Document 5

2020 Annual Report on Information Management

BACKGROUND

The Information Management Branch (IM) is responsible for establishing and promoting an overall framework for the coordinated and cost-effective management of the records and information holdings of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa, regardless of form (i.e. physical or electronic) and throughout their entire life cycle, to ensure:

- that all records and information holdings are managed as corporate assets to support effective decision-making, meet operational requirements (such as supporting the achievement of corporate strategic and program/service delivery priorities), protect and enforce legal and other rights and obligations including the public's right to access under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), and provide evidence of the Corporation's decisions, directives, and actions essential for government transparency and accountability;
- that the widest possible use is made of information within the City by ensuring it is organized to facilitate access to those who require it, at the right time, in the right form, and at a reasonable cost, subject to legal, policy and other constraints;
- that records and information holdings in all formats are retained only as long as needed, stored in the most appropriate and cost-effective storage medium and promptly disposed of when no longer required to control costs; and
- that records and information holdings serve to reconstruct the evolution of policy and program decisions and directives or have historical or archival importance are identified and preserved.

The overall framework includes an infrastructure of policies, procedures, systems, standards and practices that establish operating requirements. These give direction to management and functional specialists, providing guidance and tools to facilitate the management of the entire life cycle of the Corporation's records and information, namely:

- planning;
- collection, creation and receipt;
- organization, use and retrieval;

- storage, protection, retention, and disposition through transfer to the City of Ottawa Archives or destruction; and
- centralized records and information management resource support to the program areas of the Corporation to allow them to meet their Information Management operating requirements.

More specifically, IM helps all City staff meet their current and evolving physical and electronic records management obligations by:

- Maintaining 14 records offices in five locations across the City;

- Maintaining the corporate Records Management Policy and Procedures, the Corporate Records Classification Scheme (CRCS), and the associated *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* (By-law No. 2003-527)*;*

- Securely disposing of records in accordance with the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law*, as amended, and applicable federal and provincial legislation;

- Providing expertise in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of records, IM policies, standards and best practices;

- Providing Tier 1 and 2 system support for two records management systems;

- Training staff on the records management applications and IM principles; and

- Assessing business-specific systems for records-related risk.

Three policy instruments

IM is responsible for three policy instruments that direct City staff on how to manage their records:

1. The **Records Management Policy** identifies the requirements and expectations regarding the creation, identification and management of City records.

2. The **Corporate Records Classification Scheme** (CRCS) is a tool that helps organize City records, as well as applies a schedule detailing how long records are kept and how they should be disposed.

3. The *Records Retention and Disposition By-law***, as amended,** provides the City with the legal authority to create, manage, and dispose of records. The City

Archives is the disposition authority for the City of Ottawa and IM staff works in close collaboration with Archives staff.

Three recordkeeping systems

The City currently uses three centralized information management systems to manage records:

1. **Records Management System (RMS)** is used to manage physical records. This application has reached end of life and will be rebuilt in 2021 with an application currently being developed in-house.

2. **Business Information Management System (BIMS)** is used to manage electronic records. BIMS will be replaced in 2021 with SharePoint Online and a recordkeeping add-on application. In anticipation of this transition, and due to the shift to working from home during the pandemic, some staff have already begun to use SharePoint to manage their records.

3. **MINISIS** controls certain records that have been archived. This system is managed by the City Archives.

COVID-19 impact and response

On March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario made an Emergency Declaration about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic that included closing public places and establishments. That same day, the City Manager issued an "Update" that instructed staff to work from home where possible and closed or partially closed various City facilities. This included closing City Hall to City staff and closing Ben Franklin Place and the Mary Pitt Centre to the public. IM temporarily sent staff home and closed all but one of its records offices.

In the ensuing weeks, management continued to assess and work through the various emergency governance to ensure that record services continued uninterrupted, with priority given to statutory and other essential internal client groups.

IM has worked diligently to adhere to all guidance provided by Ottawa Public Health and reinforced in the City's COVID-19 Manager & Supervisor Guide. All measures with regard to Personal Protective Equipment and administrative protections have been followed including reconfiguration of workstations and records offices.

It is important to note that in the spirit of "One City, One Team," IM has stepped up by responding the corporation's various calls for volunteers. IM looked to leverage staff expertise in recordkeeping and documentation by contributing to various emergency response positions such as scribing, health case management, health data entry, and other emergency recordkeeping functions.

IM's service to clients continued, with priority on essential service areas such as Building Code Services, Planning Branch, and Community and Social Services. IM also increased staffing to meet the recordkeeping demand for Ottawa Public Health.

The Office of the City Clerk continues to monitor the various resourcing announcements with regard to how the IM Branch can contribute to the City's pandemic response efforts.

DISCUSSION

2020 summary and statistics

Rising to the recordkeeping challenges of a global pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted how all City staff work. Many have found themselves working from home, uncertain as to when they will be returning to their offices. This has made keeping physical records challenging, with no way to print files or get folders with labels. The VPN tool allows staff to remotely use their shared drives, BIMS and RMS. Unfortunately, due to the sudden and unexpected increase in need for VPN, ITS had advised staff who are not directly working on emergency operations to use VPN sparingly after hours. It was anticipated that records declaration would decline as a result of sporadic access. This ITS advice has been updated to permit several hours of access to staff.

Meanwhile, the new Microsoft 365 (M365) environment and its suite of tools did not require VPN. This meant that staff needed to turn to SharePoint Online to manage their records. Recognizing a need, ITS escalated their corporate-wide SharePoint deployment.

IM, understanding the new landscape, worked to support staff as they moved to the new M365 tools, including SharePoint Online. The IM team had been studying SharePoint and M365 tools, anticipating that SharePoint would become the new records repository. For this reason, IM staff were well-prepared for the COVID-19 crisis, and were able to provide support to staff as required.

IM is also working with clients who, due to working from home, are accelerating their plans to transition from physical recordkeeping into a SharePoint Online environment.

A compliance review for physical records was also completed with the objective of identifying where clients may need IM support, after the pandemic, to ensure that their records are captured and to develop a plan accordingly. This outreach started in Q4 of 2020 and will continue into 2021.

IM has continued to work diligently to reduce information operational risk, ensuring that recordkeeping obligations are met while minimizing any impact on existing business procedures. Due to the impacts across the City from COVID-19 and associated States of Emergency, this work was not as extensive as had been planned in 2019.

<u>Updating and changing two recordkeeping systems</u>

The current systems used by the City to manage records are RMS for physical records, and BIMS for electronic records. Both systems are being replaced simultaneously, as described below in more detail.

- RMS: ITS and IM staff are working to rebuild an in-house application to replace RMS. This new system will be in the cloud and will mimic existing functionality of RMS for the most part, minimizing disruption and reducing the need for training. Developing this application in the cloud allows for an agile development approach through which ITS can add functionality and it is immediately available for testing. Previously, an application would have to be fully developed before it could be installed on PCs for testing. The RMS replacement application is anticipated to be rolled out to over 600 clients corporate-wide in late 2021.

- BIMS: SharePoint has some records functionality, but alone is insufficient to meet City recordkeeping requirements. For this reason, IM staff worked on developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to purchase SharePoint records management add-on software. This software will provide additional functionality so that records can be managed 'in place'. The tool will also work beyond the SharePoint environment, reaching into other databases and apply record retention rules within systems such as SAP, Maximo, network shared drives, etc. In the long term, this will allow the City to manage records in a much more effective manner, no matter where they may reside.

The RFP for the SharePoint add-on was released on November 18, 2020. Selecting a contractor should be complete in Q1 of 2021. The next phase will be a pilot to test the tool. With a successful pilot, a full contract will be awarded for a three-year term, with the possibility of extending it to five years.

Outreach and training to support SharePoint change management

SharePoint can be a complicated and overwhelming tool, as it requires detailed configuration and comes with many features. IM realized they were in a good position to provide support to ITS and offer training to city staff. A two-hour introductory course to the basics of SharePoint was designed by IM staff, and continues to be delivered remotely through Teams. Client-centered training on SharePoint Online functionality continues to grow as SharePoint end-user adoption grows. In 2020, 286 people received this training to very positive reviews.

The SharePoint records management add-on software itself will not require training, as it is meant to work behind the scenes and be transparent to users.

IM also developed a 40-page SharePoint Reference Guide. This manual covers SharePoint basics, with explanatory text and screenshots, allowing staff to look up and focus on the information they require. The guide is available on the internal ITS SharePoint Resources website and will be updated as SharePoint Online evolves.

When introducing a business unit to SharePoint, ITS provides an introduction session. A video and slide deck was developed by IM staff, addressing recordkeeping inside SharePoint Online. The video also details the plans going forward with the add-on recordkeeping software, keeping staff up to date on coming developments.

Though RMS and BIMS will be replaced, training sessions did continue for these systems, at a reduced level. In 2020, 49 staff attended RMS training sessions, and 45 attended BIMS training sessions. New training is being developed for the RMS replacement application, even as the application continues to be built.

Making the move from physical to electronic

The new remote working situation provided an opportunity for staff to re-evaluate their business practices and processes. IM is working with several groups who have realized the value in making the switch from physical records in RMS to electronic records in SharePoint Online. The Corporate Real Estate Office, Legal, and HR are all turning to SharePoint to replace physical records processes.

IM is working with these clients, helping identify what metadata is necessary, how to structure and organize SharePoint libraries, as well as providing training and guidance to staff. This work is ongoing. It is anticipated this approach to records will develop further across the organization, as staff become more accustomed to SharePoint Online.

Ongoing declaration rates

RMS: During 2019, 453 users created a total of 111,695 physical volumes. This year has seen a marked decrease in these numbers, as the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the way City staff work and interact with physical records. In 2020, 330 users (a reduction, in itself, of 27.1 per cent) created a total of 77,292 physical volumes – a decrease of 30.8 per cent.

Some decreases in records declarations were due to the impact of the pandemic, and was expected due to service and facility closures (e.g. childcare centers, recreation centers). Some lines of business held steady, some stored records on shared drives or OneDrive and some are accelerating plans to transition to electronic records management in SharePoint. Ottawa Public Health was one of the few departments to show an increase in created volumes in RMS, due to COVID-19.

BIMS: In 2019, 550,929 records were checked into BIMS. In 2020, 504,521 records were checked in. This is a decrease in BIMS contribution by nearly 10 per cent. This is due to the inability for staff to access BIMS through VPN, as well as the gradual shift towards using SharePoint Online.

SharePoint Online: Staff have begun to capture records inside of SharePoint. As the recordkeeping add-on tool is not yet available, it's not possible to provide a count of how many records there currently are.

Business statistics

Because IM's work is city-wide, but due to the impacts from COVID-19 and associated State of Emergency, some statistics are lower than in 2019. Some key statistics for 2020 are:

- Over 4.2 million physical volumes were managed in RMS, the physical records system, with 77,292 new volumes created in 2020. This is a decrease from 2019 when 111,695 physical volumes were created.
- 504,521 electronic records were checked into BIMS. In 2019, 550,929 records were checked into BIMS.

- 336 staff took IM training courses on SharePoint Basics, records management systems, and the fundamentals of records classification;
- 36 changes were made by the City of Ottawa Archives to the Continuous Disposition Authorities (CDA) regarding final disposition. Six changes, including one new classification for Epidemic/Pandemic Case Files, were made by IM to the Corporate Records Classification Scheme to align with changes in business process, external legislation or industry best practice;
- Approximately 17,609 physical files and 625 boxes were ordered back from commercial off-site storage for staff to consult;
- 781 technical support calls for metadata and security access control updates and organization change were processed; and
- In accordance with the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* (By-law No. 2003-527) and with departmental approval,10,820 physical files were securely destroyed and 1,300 file volumes were transferred to the City Archives.

Initiatives for 2021 and beyond

For years, across all industries, there has been a prediction that physical business processes will transform into electronic ones. Despite certain predictions, the "paperless office" never seemed to materialise. Then COVID-19 happened. In 2020, electronic recordkeeping processes went from an interesting future project to a necessity.

As people become proficient with the new M365 tools, The City of Ottawa will continue to see these applications in use long after the threat of COVID-19 has passed. Information Management is well positioned to encourage and support these monumental changes in how staff work and how records are managed.

The completion of the BIMS replacement RFP

The new way to manage electronic records is well underway. Staff are using SharePoint Online. The RFP for a recordkeeping add-on was posted on November 18, 2020. It is expected a vendor will be selected by Q2 2021. Once a vendor is selected, four SharePoint sites will be selected for a proof of concept. With that work satisfactorily completed, a contract for three years which can be extended up to five will be put in place. In Q3 2021, IM staff will work with each business unit in the organization, make their SharePoint sites records-ready, and implement records management rules for their files.

Managing records in business systems

The records management add-on tool purchased in 2021 could be used to manage records on network drives and in other systems besides SharePoint Online. This includes systems such as SAP and Maximo. Once the management of records inside SharePoint is complete, IM will purchase connectors into these systems, and establish rules for the records there as well. This is the future of recordkeeping: taking the recordkeeping rules, reaching into systems where the records live, and managing them "in place."

Post-COVID-19 recordkeeping

After the COVID-19 emergency is lifted, and more regular operations commence, IM will identify key clients and arrange for the declaration of records in BIMS, RMS, business systems or the client SharePoint Online sites. Staff anticipate that the majority of key records will be unstructured and be stored in a wide variety of locations: Outlook, OneDrive, shared drives, SharePoint Online sites, Teams sites, local drives, WebEOC, and others. Staff anticipate this work to take several months. This work will also require ITS to facilitate the transfer of records into repositories or the remediation of metadata.

IM will also develop a communications plan to reinforce the importance of declaring records. The plan will include Management Bulletins, In the Loop messaging, ITS SharePoint landing pages, targeted emails to key audiences and messaging from the City Clerk.

This recordkeeping challenge is present in most organizations, especially those with M365 SharePoint implementations. Staff have contacted Library and Archives Canada and Treasury Board Secretariat for guidance. Staff will also contact other Canadian municipalities to review their approach to records capture. The IM Branch will monitor the situation at the federal, provincial and municipal level and update the approach as required.

Information governance

New applications and new technology are constantly appearing on the scene. Technology is now outpacing information governance. Tools within the M365 investment allow for improved governance and findability, but new roles may be required to respond to emerging information governance risks. The City Clerk is monitoring this situation, and in partnership with various stakeholders, will be developing recommendations for appropriate roles and guidance in 2021.

Proposed revisions to the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law*

Section 255 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that a municipality may establish retention periods during which the records of the municipality must be retained and preserved. In general, a record of the municipality may be destroyed if a retention period for the record has been established and the retention period has expired. The City's existing *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* was approved by Council in October 2003, and the records retention and disposition component, Schedule "A", has been revised on a regular basis.

On May 30, 2017, an amendment of Section 255(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* came into force and removed the requirement for municipal auditor approval. Given this change in legislation and that there are no city policy requirements for this review, the *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* has been revised to remove this requirement. The by-law also repeals all previous amending by-laws.

The *Records Retention and Disposition By-law* establishes a schedule for the retention and disposition of records in the custody or under the control of the City of Ottawa. In addition, it provides the City with the legal authority to destroy official business records and temporary records.

This Schedule is comprised of a timetable that plans the life of a record from the time of its creation, through its maintenance stages as an active record (stored either on-site or electronically), to an inactive record (stored either off-site or electronically), to its final disposition through destruction or permanent retention. The records retention and disposition schedule is aligned with the Corporate Records Classification Scheme (CRCS). City departments are required to classify their official business records according to the CRCS. Both the Schedule and the classification scheme require ongoing review and modification to accommodate changes in legislation, user needs and program changes.

As a result of such routine business developments, modifications to the records retention and disposition schedule are identified by the Office of the City Clerk in the course of its Information Management service delivery with clients and are brought forward to Council on a regular basis for approval. This process ensures that the City's records management framework is reflective of the organization and the types of official business records the City creates and needs to retain. For example, in 2020 there were 36 changes were made by the City of Ottawa Archives to the Continuous Disposition Authorities (CDA) regarding the final disposition of a records classification. In addition, there were six changes, including one new classification for Epidemic/Pandemic Case

Files, made by IM to the Corporate Records Classification Scheme to align with changes in business process, external legislation or industry best practice. The by-law has also been updated to reflect current practices, language and legislative requirements. It is noted that on May 30, 2017, an amendment of Subsection 255(3) of the *Municipal Act*, *2001* came in the force and removed the requirement for municipal auditor approval. Given this change in legislation and that there are no city policy requirements for this review, the by-law has been revised to remove this requirement. The by-law also repeals all previous amending by-laws.