Response

Agree.

Regular periodic reviews of all active lease/licence files will be part of the policy and procedures identified in Management Response 11. All managers and administrators will be trained accordingly. Currently there are insufficient staff resources to undertake the recommended practice. CFEM and CREO meet regularly to discuss and review lease/license issues including renewals, defaults etc., and REC had undertaken a review of its leases and licences with a view to verifying its inventory. A business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions to address the recommended direction, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q1 2026 for new procedures.

Recommendation 31

That the CREO develop a policy and guideline outlining how to deal with existing tenants of properties that have been purchased by the City (Appendix A, para. 117).

Management Response

Agree.

A comprehensive policy framework will be developed to establish clear guidelines for managing the transition and ongoing administration of existing tenants in properties acquired by the City. This framework will ensure consistency in handling tenant-related issues, provide transparency in decision-making, and minimize disruptions for tenants during the transition. Additionally, it will help City staff navigate complex tenancy arrangements by offering clear procedures for integrating these properties into the City's portfolio.

It should be recognized that when the City acquires properties with existing tenants, the City inherits the contractual arrangements between the previous property owner and the tenant, by virtue of an assignment. That contractual agreement may not be consistent with City standards, but is considered as part of the terms of the property Purchase and Sale Agreement.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2025.

Recommendation 32

That all management responsible for leases and licences implement a system to regularly review lease and licence files ensuring their status is accurately reflected and up to date (Appendix A, para. 123-124).

Management Response

Agree.

Consistent with Management Response 14 and 30, procedures will be updated to ensure regular reviews and updates to file status and respective data. Currently there are insufficient staff resources to undertake the recommended practice. CFEM and CREO meet regularly to discuss and review lease/license issues including renewals, defaults etc., and REC had undertaken a review of its leases and licences with a view to verifying its inventory. A business case for dedicated resources will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions to address the recommended direction, and implementation subject to Council approval.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for new procedures.

Recommendation 33

That all administrators of lease and licences be accountable to report to a central oversight authority to ensure that all fees associated with leases and licences that come due are collected in a timely manner, and that agreement revenues/overholds are being dealt with accurately and promptly (Appendix A, para. 123-124).

Management Response

Agree.

As outlined in Management Response 2, an independent consultant has provided recommendations to establish a centralized model for lease and license administration. The plan is for the CREO (Corporate Real Estate Office) to be the lead; the CREO is well-positioned to take on the oversight role, as this aligns with its strategic leadership in managing the City's real estate portfolio. By centralizing oversight under CREO, we will aim to improve consistency, accountability, and efficiency in the administration of leases and licenses, ensuring that all fees due are collected promptly and that any overholds or revenue issues are resolved in a timely manner.

To achieve this, CREO will work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including lease administrators, Finance, and other relevant departments, to build a robust framework. This framework will include clearly defined processes, integrated systems, and effective tools to streamline fee collection, manage agreement terms, and ensure that all aspects of lease and license agreements are handled accurately and efficiently.

Implementing this centralized model will require dedicated resources. A business case outlining these needs will be presented as part of the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions and will be subject to Council approval. The allocation of these resources will enable the City to fully operationalize this new model.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q4 2025 for new reporting procedures.

Recommendation 34

That management re-evaluate whether invoicing of lessees is necessary and justified or other practices would be more effective in assuring timely collection including the feasibility of automatic payment from lessees (Appendix A, para. 123-124).

Management Response

Agree.

CREO, Legal and Finance will undertake a review of collection practices. As articulated in Management Response 21, current procedures respecting collections are not consistent with industry practices. Consultants recommendations respecting the implementation of a new model of lease administration also include changes to collections practices. In conjunction with the activities articulated in Management Response 2 and 11, collections practices and procedures will be updated. Key to undertaking these changes is dedicated staff resources. A business case for dedicated resources and incorporating this Recommendation will be brought forward during the 2025 Capital and Operating Budget submissions.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024 for budget approval / Q1 2026 for new procedures.

Recommendation 35

That management develop a lease/licence standard procedure to ensure regular validation of agreement insurance requirements, and which outline the measures it will take to deal with the risks posed by lessees and licensees that do not maintain their insurance-related agreement obligations (Appendix A, para. 125-126).

Management Response

Agree.

Updated procedures will be developed and implemented on an interim basis pending approval and implementation of a centralized lease administration program.

Estimated Completion: Q4 2024.

Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licensing Audit

September 19, 2024

Domenic Pellegrini, Senior Audit and Investigations Specialist

Brigitte Minard, Deputy Auditor General

Charles Brown, Auditor General

Office of the Auditor General



Hamilton

OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL



Audit Scope and Future Reporting

- The audit focused on standard **lease-out** arrangements (i.e. City is the Landlord).
- The OAG is currently doing additional audit work regarding Hamilton Waterfront Trust Leases at Pier 7.
- The findings will be reported at a future Audit, Finance and Administration Committee meeting in 2024.

What is a Lease?

- A legally binding contract outlining the terms under which one party agrees to rent a property it owns to another party.
- A lease usually confers exclusive possession of a property.
- This exclusive right of possession may exist even if the lease imposes some restrictions, such as how the property may be used.

What is a Licence?

- A licence normally does not confer exclusive possession to the licensee.
- It only gives the right or privilege to enter and use the property in a certain manner or for a specified purpose.
- It is a personal right and does not create any estate or interest in the property.
- A licence grants permission without which the use of such property could be considered a trespass.

Who Does What?

Corporate Real Estate Office:

- Manages the commercial lease transactions and provides front-end lease administration.
- Is involved in negotiating more complex leases and licence transactions.
- Tidying up lease and licence documents; the administration of agreements that cannot be done by Facilities Management; and much of the communications with Accounts Receivable regarding rent collections.

Who Does What?

Recreation Division:

- Deals almost exclusively with licence agreements.
- Administers the use of sports fields, recreational facilities, old town halls and community centres.
- Works with School Boards for use of open spaces.

Who Does What?

Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division:

- Lease administration applicable to buildings and properties in the Public Works portfolio.
- Utilizes facility use agreements when renting space over the short-term.
- Manages the storing and tracking of all real estate agreements through ARCHIBUS, a system used to manage and administer leases, licences and properties (including facilities management).

Who Does What?

Legal Services:

- Solicitors assist with the drafting and finalization of various agreements.
- Provides advice on agreement interpretation, disputes, and other issues.

Audit Objectives

- **To assess** whether the administration of leased and licensed City-owned properties is efficient and effective, and compliant with City policies, guidelines and legislated requirements;
- **To evaluate** whether the systems, practices and procedures being followed are providing the City with reasonable assurance that its assets are being appropriately safeguarded and controlled; and
- **To determine** if revenues to the City are maximized (where applicable).

What We Did

- Reviewed Active, Overhold, and Recurring Leases.
- Interviewed staff.
- Performed detailed data review and analysis.
- Reviewed relevant documentation.
- Compiled ten case examples to communicate the findings.

What We Found

Governance

- Need for updates to delegations of authority and including them in official policy documents.

Systems and Data

- None of the lease and licence systems integrate with corporate financial systems.
- Impacts invoice tracking, receipt of payment and account status.
- Significant data issues were identified and is not reliable or current.

What We Found

Administration

- Inefficient, error prone, and there are missed opportunities.
- Current approach not serving the City's needs.
- Procedures, roles and criteria are not comprehensive or fulsome and lack detail.

Below Market Rental Rates

- A more transparent and accountable process is needed.

What We Found

Collections

- Weak and inadequate collections process.
- Inadequate to ensure full collection and restoration of arrears on a timely basis.
- We found accumulated arrears, rental losses, and revenues that are unlikely to be fully collected to be about **\$1.2 million**.

What We Found

| Leases on Overhold including Active and Recurring Past Termination Date - Years in Overhold | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 10 years | 3 | 10% |
| Between 5 and 10 years | 9 | 29% |
| Between 3 and 5 years | 8 | 26% |
| 3 years or less | 11 | 35% |
| Total | 31 | 100% |

What We Found

| Licences on Overhold, including Active and Recurring Past Termination Date – Years in Overhold | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Greater than 10 Years | 26 | 27% |
| Between 5 and 10 Years | 20 | 20% |
| Between 3 and 5 Years | 25 | 26% |
| 3 Years or less | 26 | 27% |
| Total | 97 | 100% |

Case Examples

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Company A | Four (4) Years of Intermittent and Non-Payments Accumulating to \$720K in Arrears. |
| Company B | Invoicing Started 10 Months after the Lease Began. |
| Companies C and D | Unpaid Taxes due to City's Late Administration. |
| Company E | Delayed Invoicing By City Causing Arrears. |
| Company F | Lateness in Renewal of Agreement and Subsequent Delayed Billing. |

Case Examples

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Company G | Continuing to Invoice a Vacated Lease for 33 Years . |
| Company H | Licence Agreement Forgotten About for Four Years . |
| Companies I and J | Invoicing Does Not Agree with Licence Terms/Late Renewal. |
| Companies K and L | Licensing at Below Market Value. |
| Company M | City Did Not Invoice for 22 months . |

Conclusion

- Overall, 35 recommendations were made to Management
 - Management agreed with all recommendations.
- Management is currently working on implementing their management responses.
- OAG is recommending that Council directs Management to report back with a status update by March 2025.




Hamilton

THANK YOU



INFORMATION REPORT

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| TO: | Chair and Members Audit, Finance & Administration Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | September 19, 2024 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Annual Tax Arrears as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24020) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Maria Di Santo (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5254 Rob Divinski (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6196 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Shelley Hesmer, Acting Director Financial Services and Taxation and Corporate Controller Corporate Services Department |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

INFORMATION

Property taxation is the main source of revenue for municipalities to fund their operations. The City of Hamilton (City) must ensure that this primary source of revenue is protected and monitored closely. Report FCS24020 focusses on the level of annual property tax arrears over the last five years and the resulting collection efforts employed by Taxation staff.

Total tax arrears as of December 31, 2023 equated to \$91.6 M. This is an increase of approximately \$19.4 M (or 27%) from the previous year, where arrears totalled \$72.2 M. This increase coincides with current economic conditions, where inflation and higher mortgage rates are negatively impacting property owners. In addition, the lower than average volume of property sales (which assists in clearing property tax arrears, if any, at the time of sale) would also be considered a contributing factor to the arrears increase.

Staff surveyed a number of Ontario municipalities to aide in assessing if this trend is local or a broader experience. Based on responses received, a similar uptick was experienced in other Ontario municipalities. Most confirmed an increase in property tax arrears in 2023. Increases in charges added to the tax roll were also noted in many of the responses.

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Some municipalities, however, noted an increase in arrears since the pandemic. This was not the case for the City of Hamilton, as property tax arrears were lower in 2020 – 2022, when compared to 2019. Low interest rates, high volume of property sales and Provincial / Federal financial assistance programs in response to the pandemic, may have been contributing factors in the taxpayer's ability to pay.

Table 1 is an analysis of the tax arrears from 2019 to 2023.

**Table 1
Five-Year Analysis of Tax Arrears**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 | 12/31/2019 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Arrears ¹ | \$91,582,733 | \$72,228,534 | \$71,970,200 | \$75,636,548 | \$77,609,940 |
| Increase / (Decrease) Over Previous Year | \$19,354,199 | \$258,334 | (\$3,666,338) | (\$1,973,932) | \$3,872,487 |
| Percentage Increase / (Decrease) | 26.80% | 0.36% | (4.85%) | (2.54%) | 5.25% |
| Current Taxes Levied ² Plus Additions to Tax Roll | \$1,301,656,290 | \$1,216,245,788 | \$1,171,479,507 | \$1,148,205,282 | \$1,109,605,356 |
| Increase / (Decrease) Over Previous Year | \$85,410,502 | \$44,766,281 | \$23,274,255 | \$38,599,926 | \$31,849,744 |
| Percentage Increase / (Decrease) | 7.02% | 3.82% | 2.03% | 3.48% | 2.96% |
| % of Total Arrears to Current Taxes Levied | 7.04% | 5.94% | 6.14% | 6.59% | 6.99% |

Total Arrears¹ is inclusive of current and prior years, penalty and interest charges and charges added to the tax roll (i.e., water arrears, property standards charges, etc.). Exclusive of supplementary / omitted billings levied but not due as of December 31st of each respective year.

Current Taxes Levied² is exclusive of supplementary / omitted billings levied but not due as of December 31st of each respective year.

As identified in Table 1, 2023 saw an increase in total arrears of approximately \$19.4 M when compared to 2022. The 2023 taxation year also represented a higher than average increase in charges added to the tax roll which, over the prior four years, ranged from \$23 M (or 2%) to \$45 M (or 3.8%).

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As noted above, the total arrears on the tax roll are not exclusively for property taxes, but also includes penalty and interest charges, as well as, other charges added to the tax roll (i.e., water arrears charges, property standards charges, development charges, *Provincial Offences Act* charges, etc.). Where allowable under the *Municipal Act*, charges are added to the tax roll and collected in the same manner as property taxes. Although this practice simply transfers the arrears to the tax roll, it is an efficient and effective method of collecting non-property tax arrears.

Table 2 identifies the total amount of charges added to the tax roll on an annual basis. This amount has increased each year, except for 2020, which was primarily due to the waiving of fees in response to the pandemic. The waiving of fees was only applicable during 2020 and, as such, once the waiving period expired, charges added to the tax roll continued to increase.

**Table 2
Five-Year Analysis of Charges added to Tax Roll**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 | 12/31/2019 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Charges added to Tax Roll | \$9,239,360 | \$7,728,180 | \$7,658,050 | \$6,154,450 | \$6,653,770 |
| \$ Increase / (Decrease) Over Previous Year | \$1,511,180 | \$70,130 | \$1,503,590 | (\$499,320) | \$1,427,590 |
| % Increase / (Decrease) Over Previous Year | 20% | 1% | 24% | -8% | 27% |

Water arrears charges added to the tax roll continues to be a major contributing factor to recent trends. Over the last five years (2019-2023), water arrears equate to an average of 70% of the total annual charges added to the tax roll.

In 2022, the dollar threshold to transfer water arrears charges to the tax roll was increased from \$100 to \$125, resulting in lower volumes of water arrears transfers to the tax roll that year. The increase in the dollar threshold only temporarily reduced the water arrears transfer in 2022. By 2023, the volume of water arrears transfers to the tax roll increased (while maintaining the dollar threshold unchanged) from an average of 380 a week in 2022 to an average of 430 a week in 2023, almost back to the weekly average seen in 2021 when the dollar threshold to transfer to the tax roll was at \$100.

Water arrears and the applicable administration fee to add the water arrears to the tax roll, account for 77% of the \$1.5 M increase in charges added to the tax roll from 2022 to 2023.

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Breakdown of Tax Receivable by Property Class

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the annual Taxes Receivable by major property class and the respective share to the overall total Taxes Receivable. The second portion of Table 3 identifies the number of properties with a balance owing at the end of the year, by major property class and the respective share to the overall total number of properties with a balance owing at year-end.

It should be noted that the figures below include billings levied but not yet due. Each year, the final supplementary / omitted billing is issued late in the year, with due dates in January of the following year. With the exception of 2022, when this billing totalled \$9.3 M for 2023 and prior years, it has consistently averaged approximately \$5.5 M.

**Table 3
Five-Year Analysis of Tax Receivable by Major Property Class**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 | 12/31/2019 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Taxes Receivable ¹ | \$104,241,889 | \$88,632,117 | \$84,394,273 | \$87,610,501 | \$88,844,463 |
| Vacant Land | \$5,682,026 5.45% | \$6,291,421 7.10% | \$4,559,714 5.40% | \$3,851,997 4.40% | \$3,376,527 3.80% |
| Farm/Managed Forest | \$2,890,953 2.77% | \$2,479,096 2.80% | \$2,226,561 2.64% | \$2,300,603 2.63% | \$2,402,659 2.70% |
| Residential | \$64,819,761 62.18% | \$51,229,644 57.80% | \$46,195,729 54.74% | \$51,386,229 58.65% | \$53,397,051 60.10% |
| Commercial | \$14,915,550 14.31% | \$13,649,000 15.40% | \$15,709,208 18.61% | \$15,765,595 18.00% | \$15,233,912 17.15% |
| Industrial | \$15,698,122 15.06% | \$14,703,236 16.59% | \$15,518,357 18.39% | \$14,253,920 16.27% | \$14,306,901 16.10% |
| Other | \$235,477 0.23% | \$279,720 0.31% | \$184,704 0.22% | \$52,160 0.06% | \$127,414 0.14% |
| # of Properties | 24,551 | 22,188 | 19,605 | 18,868 | 21,968 |
| Vacant Land | 624 2.54% | 674 3.04% | 533 2.72% | 491 2.60% | 525 2.39% |
| Farm/Managed Forest | 477 1.94% | 432 1.95% | 461 2.35% | 390 2.07% | 487 2.22% |
| Residential | 22,083 89.95% | 19,866 89.53% | 17,452 89.02% | 16,814 89.11% | 19,618 89.30% |
| Commercial | 1,009 4.11% | 878 3.96% | 879 4.48% | 870 4.61% | 996 4.53% |
| Industrial | 322 1.31% | 311 1.40% | 256 1.31% | 287 1.52% | 325 1.48% |
| Other | 36 0.15% | 27 0.12% | 24 0.12% | 16 0.08% | 17 0.08% |

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Tax Receivable¹ is inclusive of supplementary / omitted billings levied but not due as of December 31st of each respective year and exclusive of credit balances or balances under \$5 as of December 31st of each respective year.

As shown in Table 3, there was an increase in Taxes Receivable in 2023, all attributed primarily to the Residential property class. All other property classes have remained relatively consistent over the last five years.

The 2023 Taxes Receivable increased to \$104.2 M compared to the prior four years, where the amount ranged between \$84.4 M (2021) and \$88.8 M (2019). This trend corresponds to increased reliance on property taxes, in part, in response to the opioid, mental health and housing emergency. Consequently, the reliance on property taxes to increasingly fund social programs is negatively affecting the ability of some property owner's capacity to meet their property tax obligations.

With respect to the number of properties with a balance owing as of December 31, although the number of properties continue to increase, the Residential property class consistently represents approximately 89% of the total number of properties, while the Commercial property class approximately 4% to 5% and the Industrial class approximately 1.5%. It should be noted that Table 3 identifies all properties with a tax receivable greater than \$5.00, therefore, it is not an indication of the severity of the receivable. Some of the properties identified may be due to an unpaid charge added to the tax roll, unpaid penalty and interest as a result of a late payment or simply one missed instalment. For example, here is a list of the 24,551 properties with a balance at the end of 2023:

- 7,716, or 31.4% of these properties, have a balance owing between \$5 and \$99.99;
- 1,810, or 7.4% of these properties, have a balance owing between \$100 and \$249.99;
- 1,639, or 6.7% of these properties, have a balance owing between \$250 and \$499.99;
- 990, or 4.0% of these properties, have a balance owing between \$500 and \$749.99;
- 857, or 3.5% of these properties, have a balance owing between \$750 and \$999.99.

As such, approximately 53% of the 24,551 properties had a balance owing (not necessarily past due) of under \$1,000. For comparison, in 2022, this percentage was 57%.

Breakdown of Property Tax Arrears by Ward

To get a better indication of the severity of arrears, one must look at properties in three or more years in arrears. Table 4 is a breakdown of the number and percentage of properties by Ward that are in three or more years' arrears.

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**Table 4
Property Breakdown of Arrears per Ward
Number of properties in 3yrs+ arrears¹ (% of total ward)**

| Ward | January 2024 | January 2023 | January 2022 | January 2021 | January 2020 |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 92 (0.87%) | 76 (0.71%) | 65 (0.61%) | 90 (0.85%) | 97 (0.94%) |
| 2 | 125 (1.31%) | 101 (1.13%) | 101 (1.13%) | 117 (1.13%) | 125 (1.44%) |
| 3 | 241 (1.75%) | 198 (1.44%) | 221 (1.60%) | 259 (1.89%) | 290 (2.14%) |
| 4 | 174 (1.16%) | 136 (0.91%) | 138 (0.94%) | 162 (1.10%) | 176 (1.20%) |
| 5 | 84 (0.68%) | 72 (0.58%) | 77 (0.63%) | 95 (0.78%) | 104 (0.87%) |
| 6 | 80 (0.63%) | 88 (0.69%) | 80 (0.64%) | 99 (0.79%) | 119 (0.95%) |
| 7 | 98 (0.70%) | 74 (0.52%) | 82 (0.58%) | 105 (0.75%) | 134 (0.96%) |
| 8 | 96 (0.84%) | 79 (0.69%) | 74 (0.65%) | 93 (0.82%) | 83 (0.74%) |
| 9 | 108 (0.86%) | 99 (0.81%) | 98 (0.81%) | 116 (0.98%) | 101 (0.88%) |
| 10 | 118 (0.74%) | 107 (0.67%) | 89 (0.57%) | 112 (0.72%) | 130 (0.87%) |
| 11 | 89 (0.80%) | 67 (0.60%) | 72 (0.66%) | 92 (0.87%) | 108 (1.09%) |
| 12 | 142 (0.82%) | 124 (0.73%) | 122 (0.72%) | 150 (0.89%) | 160 (0.96%) |
| 13 | 87 (0.70%) | 81 (.65%) | 80 (0.64%) | 98 (0.79%) | 112 (0.90%) |
| 14 | 63 (0.61%) | 56 (0.54%) | 57 (0.57%) | 70 (0.71%) | 82 (0.83%) |
| 15 | 97 (0.77%) | 88 (0.73%) | 71 (0.60%) | 106 (0.91%) | 134 (1.23%) |
| TOTAL | 1,694 (0.88%) | 1,446 (0.76%) | 1,427 (0.76%) | 1,764 (0.94%) | 1,955 (1.06%) |

Number of properties in three or more years' arrears¹ is exclusive of supplementary / omitted billings completed in the second half of the year which may include billing for prior two years. Inclusive of properties with tax lien registered on title.

Table 4 shows that all Wards have properties in significant arrears. Total properties in three or more years of arrears have increased from 1,446 properties in January, 2023 to 1,694 properties in January, 2024. Although there is an increase, the number of properties is lower than 2020 and 2021, where there were approximately 1,760 to 1,950 properties. All Wards have seen an increase in the number of properties in arrears compared to the year prior, with only Ward 6 showing a minor decrease from 88 properties in 2023 to 80 in 2024. The average percentage of properties in three or more years' arrears has increased to 0.88% from 0.76% over the prior two years. This percentage is still favourable compared to 2021 at 0.94% and 2020 at 1.06%.

When looking at the different Wards, as of January 2024, the percentage of properties in three or more years' arrears by Ward ranged between 0.61% and 1.75%. This is an increase from January 2023, where the average arrears per Ward ranged between 0.52% and 1.44%. Similar to prior years, Ward 3 continues to have the highest percentage of properties in three or more years' arrears at 1.75%. However, this percentage has decreased from 1.89% in 2021 and 2.14% in 2020. Wards 6 and 14 have the lowest percentage of arrears at 0.63% and 0.61%, respectively.

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Of the 1,694 properties identified in Table 4, approximately 235 properties have a lien already registered on title, with the remainder being at risk of a lien being registered in 2024 should the arrears not be adequately addressed. Approximately 89% of these properties are Residential or Residential with a Commercial component.

As far as demographics are concerned, staff do not have a “profile” of a taxpayer in arrears. Based on discussions with taxpayers, the reasons for being in arrears vary, however, some common reasons include:

- Estate issues whereby the family is in the process of dealing with the estate or it is currently occupied by a surviving family member that is simply not addressing the property taxes or not expediting the settling of the estate promptly.
- Rental properties (i.e., single-family homes / condos not owner-occupied) where the property owner is assuming the tenant is paying the property taxes.
- Charges added to the tax roll (i.e., water arrears, property standards charges, provincial offences fines, development charges, etc.).
- Taxpayers in financial hardship (i.e., due to job loss, divorce, illness or the death of one of the owners or family, etc.). These cases are referred to the Compassionate Appeal process, requiring taxpayers to apply annually by the application deadline and provide the required financial records and / or attending physician’s statement.
- Taxpayers who are now experiencing hardship based on a higher cost of living which is attributed to an increase in the inflation rate, as well as, an increase in mortgage rates.
- Taxpayers making incorrect / misinformed assumptions (i.e., assuming they are paying their property taxes through their mortgage, assuming they are in good standing on their monthly pre-authorized payment plan, assuming another family member / partner is paying the property taxes, etc.).
- Opting to pay just the minimum required to discharge the lien or to avoid the City registering a lien. As such, these taxpayers are always in arrears and continue to incur significant penalties and interest charges each month.
- Remnant parcels, non-buildable lots, vacant properties.
- Pending assessment appeal (i.e., choosing not to fully pay the taxes levied by assuming a successful outcome to their appeal that will eventually clear the arrears once processed). Taxpayers are encouraged to pay their taxes in full, regardless of a pending appeal.
- Opting to enter into a two-year extension agreement once they are registered.

Residential Tax Assistance Programs

There is a limited number of programs to assist taxpayers falling into arrears due to lower ability to pay. For the most part, the onus is on the taxpayer to contact the City to discuss options and available programs. Information is available on the City’s website, as well as, included in the tax information brochure mailed out with both the Interim and Final tax bills.

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The programs available to residential property owners include:

Seniors (65+) Tax Rebate – the 2023 rebate was \$223 (increased from \$210 the year prior), requiring an income of \$41,800 or lower and a maximum assessed residential property value of \$500,600. Prior year taxes must be paid in full. In 2023, there were approximately 2,750 seniors that received the rebate. The deadline to apply for the 2023 rebate was February 29, 2024.

Deferral of Tax Increase for Low-Income Senior or Low-Income Persons with Disability – the deferral requires an income of \$41,800 or lower and prior year taxes paid / deferred in full. In 2023, 10 applications were approved to defer their property tax increase, while one paid off prior year deferrals as part of the sale of the property. As of December 31, 2023, there were 40 taxpayers with a deferral. Some taxpayers apply every year to defer the annual increase, while others have only applied once or applied periodically. Repayment of the deferral typically occurs on the sale of the property. The deadline to apply for deferral of the 2023 tax increase was February 29, 2024.

Full Deferral for Low-Income Senior or Low-Income Persons with Disability – the program allows for the full deferral of the annual property taxes, however, requires an income of \$41,800 or lower and prior year taxes paid / deferred in full. In 2023, 17 applicants deferred their 2023 property taxes, five of which had not deferred in prior years. There were no repayments in 2023 and 10 applicants who deferred property taxes in prior years, elected not to apply for 2023. As of December 31, 2023, there were 27 taxpayers with a full deferral of one or more years. The deadline to defer the 2023 full property taxes was September 29, 2023, being the final instalment due date for the year.

Compassionate Appeals for Extreme Poverty or Sickness – hearings for relief of 2022 property taxes were held throughout 2023 (once all applications were received by the due date of February 28, 2023). In 2023, the City received 26 applications, significantly higher than the 15 applications received the year prior. Of the 26 applications received, only six were awarded 100% relief of their 2022 total property taxes. For the remaining applications, all but one, which had to be rescheduled for a hearing in 2024, were either dismissed, withdrawn or unsuccessful either due to failure to appear, withdrawn by the appellant or the income was too high to qualify. The deadline to apply for relief of the 2023 property taxes was February 29, 2024.

Penalty and Interest Analysis

Table 5 identifies the penalty and interest charges applied to the tax roll accounts for amounts not paid by the due dates. In adherence to By-law 13-136 “A By-law to Set Penalty and Interest Rates”, taxpayers are charged a penalty of 1.25% on the first day of default, then interest of 1.25% per month (15% per year) thereafter, to all property taxes (inclusive of other charges added to the tax roll) past due, until paid in full.

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Penalty and interest charges are added on the first of the month, for the full month. The penalty and interest rate charged is the maximum allowable under the *Municipal Act* and is consistent with what most Ontario municipalities charge. The high interest rate acts as a deterrent for most taxpayers to avoid paying late or accumulating arrears, however, some taxpayers continue to pay late or allow the arrears to grow, regardless of the penalty and interest charges incurred.

As identified in Table 5, over the last five years, penalty and interest revenue has averaged approximately \$12.2 M per year. The 2023 penalty and interest charges of \$13.5 M is the highest in the last five years and approximately \$1.5 M higher than that of the any of the previous four years. In 2023, 48% of the total \$13.5 M penalty and interest charged was related to current year arrears only, an increase from 2022 and 2021, where it accounted for 47% and 44%, respectively.

**Table 5
Five-Year Analysis of Penalty and Interest Charges**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 ² | 12/31/2019 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| P&I charges added to the Tax Roll ¹ | \$13,505,480 | \$11,933,392 | \$12,030,300 | \$11,459,885 | \$12,012,070 |
| \$ Increase / (Decrease) over Previous Year | \$1,572,088 | (\$96,908) | \$570,416 | (\$552,185) | \$721,169 |
| % Increase / (Decrease) over Previous Year | 13.17% | (0.81%) | 4.98% | (4.60%) | 6.39% |

P&I charges added to the Tax Roll¹ is net of adjustments (i.e., write-off of current year penalty and interest due to misapplied payment, reduction of taxes due to successful appeal, etc.).

² The reduction in 2020 was primarily due to the Council-approved waiving of penalty and interest charges in response to the pandemic, as per staff Report FCS20038, Property Tax Assistance and Other Measures.

The increase in penalty and interest charges seen in 2023 is directly related to the increase in arrears. In light of the higher arrears and possible financial difficulty being experienced by taxpayers and their presumed lower ability to pay, there may be some consideration warranted of possibly lowering the penalty and interest rate. All factors will need to be considered as this revenue is budgeted for and, therefore, applied to lowering the overall municipal levy. Such a measure was taken in 2009 in order to assist taxpayers facing the uncertain economic future due to the global downturn at that time. The penalty and interest rate was lowered to 1% per month (12% per annum) from May, 2009 to June 2013. The rate was increased back to 1.25% per month (15% per annum) effective July 1, 2013 and has remained at this rate since, being the maximum allowable under the *Municipal Act*.

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Tax Collection Efforts

The following identifies the steps taken by Taxation staff to ensure the protection and collection of property tax arrears, while adhering to requirements under the *Municipal Act, 2001*. There are several steps taken to ensure the City's taxes receivable are protected and ultimately collected:

- Arrears are indicated on both tax billings (Interim tax bill mailed out in early February and Final tax bill mailed out in early June).
- Setting the penalty and interest rate at the maximum allowable under the *Municipal Act* (1.25% per month / 15% per year) – this rate is identified on all tax bills and reminder notices, so taxpayers are aware of the cost of falling into arrears.
- Reminder notices issued seven times per year (in March, May, July, August, October, November and December).
- An annual letter is sent in January to all properties three or more years in arrears, advising the taxpayer a lien will be registered should the arrears not be dealt with. Taxpayers are made aware that should a lien be registered, any interested parties registered on title, such as a mortgage company, will be notified of the arrears.
- For taxpayers who ignore the three or more years in arrears' letters, liens are registered on title and notices are sent to anyone with an interest on title, including mortgage holders. The approved user fee to cover the City's costs for the registration of delinquent accounts is also added to the tax roll account. Tax staff monitor all properties three or more years in arrears, registering liens in order of largest arrears.
- On average, the City runs two tax sales per year. This is the last step in the collection of property tax arrears. For the most part, arrears are settled before the tax sale, by either the property owner or their mortgage company. For properties that do go to tax sale, the arrears are paid by the proceeds of the successful bidder.

When analyzing arrears and arriving at an acceptable level of collection, the level of arrears compared to the assessed value of the property will be considered in order to minimize all risk of eventually collecting the arrears, should the City need to proceed to tax sale. For the most part, a property's assessed value far exceeds their property tax arrears.

Table 6 identifies the number of reminder notices mailed out, as well as, the number of properties with a balance owing as of December 31st.

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**Table 6
Five-Year Analysis of Reminder Notices Issued**

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020³ | 2019² |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| # of March Reminders | 21,489 | 20,960 | 18,956 | 19,342 | 18,995 |
| # of May Reminders | 24,986 | 24,361 | 22,599 | 29,614 | 21,610 |
| # of July Reminders | 24,213 | 23,542 | 22,438 | 26,707 | 21,111 |
| # of Aug Reminders | 17,841 | 16,453 | 15,345 | 16,062 | N/A |
| # of Oct Reminders | 28,999 | 26,243 | 25,499 | 25,518 | 22,978 |
| # of Nov Reminders | 20,190 | 18,224 | 17,255 | 17,363 | N/A |
| # of Dec Reminders | 16,247 | 14,170 | 13,138 | 13,617 | N/A |
| # of Properties billed ¹ | 186,476 | 185,057 | 183,685 | 180,917 | 178,841 |
| # of Properties with balance at year-end | 24,551 | 22,188 | 19,604 | 18,868 | 21,968 |
| % of Properties in Arrears | 13.17% | 11.99% | 10.67% | 10.43% | 12.28% |

of Properties billed¹ in the June final property tax billing for each respective taxation year.

² Prior to 2020, only four reminder notices were mailed out per year, in the month following the interim or final instalment due dates.

³ Increase in reminder notices in May and July 2020 due to taxpayers taking advantage of the waiving of penalty and interest (relief measure due to pandemic) and withholding payment until the waiving period ended.

As Table 6 illustrates, the number of reminder notices issued has continued to increase since 2021. Reminder notices are mailed to all taxpayers with a balance of \$50 or greater. The timing of when charges are added to the tax roll (i.e., water arrears, property standards), as well as the volume of tax roll accounts with charges added to the tax roll, may contribute to the number of notices being mailed out.

There is typically an increase in reminder notices mailed out in May and October, due to taxpayers forgetting the second instalment of their Interim or Final property tax bill. A newspaper ad is also published in the local paper to remind taxpayers of the upcoming instalment due date. Regardless of this collection effort, some taxpayers will continue to misplace or lose their tax bills, sell / purchase property and pay on their previous roll number in error, or simply ignore the reminder notices until they risk being registered with a tax arrears lien. The annual increase in reminder notices, however, may be a sign of taxpayers' inability to pay their full tax instalment by the due date and as such, agrees to the higher penalty and interest revenue seen in 2023.

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As shown in Table 6, by the end of 2023, approximately 13% of the total number of properties billed had not paid their property taxes in full, an increase from prior years.

Tax Registration

Table 7 identifies the number of properties issued a three or more years arrears' letter each year, compared to how many had a tax lien registered. The annual three or more years in arrears' letter (mailed out mid to late January each year), elicits several responses ranging from promises to pay, payment arrangements, payment of the minimum amount required to avoid a lien being registered (third year in arrears) and payment in full. Unfortunately, some taxpayers simply ignore the City's letter.

Taxation staff sort and monitor these arrears into different categories (i.e., properties with payment arrangements, properties that will pay in full, properties that can only settle the third year, properties that have not contacted the City, etc.). Staff then begin to register liens on those who have ignored collection efforts, starting with the properties with the largest arrears. Staff also monitors arrears of taxpayers who have failed on their payment arrangement and move them into the registration process. It has been the practice of Taxation staff to show compassion for taxpayers in financial difficulty and will work with the taxpayer to allow them some time, within reason, to sort out their financial affairs.

The tax registration and sale of properties is regulated under Part XI of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Once a property is eligible to be registered, an extensive title check is required to determine who is registered on title. Once the lien is registered, Taxation staff must send notices within 60 days to all parties registered on title. The full cost of this process is added to the tax roll account, as per the annual Council approved user fee by-law. In many cases, mortgage companies will act to protect their interest and work with the taxpayer on the arrears or use their Power of Sale legislation.

If the tax arrears are not addressed on receiving the Notice of Registration, then Final Notices must be sent after 280 days of registering a lien. A tax sale cannot take place before one year (365 days) has passed since the registration of the lien.

In 2020, there was a freeze in registrations under Ontario Regulation 73/20. All deadlines pertaining to the *Municipal Act* and Municipal Tax Sale rules were suspended from March to September 2020. Taxation staff resumed registering liens once the 180-day suspension period expired.

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**Table 7
Five-Year Analysis of Tax Registration /
Three or More years in Arrears' Letters Issued**

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Three or more years in Arrears' letters ¹ | 942 | 957 | 1,172 | 1,275 | 1,181 |
| Increase / (Decrease) over Prior Year | (15) | (215) | (103) | 94 | (22) |
| Properties Registered with Tax Lien | 369 | 360 | 415 | 210 | 452 |
| % in Arrears for Three or More years Registered with Tax Lien | 39.2% | 37.6% | 35.4% | 16.5% | 38.3% |

Three or more years in Arrears' letters¹ mailed out in January of each respective year. Properties in receipt of a letter exclude properties that recently were issued a supplementary / omitted tax bill (which may include billing for prior two years), properties with a tax lien already registered on title, properties on the arrears pre-authorized payment plan, properties with arrears less than \$250 and properties on an approved payment plan which will clear their third year arrears amount prior to the end of Q3 in the current year.

As reflected in Table 7, over the last five years, Taxation staff typically register approximately 350 to 450 liens per year. Due to the pandemic, the registration of 210 liens in 2020 was the City's lowest over the last five years. This was due to the freeze in registering liens under Ontario Regulation 73/20. The 942 letters mailed out in January, 2023 was the lowest over the five-year period, however, staff still registered 369 liens. The percentage of liens registered when compared to the number of three or more years arrears' letters that were issued, (39.2% in 2023) was the highest over the last five years.

Although the *Municipal Act* was amended in 2017 to allow the registration of liens for properties in two or more years' arrears, staff is not recommending doing so at this time as this would increase the number of properties that could potentially be registered by over three times. Based on existing resources, Taxation staff will continue to register at three years in arrears. As the City has priority lien status and ultimately can collect the property taxes levied, any proposed change to the status quo would need to balance the expected resulting reduction in total tax arrears with the added costs for additional staff resources required, potential loss of penalty and interest revenue and impacts to taxpayers in financial difficulty.

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Tax Sale of Properties

The tax sale of a property is the final step of the process and one with serious consequences. When a property goes to tax sale, several of the properties generally get rectified by the owners and pulled from the tax sale. Every effort possible is made to allow property owners to keep their properties by settling the arrears themselves. For many of the properties that go to tax sale, properties may also have large property standard charges and / or water arrears added to the tax roll, as well as, Federal and / or Provincial liens. The City must also deal with estate issues where no will exists. A further issue is where slivers of properties have been created and have been over-valued and where the only means to rectify the problem is through the tax sale process.

Of the properties that end up going through to the final bidding process of a tax sale, there are three potential results:

1. They sell for at least the minimum bid (taxes owing including all charges and fees added to the tax roll) and the City recovers all that is owed. Excess funds are paid into Court.
2. They do not sell (no acceptable bids are received) and the property is not vested to the City due to liability concerns. These properties are then dealt with by the City's process for potentially contaminated properties or re-evaluated by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to a reasonable value for unbuildable land and left in the current owner's name.
3. They do not sell (no acceptable bids are received) and the property is vested to the City. City Real Estate staff would then attempt to sell the properties vested, at which time, a report goes to Council to write-off any difference between what it sold for and the property taxes owing.

Table 8 confirms that most property tax arrears are eventually settled, with relatively very few properties required to proceed to tax sale. As shown below, no tax sales were held in 2020 or 2021 due to the pandemic. Tax sales resumed in the Fall of 2022.

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**Table 8
Five-Year Analysis of Tax Sales**

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Letters sent advising of impending tax sale | 37 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Properties advertised for tax sale | 17 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| % to Tax Sale | 45.9% | 42.1% | N/A | N/A | 50.0% |
| Rectified by Taxpayer | 13 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| %Rectified | 76.4% | 62.5% | N/A | N/A | 80.0% |
| Sold at Tax Sale | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| % Sold at Tax Sale | 11.8% | 25% | N/A | N/A | 20.0% |
| No Bids Received | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % with No Bids | 11.8% | 12.5% | N/A | N/A | 0.0% |
| Sold at a later date by Real Estate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

As shown in Table 8, most arrears are rectified by the taxpayer even after the property is advertised for tax sale. The figures for 2023 are the first figures since 2020 whereby the City conducted two tax sales, in the Spring and another in the Fall. Figures for 2022 are only based on one tax sale in the Fall, whereas there were no tax sales in 2020 or 2021 due to the pandemic. The number of properties that eventually go to tax sale ranges from just three to four properties per year over the three years where the City has held tax sales. Considering the total number of properties levied property taxes (ranging from approximately 179 k in 2019 to 186 k in 2023), this represents only 0.002% of all properties.

For the two tax sales conducted in 2023, the City received successful bids on two of the four properties. Staff will evaluate options on how to proceed with the two properties that did not receive any successful bids, which includes vesting to the City for possible sale by Real Estate staff to recover all or most of the arrears, attempt a second tax sale and / or possible write-off.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None

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INFORMATION REPORT

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| TO: | Chair and Members Audit, Finance & Administration Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | September 19, 2024 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Annual Assessment Appeals as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24021) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Maria Di Santo (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5254 David Janaszek (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4546 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Shelley Hesmer, Acting Director Financial Services and Taxation and Corporate Controller Corporate Services Department |
| SIGNATURE: | |

COUNCIL DIRECTION

N/A

INFORMATION

Introduction

Report FCS24021 is intended to keep Council apprised of the trends in assessment growth and offsetting losses due to assessment appeals over the last five years. As shown in Report FCS24021, both assessment growth and appeals can significantly vary year over year. There are factors affecting these results in which the City has limited control. These factors include the timing of when Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) captures and reflects growth on the assessment roll, the number of assessment appeals initiated by taxpayers, the outcome of these appeals as well as the timing of when the appeal is ultimately settled and reflected on the tax roll. Staff make every effort to minimize these factors by following up with MPAC to ensure large developments are captured on the roll as soon as possible and actively participating in appeals where there is potential for significant municipal property tax losses.

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**SUBJECT: Annual Assessment Appeals as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24021)
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The 2023 taxation year saw a favourable net benefit in municipal property tax revenue of \$11.4 M. This net benefit far exceeds the results seen over the last five years. Contributing to this favourable outcome includes:

- Supplementary / omitted revenues of \$15.5 M in 2023, being the highest over the last five years;
- Municipal property tax losses of \$4.1 M in 2023 due to appeals and assessment changes, being the lowest over the last five years.

It should be noted that staff cannot measure the extent that the continued postponement of the reassessment may have on these results. Although it cannot be quantified, it is safe to assume that it does have an impact, both favourably and unfavourably.

With respect to the City's active participation in appeals, 2023 results show continued mitigation of potential municipal property tax losses. In 2023, the City participated in 65 *Assessment Act* and *Municipal Act* appeals, of which, 39 appeals were closed in 2023, while 26 remain open.

The estimated potential municipal property tax loss of the 39 appeals that were closed in 2023 totalled \$13 M. The results from these closed appeals are as follows:

- 11 appeals were settled totalling a municipal property tax loss of \$1,175,920;
- Three appeals were settled totalling a municipal property tax gain of \$533,050;
- 25 appeals were withdrawn or dismissed resulting in no municipal property tax loss;
- Total external costs incurred (in current and prior years) to participate in these 39 closed appeals totalled \$243,630;
- Net of the external costs, \$12.1 M (or 93%) of the total estimated potential municipal property tax loss was mitigated.

It is evident from the City's involvement in these appeals and the positive outcome of the closed appeals, that the actual municipal property tax revenue losses would have been significantly higher, had the City not initiated its program to actively participate in appeals.

Assessment Base Growth

Assessment growth is the change in the assessment base due to the addition of new developments, as well as changes in the assessment of existing properties.

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Table 1 shows the positive gains over the last five years due to supplementary / omitted property tax revenues. Under the *Assessment Act* and *Municipal Act*, assessments and property taxes can be retroactively billed after the final roll is returned for the current year (referred to as supplementary taxes) and the prior two years (referred to as omitted taxes).

**Table 1
Five-Year Analysis of Supplementary / Omitted Municipal Property Tax Revenues**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 | 12/31/2019 |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Supplementary / Omitted Revenues | \$15,475,500 | \$14,059,800 | \$10,831,700 | \$13,093,600 | \$10,525,700 |
| Loss due to Appeals* | -\$4,076,900 | -\$6,503,100 | -\$15,831,800 | -\$8,460,200 | -\$5,462,200 |
| Net – Supplementary Revenues less Appeals | \$11,398,600 | \$7,556,700 | -\$5,000,100 | \$4,633,400 | \$5,063,500 |

* Municipal property tax revenue losses resulting from Assessment Review Board (ARB) appeals, MPAC Request for Reconsideration (RfR), Post Roll Amended Notices (PRAN) and *Municipal Act* tax applications (under section 357/358 of the *Municipal Act*).

The five-year average for supplementary / omitted municipal property tax revenue is approximately \$12.8 M. This revenue is contingent on the volume of new development, the type of development, the length of construction and ultimately MPAC's ability to timely reflect the new development on the assessment roll. As shown above, the 2023 supplementary / omitted revenues of \$15.5 M were the highest over the last five years. The last time this revenue surpassed \$15 M was in 2015.

In 2023, the Province announced a further postponement of the province-wide reassessment while it conducts a review of the accuracy and fairness of the property tax and assessment system. As a result, properties will continue to be assessed at a January 1, 2016 valuation date for the 2024 tax year. This on-going postponement of the province-wide general reassessment may have had some positive impact, allowing MPAC staff more time to concentrate on growth. The City typically experiences a reduction in supplementary / omitted revenue the year prior to the reassessment, when MPAC resources are focussed on reassessing properties (for example, the 2016 supplementary / omitted revenues was only \$7.9 M).

In addition to the higher supplementary / omitted revenues, further benefiting the 2023 results were lower municipal property tax losses. The combination of the two factors resulted in the most favourable overall net benefit experienced over the last five years, being an overall net gain of \$11.4 M. This net gain reported in 2023 is significantly higher than in prior years.

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Assessment Base Erosion

Assessment base erosion is the depletion of the assessment base due to assessment appeals, requests for reconsideration and *Municipal Act* tax applications.

The figures reflected in Table 2 are municipal property tax revenue losses resulting from the following processes: Assessment Review Board (ARB) appeals, MPAC Request for Reconsideration (RfR), Post Roll Amended Notices (PRAN) and *Municipal Act* tax applications (under section 357/358 of the *Municipal Act*).

**Table 2
Five-Year Analysis of Appeals / Tax Reduction by Property Type**

| | 12/31/2023 | 12/31/2022 | 12/31/2021 | 12/31/2020 | 12/31/2019 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Municipal Tax Loss | -\$4,076,900 ² | -\$6,503,100 | -\$15,831,800 | -\$8,460,200 ¹ | -\$5,462,200 |
| Taxes Lost by Property Type | | | | | |
| Commercial | -\$1,183,900 29.0% | -\$4,180,700 64.3% | -\$9,893,400 62.5% | -\$2,593,800 30.7% | -\$3,384,600 62.0% |
| Taxable to Exempt | -\$124,800 3.1% | -\$84,000 1.3% | -\$321,400 2.0% | -\$586,800 6.9% | -\$164,000 3.0% |
| Farm / Managed Forest | -\$791,400 19.4% | -\$212,500 3.3% | -\$490,500 3.1% | -\$526,600 6.2% | -\$247,400 4.5% |
| Industrial | +\$84,700 -2.1% | -\$1,245,900 19.1% | -\$3,605,000 22.8% | -\$1,898,900 22.4% | -\$560,400 10.3% |
| Residential | -\$2,061,500 ² 50.6% | -\$780,000 12.0% | -\$1,521,500 9.6% | -\$2,854,100 ¹ 33.7% | -\$1,105,800 20.2% |

¹ inclusive of \$1.1 M loss due to retirement of roll number for large residential development (this amount was offset through Supplementary / Omitted tax revenue).

² inclusive of \$1.5 M loss due to retirement of roll numbers for three large residential development (this amount was offset through Supplementary / Omitted tax revenue).

Appeals on a property's value is a constant risk to the City's assessment base. As such, through the budget process, the City recognizes that assessments will be challenged and lost. The expected loss of property tax revenue due to the reduction of assessment values is budgeted annually (2023 budget = \$7.5 M), with additional allowances set aside for more significant, multi-year appeals. The five-year average municipal property tax revenue loss due to the combined impacts of Assessment Review Board (ARB) appeals, MPAC Request for Reconsideration (RfR), Post Roll Amended Notices (PRAN) and *Municipal Act* tax applications (under section 357/358 of the *Municipal Act*) equates to approximately \$8.1 M, or 0.8% of the 2023 Municipal tax levy.

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This five-year average municipal property tax revenue loss considers the higher-than-normal amount of appeals processed in 2021, the losses due to the retirement of rolls for large residential developments that are subsequently fully offset by supplementary / omitted tax revenues and the atypical increase in municipal property taxes for several appeals processed in 2023.

As can be seen from Table 2, the actual loss in municipal property tax dollars can vary widely from year to year and by property class. As such, it is difficult to predict annual losses, as the loss would depend on when the appeal / request for reconsideration is ultimately resolved. As appeals often carry over and apply to tax years which follow the year which the appeal was filed, an increase in the municipal property tax revenue loss is typically experienced in the year in which significant multi-year appeals are settled.

Typically, the commercial and industrial property classes experience the greatest amount of municipal property tax losses, as they have high assessed values, are subject to higher property tax rates and more commonly file appeals. As such, these are the properties staff are focussing on when determining which appeals to actively participate in. As shown in Table 2, the municipal property tax loss experienced in the Commercial property class in 2023 was the lowest over the last five years, while the Industrial property class actually saw a tax increase in 2023.

The most significant municipal property tax losses processed in 2023 include:

- 130-150 King Street East (for taxation years 2017-2023) – City actively participated in the appeal which was ultimately settled for a total municipal property tax decrease of \$706,160, mitigating over 60% of the original reduction being sought by the appellant.
- 130 Mud Street East (for taxation years 2017-2022) – City actively participated in the appeal which was settled in 2022 and reported on last year's staff report (mitigated almost 64% of the original reduction being sought by the appellant). The appeal was not processed until early 2023 for a total municipal property tax loss of \$411,930.
- 0 Industrial Drive (for taxation years 2021-2023) – City actively participated in the 2021 and 2022 appeals which was settled in 2022 and reported on last year's staff report (mitigated 30% of the original reduction being sought by the appellant). The 2021-2022 appeal and subsequent request for reconsideration for 2023 was not processed until 2023, with a total municipal property tax loss of \$393,940.
- 319 Sherman Avenue North (for taxation years 2021-2022) – combination of ARB appeal, request for reconsideration and *Municipal Act* application for a total municipal property tax loss of \$146,220 (or 41%).
- 1471 Upper James Street (for taxation years 2018-2023) – ARB appeal settlement resulting in a total municipal property tax loss of \$120,470 (or 16%).
- 751-777 Upper James Street (for taxation years 2017-2023) – ARB appeal settlement resulting in a total municipal property tax loss of \$112,560 (or 3%).

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- 640 Mohawk Road (for taxation years 2017-2023) – City actively participated in the appeal which was ultimately settled for a total municipal property tax decrease of \$94,280, mitigating 87% of the original reduction being sought by the appellant.
- 71-91 Wentworth Street South (for taxation years 2019-2023) – ARB appeal settlement resulting in a total municipal property tax loss of \$88,530 (or 14%).
- 225 Pritchard Road (for taxation years 2020-2023) – ARB minutes of settlement resulting in a total municipal property tax loss of \$88,510 (or 13%).

Offsetting the municipal property tax losses were several, uncommon increases in municipal property taxes that were processed in 2023, which include:

- Multiple Rolls (for taxation years 2022-2023) – MPAC issued Post Roll Amended Notices (PRAN) for properties that ceased to be farmed, causing a change to the property classification from farm to industrial vacant land based on the zoning, which resulted in a total net municipal property tax increase of \$1.5 M.
- 14 Martindale Crescent (for taxation years 2017-2023) – City actively participated in the appeal which was ultimately settled for a total municipal property tax increase of \$398,800 (or 9%).
- 610 South Service Road (for taxation years 2013-2023) – ARB decision resulted in a total net municipal property tax increase of \$358,900 (or 15%).
- 205 Coreslab (for taxation years 2022-2023) – City actively participated in the appeal which was ultimately settled for a total municipal property tax increase of \$67,130 (or 5%).
- 0 Concession 4 West (for taxation year 2023) – City initiated this appeal (as part of the broader appeal on gravel pits) which was ultimately settled for a total municipal property tax increase of \$67,120 (or 783%).

Municipal Act Appeals (Sections 357 and 358)

In 2023, staff held five virtual meetings, resulting in the processing of 195 tax applications under Sections 357/358 of the *Municipal Act*. These applications resulted in a total loss of \$676,800, of which \$529,400 was the municipal portion. This \$529,400 reduction in municipal taxes is included in the 2023 appeal loss of \$4.1 M in Table 2 of Report FCS24021. It is important to note that some of the assessment reductions under Sections 357/358 of the *Municipal Act* may, in turn, lead to assessment growth. Where a property's assessment is reduced due to a fire or demolition, assessment subsequently may increase due to a renovation or new development ultimately leading to an increase in property taxes. Some of these losses also pertain to City acquired properties changing from taxable to exempt.

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Apportionments (Section 356)

Properties subject to a land severance may require the apportionment of land taxes levied for a particular year(s) from the larger parcel to the newly created parcels of land. Section 356 of the *Municipal Act, (2001)* permits such an apportionment. When original blocks of land are severed into newly created lots, there is no overall financial impact or property tax loss to the City, as taxes owing against the original parcel of land are transferred to the new parcels. MPAC produces severance information forms for the assessment originally levied on the original parcels of land and identifies the split of assessment amongst the newly created lots.

In 2023, staff held two virtual meetings for the approval of tax apportionments, resulting in the processing of 13 tax apportionments into 98 newly created rolls (inclusive of the originating roll). Although there is no financial impact to the City following this process, property taxes often increase for the newly created parcels resulting from an increase in the property's assessment due to new construction or development that has occurred. Portions of properties that become public roadways are processed under the apportionment process as Land not Assessed. These have a minimum dollar impact. Apportionments processed as Land not Assessed in 2023 resulted in a minimal \$18,300 municipal property tax loss.

Current State of Assessment Appeals at the City

Assessment appeals are not unique to the City of Hamilton. The loss of commercial and industrial assessments due to appeals is province wide. As MPAC is responsible for the property assessment, municipal property tax revenues hinge on how well their assessment holds up when challenged by taxpayers and highly trained assessment consultants. It is a common practice for assessment consultants to automatically file appeals on business properties, regardless of the assessment returned by MPAC. As the assessment of business properties is complex, with multiple variables, assessment consultants simply need to prove the inaccuracy of one of these variables which in most cases, may ultimately warrant some type of reduction in the assessed value.

Table 3 shows the number of properties with outstanding ARB appeals by CVA (Current Value Assessment) Cycle:

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**Table 3
Outstanding appeals by Assessment Value and Number**

| | 2023- 2017 Assessment Cycle (2016 CVA) | 2016 – 2013 Assessment Cycle (2012 CVA) | 2012 – 2009 Assessment Cycle (2008 CVA) | 2008 – 2006 Assessment Cycle (2005 CVA) |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| CVA under Appeal | 2,756,098,078 | 369,000 | 0 | 0 |
| # of properties by taxation year ¹ | 78 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

¹ a property will be identified multiple times if the appeal extends multiple taxation years

Table 3 highlights the number of current outstanding appeals for properties within the City of Hamilton, a significant reduction from what was reported in prior years. The assessment values in Table 3 are the cumulative property values under appeal. Since the same property can be appealed every year, it also includes the assessed value of the same property for every year an appeal is filed (i.e., four times in the four-year assessment cycle).

Due to the Province postponing the reassessment, current property values are still based on a valuation date of January 1, 2016. This has facilitated settled appeals, where the settled (mainly lower) value is carried forward to future years and, therefore, for the most part, subsequent appeals are not filed. However, due to the growing disparity between the current year and the valuation year, this has led to additional appeals in some cases. Once the next reassessment occurs, it is expected that most large non-residential properties will file an appeal, regardless of the outcome of the appeal on the 2016 value.

City's Active Participation in Appeals

As approved by Council, the City is more actively participating in appeals. The results, to date, have shown that this program has been very successful in mitigating municipal property tax losses. Appendix "A" to Report FCS24021, Annual Assessment Appeals as of December 31, 2023, provides for a detailed listing of the appeals the City participated in during 2023, of which a summary of the 2023 results is provided in Table 4.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Annual Assessment Appeals as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24021)
(City Wide) – Page 9 of 9**

**Table 4
Results of 2023 Active Participation in Appeals**

| | Closed Appeals | Open Appeals |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| # of appeals | 39 | 26 |
| Estimated Total Potential Municipal Tax Loss | \$13,007,700 | \$16,243,000 |
| Actual Total Municipal Tax Loss | \$642,870 | TBD |
| External costs | \$243,630 | TBD |
| \$ Loss Mitigated (net of external costs) | \$12,121,200 | TBD |
| % Loss Mitigated (net of external costs) | 93% | TBD |

As shown above, in 2023, the City's active participation in assessment appeals resulted in the mitigation of \$12.1 M (or 93%) of the original municipal property tax reduction being sought by appellants.

With respect to the 39 closed appeals, 25 were withdrawn / dismissed resulting in no municipal property tax loss. Of the remaining 14 closed appeals that were settled, 11 were settled at a total municipal property tax loss of \$1,175,920, while three were settled at a municipal property tax gain totalling \$533,050. Settling appeals at a gain is extremely rare. The values ultimately settled on, resulting in either a municipal property tax loss or gain, ensure the property was more accurately and equitably assessed.

With respect to the 26 open appeals, 12 pertain to gravel pits / quarries in which staff is of the opinion that the properties are incorrectly assessed and as such have initiated appeals seeking an increase.

The City incurred \$262,000 on external costs in 2023 to actively participate in appeals. Approximately 87% of these external costs were for consultants / expert witnesses who have the required knowledge and tools to provide an opinion in value. Minimal 2023 external costs were incurred for Outside Legal Counsel, as Legal staffing resources were approved in the 2023 budget. Of the \$262,000 external costs incurred in 2023, approximately \$109,000 was incurred for the appeals that were closed in 2023, while the remaining was incurred for appeals that are still open.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report FCS24021 – 2023 Assessment & Municipal Act Appeals
Property Listing

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

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2023 Assessment & Municipal Act Appeals Property Listing

CLOSED APPEALS - 2023

| Property Address | Assessment Act | Property Type | Appeal Status | Taxation Years Under Appeal | Total Estimated Potential Municipal Tax Loss ² | Actual Total Municipal Tax Loss | External Costs | Total Municipal Tax Loss Mitigated (net of external costs) | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------|
| | | | | | | | | \$ | % |
| 60 Caledon Ave | Assessment Act | Commercial (vacant land) | Withdrawn | 2020-2022 | withdrawn before SOI | \$0 | \$0 | | |
| 54 Hess St | Assessment Act | Commercial/Residential | Settled | 2021-2023 | \$11,200 | \$1,460 | \$0 | \$9,740 | 87.0% |
| 130-150 King St E | Assessment Act | Commercial/Multi-Res | Settled | 2017-2023 | \$1,863,500 | \$706,160 | \$14,870 | \$1,142,470 | 61.3% |
| 1 Redfern Ave | Assessment Act | Residential (Condo Dev.) | Withdrawn | 2021 | withdrawn before SOI | \$0 | \$0 | | |
| 210 Centennial Pky N | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2017-2022 | \$586,400 | \$0 | \$11,620 | \$574,780 | 98.0% |
| 675 Upper James St | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2017-2023 | \$512,300 | \$58,070 | \$16,050 | \$438,180 | 85.5% |
| 100 Concession 5 E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2022 | withdrawn before SOI | \$0 | \$0 | | |
| 65 Mall Rd | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2022 | \$59,400 | \$0 | \$0 | \$59,400 | 100.0% |
| 54 Wilson St W | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2022 | \$51,800 | \$0 | \$0 | \$51,800 | 100.0% |
| 120 Portia Dr | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2022-2023 | \$40,200 | \$0 | \$0 | \$40,200 | 100.0% |
| 131-135 King St E | Assessment Act | Residential (Retirement Home) | Withdrawn | 2022-2023 | \$119,700 | \$0 | \$0 | \$119,700 | 100.0% |
| 640 Mohawk Rd W | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2017-2023 | \$812,000 | \$94,280 | \$11,230 | \$706,490 | 87.0% |
| 505 Woodward Ave | Assessment Act | Commercial/Industrial | Settled | 2017-2023 | \$587,200 | \$13,930 | \$10,260 | \$563,010 | 95.9% |
| 14 Martindale Cres | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2017-2023 | \$147,800 | -\$398,800 | \$36,160 | \$510,440 | 345.4% |
| 158-166 Upper Mount Albion Rd | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$553,200 | \$0 | \$3,240 | \$549,960 | 99.4% |
| 1 King St W | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$599,700 | \$0 | \$5,730 | \$593,970 | 99.0% |
| 50 Hatt ST | Assessment Act | Residential (Retirement home) | Withdrawn | 2022-2023 | withdrawn before SOI | \$0 | \$3,810 | -\$3,810 | |
| 1227-1271 Barton St E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$213,500 | \$0 | \$13,770 | \$199,730 | 93.6% |
| 116 King St W | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$443,000 | \$0 | \$11,220 | \$431,780 | 97.5% |
| 40 Bay St S | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$597,600 | \$0 | \$5,800 | \$591,800 | 99.0% |
| 50 Aeropark Blvd | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2022-2023 | \$234,200 | \$8,340 | \$2,620 | \$223,240 | 95.3% |
| 28 Wetenhall Crt | Assessment Act | Industrial (vacant land) | Withdrawn | 2023 | withdrawn before SOI | \$0 | \$0 | | |
| 80-90 Dundas St E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2020-2023 | \$490,800 | \$0 | \$8,460 | \$482,340 | 98.3% |
| 52-76 Dundas St E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2020-2023 | \$705,300 | \$162,860 | \$5,400 | \$537,040 | 76.1% |
| 35-73 Wilson St W | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2022-2023 | \$28,500 | \$5,410 | \$0 | \$23,090 | 81.0% |
| 75 Centennial Pky N | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$2,849,100 | \$0 | \$6,710 | \$2,842,390 | 99.8% |
| 360 James St N | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2022-2023 | \$159,700 | \$0 | \$4,580 | \$155,120 | 97.1% |
| 1020 Osprey Dr | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2021-2023 | \$472,600 | \$0 | \$28,860 | \$443,740 | 93.9% |
| 1770-1810 Stone Church Rd E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2023 | \$50,900 | \$0 | \$7,250 | \$43,650 | 85.8% |
| 220 Cranbook | Assessment Act | Residential | Dismissed | 2020-2023 | \$147,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$147,000 | 100.0% |
| 1187 Upper James St | Assessment Act | Commercial | Settled | 2021-2023 | \$287,200 | \$59,050 | \$10,140 | \$218,010 | 75.9% |
| 0 Concession W | Assessment Act | Industrial | Settled | 2023 | \$0 | -\$67,120 | \$0 | \$67,120 | |
| 20-50 Dundurn St S | Assessment Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2023 | \$39,900 | \$0 | \$0 | \$39,900 | 100.0% |
| 205 Coreslab Dr | Assessment Act | Commercial/Industrial | Settled | 2022-2023 | \$48,900 | -\$67,130 | \$3,560 | \$112,470 | 230.0% |
| 925 Main St W | Assessment Act | Commercial (vacant land) | Settled | 2023 | \$96,700 | \$44,360 | \$22,290 | \$30,050 | 31.1% |
| 192 Hughson St N | Municipal Act | Multi-Residential | Withdrawn | 2021 | \$30,500 | \$0 | \$0 | \$30,500 | 100.0% |
| 83-85 Emerald St | Municipal Act | Residential | Withdrawn | 2021 | \$7,100 | \$0 | \$0 | \$7,100 | 100.0% |
| 565 Sanatorium Rd | Municipal Act | Commercial | Withdrawn | 2019 | \$137,400 | \$0 | \$0 | \$137,400 | 100.0% |
| 0 Dundas St E | Municipal Act | Commercial | Settled | 2021 | \$23,400 | \$22,000 | \$0 | \$1,400 | 6.0% |
| Total - 2023 Closed | | | | | \$13,007,700 | \$642,870 | \$243,630 | \$12,121,200 | 93.2% |

OPEN APPEALS - 2023

| Property Address | | Property Type | Appeal Status | Taxation Years Under Appeal | Total Estimated Potential Municipal Tax Loss ² | Actual Total Municipal Tax Loss | External Costs | Total Municipal Tax Loss Mitigated (net of external costs) | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------|--|------------|
| | | | | | | | | \$ | % |
| 999 Upper Wentworth St | Assessment Act | Commercial | Open | 2020-2023 | \$11,951,100 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 2126 Rymal Rd E ¹ | Assessment Act | Residential (Retirement home) | Open | 2021-2023 | \$294,000 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 150 Market St ¹ | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2022-2023 | \$43,700 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 155 Market St ¹ | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2022-2023 | \$59,900 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 160 Market St ¹ | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2022-2023 | \$83,700 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 110 Aeropark Blvd | Assessment Act | Commercial | Open | 2022-2023 | \$2,681,800 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 20 George St | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2023 | \$303,900 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 49 Walnut St S | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2023 | \$89,300 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 804 Beach Blvd/500 Eastport Blvd | Assessment Act | Commercial | Open | 2020-2023 | \$39,400 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 1670 Garth St | Assessment Act | Multi-Residential | Open | 2022-2023 | \$187,000 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 2110 - 2140 Rymal Rd E | Assessment Act | Commercial | Open | 2023 | \$103,800 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 380-400 McNeilly Rd | Assessment Act | Commercial/Industrial | Open | 2022-2023 | \$280,700 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 0 Aeropark Blvd | Assessment Act | Industrial (vacant land) | Open | 2023 | \$24,800 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 80 Brockley Dr | Assessment Act | Industrial | Open | 2023 | \$99,900 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 451 Tenth Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 600 Highway 5 W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 649 Highway 5 W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 0 Brock Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 0 Concession 4 W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 834 Brock Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 1051 Green Mountain Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 0 Concession 4 W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 701 Concession 4 W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 658 Fiddler's Green Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 582 Brock Rd ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| 565-580 Moxley Rd W ¹ | Assessment Act | Gravel Pit / Quarry | Open | 2023 | \$0 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| Total - 2023 Open | | | | | \$16,243,000 | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |

¹ The City is seeking an increase to the value returned by MPAC

² Annual impact calculated based on original Statement of Issues (SOI) received, multiplied by number of years under appeal



Hamilton

**GOVERNANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE
REPORT 24-001**

Friday, September 13, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Room 264, 2nd Floor

Hamilton City Hall

Present: Councillors T. Hwang (Chair), B. Clark J.P. Danko, C. Kroetsch,
N. Nann (virtually) and M. Wilson

**THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE SUBMITS REPORT 24-001 AND
RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:**

1. Council Access to Records (FCS23078) (City Wide) (Item 9.1)

That Report FCS23078, respecting Council Access to Records, be received.

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda:

5. COMMUNICATION ITEMS

5.2 Medora Uppal, YWCA Hamilton, respecting Gender-affirmation Training for Council Members

5.3 Joey Coleman, respecting Records Retention By-Law

CHANGES TO THE ORDER OF ITEMS

The consideration of Item 5.1, Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct, is to be considered following the Delegation from Jelena Vermillion, once approved.

The September 13, 2024 Agenda of the Governance Review Sub-Committee was approved, as amended.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Item 4)

(i) November 17, 2023 (Item 4.1)

The Minutes of the November 17, 2023 meeting of the Governance Review Sub-Committee were approved, as presented.

(d) COMMUNICATION ITEMS (Item 5)

(i) Medora Uppal, YWCA Hamilton, respecting Gender-Affirmation Training for Council Members (Added Item 5.2)

The correspondence from Medora Uppal, YWCA Hamilton, respecting Gender-Affirmation Training for Council Members, was received.

(ii) Joey Coleman, respecting Records Retention By-Law (Added Item 5.3)

The correspondence from Joey Coleman, respecting Records Retention By-Law, was REFERRED to staff for the preparation of a report respecting the retention of audio-visual recordings of meetings and options for providing the most reasonable and best access to these recordings, at the next Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting.

(e) DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 6)

(i) Jelena Vermillion, Sex Workers' Action Program of Hamilton, respecting Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct (for today's meeting) (Item 6.1)

The Delegation Request from Jelena Vermillion, Sex Workers' Action Program of Hamilton, respecting Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct, was approved, for today's meeting.

(f) DELEGATIONS (Item 7)

(i) Jelena Vermillion, Sex Workers' Action Program of Hamilton, respecting Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct (for today's meeting) (Added Item 7.1)

(1) Jelena Vermillion, Sex Workers' Action Program of Hamilton, addressed Committee respecting Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct.

The Delegation from Jelena Vermillion, Sex Workers' Action Program of Hamilton, respecting Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct, was received.

- (2) Clerks staff was directed to report back to the Governance Review Sub-Committee, with advice from Legal staff and in consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, on the role of the presiding officer in regulating the content of a delegate's speech, including written submissions, with respect to identifying other individuals by name or making false or defamatory statements, with respect to:
- (a) whether or not the City is liable when a member of the public names individuals within their delegation or written submission;
 - (b) when the City becomes liable for comments made by a member of the public within their delegation or written submissions;
 - (c) when the City becomes liable for impeding a member of the public's right to freedom of expression within their delegation or written submissions; and
 - (d) when a member of the public's freedom of expression becomes an incitement of hatred and/or violence to an individual or group of individuals within their delegation or written submissions.

(g) COMMUNICATION ITEMS (Item 5) - CONTINUED

(i) Amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct

For disposition of this matter, refer to Item (h)(iii).

(h) MOTIONS (Item 11)

(i) Revisions to Report Templates (Item 11.1)

WHEREAS Hamilton City Council approved the following three (3) Council Priorities along with their corresponding nine (9) Outcomes and Measures of Success for the 2022-2026 Term of Council on July 14, 2023:

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC & ECOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ***Reduce the burden on residential tax payers***
 - Increase new Commercial and Industrial construction by 1.4 million square feet and \$500 million in construction value per year with an ecological and economic lens

- Review and adjust our planning and economic development processes to increase the tax productivity of land within the Municipality with the specific outcome to reduce the tax burden on residential tax payers
- Create ecosystems and supports that will build a breeding ground to leverage and facilitate the growth of businesses, from start-ups to large industry, in key sectors identified in the 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan, including Advanced Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Food Processing, Creative Industries, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (FIRE), Goods Movement, ICT & Digital Media, Life Sciences and Tourism Industry)
- **Climate Change/Decarbonization Progress**
 - Accelerate the City's current Climate Change Action Plan goal of a 50% reduction in total Corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 2005 Baseline by 2030, to achieve a 55% reduction by the end of 2026
 - Increase urban tree canopy coverage by 2% by the end of 2026, by targeting 20,000 tree plantings per year, to move toward the goal of achieving the City's Urban Forest Strategy target of 40% urban tree canopy coverage by 2050, prioritizing planting in neighborhoods with the greatest need
- Tree planting priority analysis, based on Neighbourhood Tree Equity Scores, to be completed by mid-2024
- **Protection of Green Spaces & Water**
 - Increase in municipally and publicly owned natural areas, parks & public spaces (hectares)
 - Inventory to be completed by mid-2024; inventory will determine 2026 target
 - Accelerate the proposed Watershed Action Plan for Council approval in 2024, followed by implementation, in order to support the delisting of Hamilton Harbour as an International Joint Commission Area of Concern

SAFE & THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS

- **Increase in Housing Units for All & Reduce Homelessness**
 - Facilitate the approval of 20,000 new housing units by the end of 2026, with one third being available as rental units, and including at least 10% affordable and/or permanently supportive housing units
 - Preserve and maintain affordable rental stock in the private market, in addition to the 13,124 units in the non-profit sector and/or community housing
 - Metric related to private market to be developed with the Canadian Housing Evidence Collaborative by Q4 2023

- Reduce the number of individuals who are actively homeless by 30% and facilitate increased capacity within the shelter system by the end of 2026
- **Improved Mobility, Accessibility & Road Safety**
 - Achieve Vision Zero annually
 - More than double the pace of construction of new and upgraded active transportation facilities (separated bikeways, connected bikes lanes and paved multi-use pathways) from approximately 15 km per year to 40 km per year
 - Increase transit ridership to pre-pandemic numbers by end of 2026, while improving accessibility for all

WORKING OF CITY HALL & TRANSPARENCY IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

- **New Budget Process Implemented**
 - Develop a plan to transition to a revised budget process, beginning in the 2025 budget year, that:
 - Emphasises long-term financial planning through asset management principles
 - Considers equity and carbon budgeting principles
 - Is accessible, prioritizes public engagement and promotes transparency
 - Shifts timing of budget approval from early Q2 to mid Q1 annually
 - Integrates current operating, capital and rate budgets into 2 annual budgets (Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rate Supported budget and a Tax Supported budget)
- **Improved Public Engagement**
(metrics TBD as part of Public Engagement Policy & Framework report Dec 2023)
 - Consistency in corporate-wide application of enterprise public engagement policies and practices
 - Improved access and reduced barriers to participation for public engagement activities
- **Efficient Customer Service & Communication**
 - Establish an enterprise customer service strategy by Q1 2026 that would lead to the measurement and tracking of 100% of customer interactions and implementation of enterprise customer service standards, shifting the organization culture to be more responsive and creative
 - Implement customer centered design for all City initiatives through the implementation of the City's Digital Strategy
- **Employer of Choice**
 - Corporate wide voluntary turnover rate (does not include involuntary or retirements) maintained at 7% or less, in line with industry standards

- Improve decline job offer rate
 - Currently not tracked; baseline to be set in 2024
- Improve the Employee Engagement Index in the 2024 Our People Survey (data: 2021 69.1%; 2017 69.2%)

WHEREAS, City of Hamilton Committees make their views and recommendations known to Council and the public by way of reports; and

WHEREAS, to enable the public to hold Council to account, these reports should detail how the recommendations support or detract from Council Priorities, along with references to previous reports that have informed analysis and debate on the subject and the public consultation undertaken.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Staff were directed to revise the Report templates, as follows:

- to identify the relationship to the subject matter with Council's Priorities;
- along with a reference to a report history on the topic under discussion; and
- a summary of any public consultation to date under the 'RELEVANT CONSULTATION' section, including the following checklist:

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

(ii) **Community Engagement on Council Term Limits (Item 11.2)**

Councillor M. Wilson introduced the following motion, which was later WITHDRAWN:

WHEREAS, the *Municipal Elections Act* details who can be a candidate for municipal office in any municipality throughout Ontario;

WHEREAS, there is no limit to the number of consecutive times a Hamilton City Councillor or Mayor can be elected;

WHEREAS, Hamilton City Council has identified responsiveness and transparency in local government as a priority, including the expansion of demographic representation and the reduction of barriers to participation;

WHEREAS, overall voter turnout rate for municipal elections in Hamilton has not exceeded 41% in the last six municipal elections, with a turnout of

38% in 2003, 37% in 2006, 40.5% in 2010, 33.5% in 2014, 39% in 2018, and 35.4% in 2022;

WHEREAS, the advantage of incumbency at the municipal level of government is reflected in the fact that the following number of incumbents have been returned to Hamilton City Council in the past 21 years: 84.6% in 2003, 83.3% in 2006, 85.7% in 2010, 100% in 2014, 91.7% in 2018, and 66.7% in 2022. Only 10 challengers have been successful at unseating incumbents in 96 races since 2003;

WHEREAS, some Indigenous councils employ term limits across Ontario; and

WHEREAS, there would be significant value in invigorating local democracy and offering all Hamilton residents the opportunity to consider term limits as part of an overall strategy to promote electoral competition, the emergence of candidates and voter participation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That Hamilton City Council commit to an open and transparent process that would enable and encourage residents to consider and comment on term limits at the municipal level of government;
 - (b) That staff be requested to design and implement a community engagement strategy aimed at soliciting public input on the prospect of and goals to be achieved with municipal term limits;
 - (c) That city staff survey the use of term limits in comparable jurisdictions across North America, including the practices of Indigenous Peoples; and
 - (d) That city staff report to the Governance Review Sub-Committee on the outcomes of this engagement and study including the required legislative changes to the *City of Hamilton Act* and *Municipal Elections Act*.
- (iii) **Amendment to By-Law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct (Added Item 11.3)**

Staff were directed to prepare an amendment to By-law 16-290, Council Code of Conduct, to include the following and renumbering the remaining sub-sections accordingly:

SECTION 14: STANDARDS RELATING TO COMMUNICATION

- 14.1 Members are responsible for making honest statements. No member shall make a statement, including through social media, when they know that statement is false or are reckless as to

whether it is true. No member shall make a statement with the intent of misleading Council or members of the public.

- 14.2 Members will conduct their communications with each other and members of the public, including by means of social media, in ways that maintain public confidence in the office to which they have been elected or appointed, are open and honest, focus on issues rather than personalities, and avoid threatening, intimidating, offensive or abusive conduct.

(i) GENERAL INFORMATION AND OTHER BUSINESS (Item 13)

(i) Clerk's Workplan (Added Item 13.1)

The City Clerk was directed to report back to the next Governance Review Sub-Committee with:

- (1) an outline of the Clerk's workplan for the remainder of 2024; and
- (2) a list of objectives the Governance Review Sub-Committee can complete in 2025 for discussion.

(j) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

There being no further business, the Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor T. Hwang, Chair
Governance Review Sub-Committee

Tamara Bates
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk

CITY OF HAMILTON MOTION

Audit, Finance and Administration Committee: September 19, 2024

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR C. KROETSCH

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Ward 2 Community Grants - Q3 2024 - 2 (Ward 2)

WHEREAS, the Ward 2 Community Grants program closed for Q2 on August 9, 2024 with a total of 17 applications;

WHEREAS, City staff in Financial Planning, Administration and Policy and Community Engagement - Grants reviewed the recommendations from the Ward 2 Community Grants program and found that the following were all eligible; and

WHEREAS, the following \$39,670 in 14 individual grants represents the fulfillment of Q3 - 2024 of the Ward 2 Community Grants program.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- a) That art and sensory protection supplies, refreshments, seating rentals, and security for A Chance to Dance! be funded to Art Gallery of Hamilton from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$2,950;
- b) That costs associated with a movie night in Beasley Park, a BNA sponsored pizza lunch at Dr. Davey School, and a Beasley focused heritage brochure be funded to the Beasley Neighbourhood Association from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$2,060;
- c) That nutritional supplements and incontinence products be funded to Cancer Assistance Program from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$5,000;
- d) That gardening tools for the purpose of maintaining the gardens at Magnolia Hall be funded to the Durand Neighbourhood Association from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$1,165;
- e) That program expenses related to events in Ward 2, including bussing, equipment, snacks, insurance, and coaching costs be funded to Fit Active Beautiful Foundation from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$2,725;

- f) That stage and chair rental costs for the Festival of Racalmutese be funded to Fratellanza Racalmutese Italian Club from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- g) That costs associated with installing a pollinator garden and running an education and plant giveaway event in the North End be funded to Green Venture from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,500;
- h) That costs associated with Illumini Choral Intensive, including facility rental and camp accommodations, be funded to Hamilton Children's Choir from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- i) That costs associated with acquiring donor management software and organizing fundraising initiatives be funded to Hamilton Literary Festival Association from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- j) That sound and lighting costs at Eclectic Local and scholarships for low income participants at Musical Futures Summer Camp be funded to Hamilton Music Collective from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- k) That the facilitation of a strategic fundraising plan for Open Homes Hamilton be funded to IAFR Canada from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$1,250;
- l) That costs associated with Take Back the Night 2024, including staffing, truck rental, table rental, and security funded to Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area) from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- m) That the rehearsal space rental and contracted theatre coaches and specialists be funded to Shakespearience Performing Arts from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$1,820;
- n) That transportation support and program supplies for spectrum programming be funded to YWCA Hamilton from the Ward 2 Capital Discretionary Account #3302309200 at an upset limit, including contingency, not to exceed \$3,200;
- o) That any funds allocated and distributed through the Ward 2 Community Grants Program be exempt on a one-time basis and not be counted toward any formula that restricts regular funding from the City including the City Enrichment Fund or the One-Time Enhancement Grant (e.g. the City's 30% formula); and
- p) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute any required agreement(s) and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

CITY OF HAMILTON NOTICE OF MOTION

Audit, Finance and Administration Committee: September 19, 2024

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR A. WILSON

Ward 13 Community Grants Q2/Q3 2024

WHEREAS, the Ward 13 Community Grants program closed for Q2/3 on July 26, 2024 with a total of 8 applications;

WHEREAS, City staff in Financial Planning, Administration and Policy and Community Engagement - Grants reviewed the recommendations from the Ward 13 Community Grants program and found that 8 applications were eligible and approved for Q2/3; and

WHEREAS, the following \$31,350 constitutes the complete issuance of community grants for Q2/Q3 2024.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That up to \$4750 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to St. Joseph's Villa to cover costs associated with a new fridge for their kitchen;
- (b) That up to \$5000 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Friends of St Albans Church, Rockton, ON, to cover costs associated with the repair of their historical belfry and organ;
- (c) That up to \$3300 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Dundas Little Theatre to cover costs associated with their children and youth community theatre programs;
- (d) That up to \$3,000 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Dundas Cactus Parade to cover the costs associated with bringing in youth musicians and supporting local youth marching arts initiatives;
- (e) That up to \$2800 be allocated the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to Routes Youth Centre to fund their adolescent/youth employment readiness program;
- (f) That up to \$4,000 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Dundas Museum and Archives as fundsholder to support the provision of My Walks of Art, an artistic walking guidebook focused on Dundas heritage, to libraries and residential aged care facilities in the ward, and to support author talks at the same;

- (g) That up to \$4500 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Dundas Terry Fox Run, to offset the organizing costs associated with hosting the Terry Fox Run in the Dundas Driving Park;
- (h) That up to \$4,000 be allocated from the Non-property tax Revenue account (3301609613) to the Dundas Lawn Bowling Club to cover costs associated with replacing their air conditioning systems;
- (i) That any funds allocated and distributed through the Ward 13 Community Grants Program be exempt on a one-time basis and not be counted toward any formula that restricts regular funding from the City including the City Enrichment Fund or the One-Time Enhancement Grant (e.g. the City's 30% formula); and
- (j) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute any required agreement(s) and ancillary documents, with such terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.