

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, Legislative Services jkramer@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	October 25, 2021		
Report No.:	Corporate Services-101-21		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program at the Town of Cobourg Wrap-Up

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the report from the Accessibility Coordinator for information purposes, and;

FURTHER THAT Council approve another cohort of the “Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program” for the Town of Cobourg to run between March to August 2022 with an updated programming schedule, as outlined below, and;

FURTHER THAT Council participate as both mentors and advisors to the participant through the programming, and;

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring a report to Council after the completion of the 2022 program.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

The inclusion of this program falls under the following pillars of the strategic plan, as well as under the scope of the **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy** at the Town of Cobourg:

- PEOPLE:** The Town of Cobourg supports and cares for the Social and Physical Well-Being of its Citizens.
- PROGRAMS:** The Town provides efficient and effective corporate, community, and business and recreational services for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

N/A

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the 2021 Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program as well as highlight the minor changes that will be made for the 2022 program.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Council Resolutions

On April 5, 2021, Council made the following resolution:

WHEREAS at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on March 29, 2021, Council considered a Memo from the Accessibility Coordinator, regarding the Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program at the Town of Cobourg;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approve the creation of the "Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program" for the Town of Cobourg, as attached to the Staff Report, and;

FURTHER THAT Council participate as both mentors and advisors to the participants through the established programming, and;

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to bring a summary report to Council after the completion of the program.

This program was created as a subset of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy at the Town of Cobourg.

5. BACKGROUND

The Women in Governance: Mentoring and Leadership Program is a twelve (12) week program that pairs women-identifying residents with women-identifying Councillors in the Town of Cobourg.

Initially meant to be a one to one mentoring program, based on the response and interest, it was adjusted to have multiple participants for each Councillor in order to include everyone. Eleven (11) women registered for the program. Seven (7) women from outside of the community but in Northumberland County wished to join and participate; however, based on their location, they were not able to participate. After discussion with the Councillors participating, it was decided that it was important to keep all of these women engaged in public service.

Instead of three (3) to five (5) participants total in the program, the Councillors decided to each take on three (3) to four (4) participants to keep everyone engaged. However, through the course of the program, there was a total of eight (8) participants that were active in the mentoring and speaker conversations.

Beyond meeting with their mentors, there were information sent to each of the participants on a weekly basis about different offerings and services at the Town of Cobourg.

In addition, this program created the Women in Governance Program Speaker Series in which elected officials and public servants at all levels of government discussed their experiences and had a question and answer period for the participants of the program and all the public to participate in.

6. ANALYSIS

The initial Women in Governance: Mentoring and Leadership Program took place from June 7th to September 3rd, 2021, inclusive.

In addition, the Towns hosted Women in Governance Speaker Sessions for:

1. Associate Minister Jill Dunlop and David Piccini, MPP on June 10th, 2021;
2. Honourable Maryam Monsef and Gudie Hutchings on June 23rd, 2021;
3. Deputy Minister for Public Service Accessibility, Yazmine Laroche on July 14th, 2021;
4. Honourable Senator Yonah Martin on July 30th, 2021;
5. Indigenous Climate Action Steering Committee member Bryanna R. Brown on August 3rd, 2021, and;
6. The Honourable Kathleen Wynne on August 16th, 2021.

We appreciate the time and dedication that each of our speakers took to engage with our participants and our public about their service to our cities, provinces, and country. Each of these sessions was promoted on social media and other mediums to highlight to the public that they were able to attend as well.

The sessions in total had over one hundred (100) unique participants with each having an average of twenty-five (25) participants. The lowest turnout was seven (7) participants as this session took place on the Friday evening before a long weekend.

At the completion of each session, participants were asked for their feedback on the session and what they would like to see next. We had an average of 4.2/5 stars for the sessions overall. The highest rated session was featuring the Honourable Kathleen Wynne with the session with the Honourable Maryam Monsef and Gudie Hutchings as the next highest rated. Both of these sessions also had our highest rate of participation.

At the beginning of the program, each of the participants was asked about their understanding of municipal government, specifically how Cobourg functioned within the realm of Northumberland County.

Participants knew some of the functions of the Town of Cobourg and how it differentiated from the services provided by Northumberland County; however, it wasn't very clear to all participants where the services drew the line and/or what the role of Cobourg's Council was in comparison to the County's Council.

By the end of the program, when asked again, all participants could distinguish between the Town and the County. In addition, there was more insight into the role of Council, what a Councillor's portfolio looks like, and how the public, Advisory Committees, Staff, and Council work together to create solutions for Cobourg.

It is the hope that this program has inspired others in the community to participate in this program in the future, other forms of public participation, as a volunteer Board or Committee member, and/or in running for elected office here in Cobourg or on a provincial or federal level.

Based on the recommendations from the participants, as well as the capacity of our Councillors and Staff members, it is recommended that the following changes be made for the next session:

1. That the mentors and mentees meet every other week for an hour;
2. That the mentees meet as a group during those alternate weeks with a presentation and/or Speaker to discuss on the topic, using the expertise of our Staff;
3. Incorporate additional municipal speakers into the Speaker Series programming;
4. Expand the length of the program from twelve (12) weeks to twenty-two (22) weeks (beginning of March 2022 to end of July 2022) to provide more opportunities for meeting with mentors, learning the material, incorporating speakers.
5. That the applicants are interviewed and confirmed for their availability throughout the program, and;
6. That there is an additional option for students to participate between June and July only.

Staff appreciates the time, energy, and dedication of Council, the participants, Staff members, and all the Speakers. This has been a wonderful and successful program that has provided more civic involvement and engagement for our residents.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

The total cost of this program was approximately \$1,100, which included a group wrap-up session and an honorarium for a speaker. The total cost of this program was \$880.16, which included thank you's for the participants, advertising the program on Facebook, and an honorarium for a speaker. This was completely funded by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion budget that was provided during the 2021 Budget.

Staff is requesting that Council consider incorporating an additional fund into the 2022 Budget for the continuation of this program.

8. CONCLUSION

The Women in Governance: Leadership and Mentoring Program and Speaker Series was a great first step to creating more equity in the programs the Town of Cobourg provides to our residents.