



## Administrative Report

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Kyla Pritiko, J.D.  
Director, Human Resources

**Date:** Wednesday, November 6, 2024

**Subject:** Staffing Requests- 2025 Budget

**Report #:** 2024-1024-HR-R01-KP

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### Purpose

To seek approval in principle for the following four (4) proposed staff positions, additional shift hours and transition from co-op to articling resources ahead of the 2025 Budget:

### Staff Positions

1. Essex Windsor EMS- Logistics Technician
2. Essex Windsor EMS- Manager, Employee Wellness
3. Information Technology- Business Analyst
4. Infrastructure & Planning Services- Planning Division Co-op Student

### Additional Hours

Sun Parlor Home is seeking approval for an additional four (4) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, for the Food Service Worker position to support the Food and Nutrition Services Department at Sun Parlor Home.

### Future Transition from Co-Op to Articling Resource

The Legislative & Legal Services Department is seeking permission to pursue a 10-month Articling Student to replace a Legal Co-op Student in 2026.

Note: Positions with the Essex County Library Board are approved at the Library Board level and therefore have not been included in this report.

### Background

#### Staffing Requests and Budget Process

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Historically, the budget process involved the inclusion of staffing requests in the draft budget for financial approval, with a subsequent report from the

CAO to explain the positions in more detail and answer any questions from County Council. In 2024, during the last budget deliberation process, County Council requested that staffing requests be presented in advance of the 2025 budget process for approval in principle. This report is therefore being brought forward in advance of the 2025 budget process for County Council's consideration.

## **Staffing Request Review Process**

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Currently, the County of Essex employs a total of 898 full and part-time employees. Business Case Reports were prepared for a total of nine (9) positions for consideration by the Director of Finance/Treasurer and the CAO to address operational demands, improve service delivery, and meet strategic goals.

In determining which positions to present to Council for approval in principle, the Director of Finance/Treasurer and the CAO had detailed discussions with the senior management team and considered relevant factors such as anticipated room in the budget, departmental need, service gaps, and competing priorities. While all nine (9) staff positions submitted for consideration remain a priority, administration strategically prioritized the above-listed four (4) positions and one (1) request for additional hours for the Food Service Worker position at Sun Parlor Home based on operational urgency, service impact, and alignment with the strategic plan, with a view to ensuring the most immediate needs are met. The recommended transition from a legal co-op student to an articling student has no impact on the 2025 Budget however to secure an articling student in 2026, the hiring process must begin in spring 2025.

If all four (4) of the requested positions are approved by County Council, this would represent a total headcount increase of 0.445%.

With respect to the five (5) positions that were not put forward for consideration to County Council, Legislative & Legal Services identified a need for more oversight in their housing support area as well as additional legal support, EMS identified a service gap with EMS-specific communications, HR identified a need for additional support with Health and Safety, and IT sought approval for a systems analyst.

## **Process for Approving New Positions**

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Corporate Policy 91-001, Employment/Hiring, provides the process for considering and approving new positions to be added to the existing staffing complement. Section 6.0 of the Employment/Hiring policy requires:

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- The request to be presented to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for review. Such presentation is to include the Department Head's written business case for adding the position;
- The CAO is to present a recommendation to County Council for approval; and
- Once the position is approved by Council, the hiring manager and Director, Human Resources will establish the appropriate recruitment strategy.

In recognition of Council's dissatisfaction with the current policy, this report recommends staffing request approval in principle occur ahead of budget deliberations and shifts the presentation of new positions from the CAO to the Director of Human Resources. Once Administration confirms County Council is satisfied with these process changes, the existing Employment/Hiring Policy will be amended and presented to County Council for review and adoption.

Due to the advanced timing of the 2025 Budget deliberations, funding for the proposed positions/hours in this report has been included in the draft budget. Should County Council not approve the recommendations in this report, the draft budget will be adjusted accordingly in advance of the start of deliberations.

## **Discussion**

The 2025 Proposed Budget includes the addition of four new positions, along with an increase in hours for an existing role. The specifics of these new positions and the proposed adjustments to hours are outlined below, reflecting the anticipated impact on departmental capacity and service delivery.

### **Essex Windsor EMS- Logistics Technician**

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Essex Windsor EMS proposes to add one (1) additional full-time Logistics Technician within the Planning and Physical Resources Department. Currently, this department contains two (2) Logistics Technicians, one (1) Vehicle Services Technician, and one (1) Vehicle Services Technician Summer Student. Logistics Technicians are responsible for ensuring that all consumable supplies needed for patient care are readily available for paramedics. This includes stocking 12 EMS stations and 3 hospital paramedic report rooms. Their duties also encompass maintaining par levels, reordering supplies, disposing of expired goods, and tracking controlled substances. This position also supports the department by preparing vehicles as needed and performing miscellaneous tasks as they arise.

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Currently, the Vehicle Services Technician Summer Student assists the Logistics Technicians to support non-technical tasks during their tenure; however, adding a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) full-time Logistics Technician would significantly enhance operational consistency by allowing the Vehicle Services and Logistics Technicians to focus more efficiently and promptly on their primary responsibilities, thereby improving overall productivity and service quality. Furthermore, it would enable the department to effectively address projected future operational demands faced by the service and support succession planning. Strengthening the department would also enable the service to address deficiencies identified during a recent Ministry of Health service review and inspections, which was primarily related to a shortage of personnel resources. Furthermore, this position enhancement aligns with the 2010 Ten-Year Master Plan conducted by Operational Research in Health Ltd. (ORH), which called for a departmental enhancement that has yet to be implemented.

### **Essex Windsor EMS- Manager, Employee Wellness**

Essex Windsor EMS proposes to add one (1) new Manager, Employee Wellness position. This position is recommended based on the observations and findings of Chief Lammers, in his first year as Chief. This position oversees the planning, development, management, and evaluation of EMS-specific well-being programs designed to enhance the psychological and physical health of employees. As call volumes and staffing compliments increase, so does the exposure to critical incidents, operational pressures, and the subsequent need to support our employees. The County of Essex provides mental wellness benefits to its employees for their use outside of the workplace, including access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and mental wellness benefits through Green Shield. Essex Windsor EMS provides additional support through the volunteer Peer Support Team when a critical incident occurs or if someone is concerned about a colleague's well-being.

Currently, peer support notifications happen at the time of the critical incident and resources are shared. While that is an incredibly valuable part of the system, it is not enough. In a fast-paced environment such as EMS, it is difficult to have a line of sight on every employee and quite often, critical incidents have occurred and the details of who responded are not readily available. In keeping with current industry best practices, the Manager, Employee Wellness would provide proactive (rather than just reactive) supports, in order to have a real-time pulse on all employees and what they are experiencing, based on operational data that is already being collected. The Manager, Employee Wellness would be responsible for overseeing and supporting the volunteer Peer Support Team, developing policy and well-

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being programs and initiatives as well as educational material to help guide difficult moral and ethical decision-making, and provide support for team building. The role would be tasked with developing a baseline of organizational health and the creation of KPIs with the goal of ultimately improving employee health, engagement and morale, lowering absenteeism, improving workplace culture, and creating synergies across all County of Essex departments.

In order to consistently meet obligations under the *Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act*, which requires employers to implement and maintain PTSD prevention plans within the workplace, the new Manager, Employee Wellness position will provide for a dedicated specialist in ability and wellness to facilitate the return to work of all staff absent from the workforce. This managerial role will ensure all existing and future well-being programs within the department are coordinated, remain relevant and are measured for effectiveness.

### **Information Technology- Business Analyst**

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The Information Technology department proposes adding one (1) Business Analyst position to enhance support for internal County operations and improve IT service delivery. This new role, recommended in the 2023 Service Delivery Review, will focus on tasks to streamline workflows, optimize resource use, and ensure technology solutions align with the needs of all departments. The Business Analyst will collaborate with various County departments to identify inefficiencies, analyze existing processes, and implement changes that reduce manual tasks, integrate technology effectively, and improve productivity.

Key tasks will include gathering requirements from department stakeholders, mapping out current and future state workflows and documenting detailed functional specifications for IT and business projects. The Business Analyst will analyze current processes and identify areas for optimization. They will work with IT and departmental teams to ensure that systems and solutions are designed to meet departmental goals.

Additionally, the Business Analyst will lead efforts in data identification, categorization, and governance outside of records management responsibilities. A key focus will be understanding, documenting, and communicating data workflows to help departments make better-informed decisions through modern data analytics. Continuous improvement efforts will be directed towards refining the County's approximately 120 applications to create a holistic solution experience where data is structured and better governed. This hands-on approach will help the County make more efficient use of technology, achieve cost savings, and enhance the overall

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effectiveness of its IT services. The role will also work to improve cybersecurity preparedness through regular review of data sources, integrity and ongoing business impact assessments.

The Business Analyst will serve as a key relationship builder amongst each department to promote the use of technology and automation to reduce tedious data entry and user-generated errors in data. The Analyst will partner with our departments to ensure that vendors are implementing technology solutions in a manner that is expected through the use of defined business processes and outcomes. The Analyst will be key in bridging gaps between our departments as subject matter experts and our internal or external technological experts. Each department has its business objectives that align with the strategic plan, the Business Analyst will help each department discover and implement solutions that will help them meet those objectives.

### **Infrastructure & Planning Services - Planning Division Co-op Student**

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Infrastructure & Planning Services proposes to hire a Planning Division Co-op student for a 4 (four) month term from May to August in 2025. In 2024, with budget funding from Rate Stabilization, the Planning Division was able to hire a third-year planning student from an OPPI accredited University. This student facilitated advancement of initiatives in the department including preparation of:

1. Essex County Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines;
2. Natural Heritage Compensation Guidelines; and
3. County template for reviewing Environmental Impact Assessments.

Due to the very high volume of work in the department, having additional staff with knowledge in planning assists with undertaking tasks that would otherwise be difficult to advance. The Planning Division is seeking to transition from one-time Rate Stabilization funding to more permanent levy funding to support this Co-op Student role on an ongoing annual basis. It is also important to note that there is a shortage of Planners in the Province of Ontario and hiring Planning students assists with training new Planners into the field. Hiring co-op students is also aligned with continuing our ongoing partnerships with St. Clair college and the University of Windsor.

### **Sun Parlor Home- Addition of 4 hours/day to FSW Position**

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Sun Parlor Home is requesting an additional four (4) hours per day, seven (7) days per week (1460 hours annually), be added to the Food Service Worker Position to support the nutritional care of residents. Providing food and nutrition services to residents has become increasingly challenging at

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Sun Parlor Home as the complex dietary needs of the residents increases. The increased demands of enhanced Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) requirements from both the Ministry of Long-Term Care and Public Health has also impacted the time needed within the Food and Nutrition department. In order to accurately provide meals for each resident, Food Service Workers must follow detailed production sheets as well as complex therapeutic menus and comprehensive Resident information at the point of service.

At Sun Parlor Home, the dining experience is often one of the most exciting and social times of day. Ultimately, inadequate staffing can inadvertently result in a lower provision of care that may negatively impact on the quality of care and services to our residents. This is particularly challenging given the time sensitive nature of food preparation and meal service. In the event that the department is understaffed, the main cook has to stop food production and assume food handling duties in a neighbourhood. These delays impact meal service for the residents and can result in further delays in meal preparation for upcoming meals. The approval of this request would minimize disruptions to both food preparation and meal service, improve work life conditions and reduce stress for our valuable team members.

As discussed further below, these additional hours can be added without impacting the County's budget as existing funding to the home from the Ministry of Long-Term Care – Global Funding could be re-allocated to the Dietary budget to cover the total cost of the increase in hours.

### **Legislative & Legal Services – Articling Student**

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The 2024 Budget included one-time Rate Stabilization funding to support the hiring of a temporary Legal Co-Op Student. The same request is being made in the 2025 Budget. As the legal needs of the County evolve, the Director of Legislative & Legal Services / County Solicitor is requesting resources be augmented from a 4-month co-op student placement to a 10-month Articling Student position. In order to secure an Articling Student in 2026, hiring needs to take place in spring 2025 to align with the standard articling hiring process in place across Ontario. This staffing request has no financial implications in 2025, however transitioning from a co-op student to an articling student will increase the overall cost of legal staffing by approximately \$30,000 in 2026. It is likely the 2026 Budget will recommend funding this new temporary position from the Rate Stabilization Reserve until an assessment can be made as to whether the Articling Student role is achieving its intended service results. If the Articling Student role proves to be successful, a request to transition from Rate Stabilization Reserve funding to levy funding will be made.

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The Articling Student role is expected to achieve the following:

1. **Enhanced Legal Research and Support:** Conduct detailed legal research, draft documents, and assist with case preparation. Their training and focus on legal issues can provide valuable support other lawyers at the County (i.e. HR Director and any lawyer(s) working in LLS), improving efficiency and thoroughness.
2. **Cost-Effective Legal Assistance:** Articling Students are typically less expensive than fully licensed lawyers, and only nominally more expensive than hiring a summer student. Hiring an Articling Student should allow the County to benefit from legal expertise and support while managing costs more effectively.
3. **Increased Capacity for Legal Work:** The addition of an Articling Student can help distribute the workload more evenly within the Legal Services Division. This should allow lawyer(s) and other legal staff to focus on more complex matters and strategic tasks, enhancing overall productivity.
4. **Support for Legal Compliance and Documentation:** Assist in ensuring that legal documentation and compliance measures are accurate and up to date. As such, this position should assist the Records Management Division in meeting their standards in document management and regulatory adherence.
5. **Contributing to Professional Development:** Providing an Articling Student with practical experience supports their professional growth and development, while also providing them with the required hours to become licensed. This aligns with the County's commitment to being a regional leader.

In summary, hiring an Articling Student provides cost-effective legal support, increases the Legal Service Division's capacity, while contributing to talent development. Their involvement enhances legal research, compliance, and strategic planning while offering them valuable professional experience.

## **Financial Implications**

The positions proposed for approval in the 2025 County budget have different financial implications, depending on the position type, the cost-sharing agreements and the various funding sources.

Please refer to the chart below for a breakdown of each position and the number of months included in the 2025 budget.

If all positions are approved as proposed, the total cost to the County would result in a modest net levy impact of \$193,336.66 for the 2025 fiscal year.

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<b>Department</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Annual Cost (Wages &amp; Benefits)</b>	<b>Anticipated # of Months in 2025 Budget</b>	<b>Anticipated funding required in 2025 budget</b>
EMS	Logistics Technician	\$57,118.00 <sup>1</sup>	10	\$47,598.33
EMS	Manager, Employee Wellness	\$79,546.00 <sup>2</sup>	10	\$66,288.33
IT	Business Analyst	\$121,200.00	6	\$60,600.00
IPS	Planning Co-op Student	\$18,850.00	4	\$18,850.00
SPH	4 FSW hours per day	\$59,400.00	12	None <sup>3</sup>
LLS	Articling Student	\$60,000	N/A	N/A

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<sup>1</sup> The total cost of the position, including wages and benefits is \$111,067.00, however the first-year costs are split with the City of Windsor and the Township of Pelee based on the weighted assessment rates for the year. In subsequent years, 50% of the costs are split using the weighted assessment rates for the participating municipalities and 50% of the costs borne by the Ministry of Health.

<sup>2</sup> The total cost of the position, including wages and benefits is \$154,678.00, however the first-year costs are split with the City of Windsor and the Township of Pelee based on the weighted assessment rates for the year. In subsequent years, 50% of the costs are split using the weighted assessment rates for the participating municipalities and 50% of the costs borne by the Ministry of Health.

<sup>3</sup> Existing funding to the Home from the Ministry of Long-Term Care – Global Funding could be re-allocated to the Dietary budget to cover the total cost of the increase in hours. Additional funding from the County would not be required.

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**Consultations**

Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS  
 Ziad Fatallah, Deputy Chief, Planning and Physical Resources, Essex-Windsor EMS  
 Darrel Laurendeau, Director, Information Technology  
 Rebecca Belanger, Manager, Planning Services  
 Maria Gomer, Manager, Food and Nutrition Service, Sun Parlor Home  
 Jayne Brooks Keller, Administrator, Sun Parlor Home  
 David Sundin, Director, Legislative & Legal Services

**Strategic Plan Alignment**

<b>Working as Team Essex County</b>	<b>Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence</b>	<b>Building a Regional Powerhouse</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focusing "Team Essex County" for Results</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County's Fair Share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation</li> </ul>

**Recommendation**

That Essex County Council approve in principle the hiring of the following positions/additional hours so that they may be included in the 2025 budget deliberation process:

1. Essex Windsor EMS- Logistics Technician
  2. Essex Windsor EMS- Manager, Employee Wellness
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3. Information Technology- Business Analyst
4. Infrastructure & Planning Services- Planning Division Co-op Student
5. Sun Parlor Home- Additional four (4) hours per day (1460 hours annually) for the Food Service Worker Position

And further, that Essex County Council authorize administration to transition from a Legal Co-op Student to an Articling Student in 2026.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kyla Pritiko*

Kyla Pritiko, Director, Human Resources

Concurred With,

*Sandra Zwiers*

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>1</b>	Job Description- EMS Logistics Technician
<b>2</b>	Job Description- EMS Manager, Employee Wellness
<b>3</b>	Org Chart- EMS
<b>4</b>	Job Description- IT Business Analyst
<b>5</b>	Org Chart- Information Technology
<b>6</b>	Job Description- Planning Division Co-op Student
<b>7</b>	Org Chart- Infrastructure and Planning Services
<b>8</b>	Org Chart- Sun Parlor Home
<b>9</b>	Historic Staffing Additions – 2021-2024

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