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**REVIEW OF THE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING  
PROCESS FOR COUNCILLORS' ASSISTANTS**

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March 31, 2020

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a result of media reports in September of 2019, the City Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Councillor Kavanagh, have committed to undertake a review of the recruitment and hiring process for Councillors' Assistants.

In January of 2020, the Clerk's Office retained the services of Samson & Associates to conduct a review of the existing recruitment and hiring of Councillors' Assistants.

Nathalie Dunn and François Desrochers were designated by the firm as the qualified Human Resources consultants to execute this mandate.

### 1.1 Mandate

The mandate consisted of reviewing the current practices pertaining to the recruitment and hiring process with the objective of providing a clear representation of the different processes in place. With the information contained in this report, it is the responsibility of the Clerk's Office to provide the appropriate recommendations to City Council if necessary.

Several stakeholders were identified by Council Support Services and a list was provided to the consultants. Our analysis was determined by reviewing the findings of the following stakeholder groups:

- Councillors
- Councillors' Assistants
- Contracted Vendors
- Other City of Ottawa Employees
- External Community Groups
- External Experts
- Other Canadian Municipalities

### 1.2 Methodology

For the purpose of collecting the information from Councillors, Councillors' Assistants, contracted vendors and City of Ottawa employees, a series of structured interviews were conducted mostly in person with one consultant. All interviewees were asked a set of standard questions approved by Council Support Services. At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. Their answers have been recorded in Appendix A of this report.

For these four stakeholder groups, it was decided that the comments would be noted by the consultants and paraphrased. The interviewees are not identified as this was considered the best procedure to allow the most forthright cooperation and bring comfort to the participants. Additionally, they were told that the information would be collected confidentially. There were instances when the interviewees

provided answers to some of the questions, before being specifically asked to comment. When this occurred, if the questions were already responded to, the answers were not recorded again. In other instances, some interviewees were not in a position to answer some specific questions. For these reasons, the number of answers recorded might not necessarily match the number of questions found in Appendix A.

For the group of City employees, their recorded comments are not linked to specific individuals and were inserted in a random order. The participants were:

- The City Manager
- The City Clerk
- The Director of Human Resources, Innovative Client Services Department
- The Human Resources Business Service Manager, Innovative Client Services Department
- The Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, Innovative Client Services Department
- The Corporate Public Policy Advisor, City Manager's Office
- The Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
- The Program Manager, Council Support Services, Office of the City Clerk
- The Manager of Legislative Services, Office of the City Clerk
- The Manager of Council and Committee Services, Office of the City Clerk
- The Program Manager of Mayor Support Services, Office of the City Clerk
- Stakeholder Relations and Legislative Officer, Office of the City Clerk
- The City Solicitor, Innovative Client Services Department
- The City Women and Gender Equity Specialist, Community and Social Services Department

Representatives from external community groups were asked to provide their perspective on the actual hiring process. Acknowledging that some groups know little about the internal process, they were asked what their expectation was for a proper recruitment and hiring process for Councillors' Assistants. Their comments were noted by the consultants and reviewed by the representatives of each group. The external groups interviewed were:

- City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE)

Likewise, two external experts were contacted, and interviews were conducted in person. The consultants provided them with a draft copy of their statement for their review and approval. The external experts interviewed were:

- Dr. Jennifer Robson from Carleton University
- Mr. Stéphane Émard-Chabot from the University of Ottawa

Additionally, research was conducted through an environmental scan of nine other Canadian municipalities. A basic questionnaire was provided, and some cities' representatives answered the

questions in writing. In other instances, the consultants were given a general statement about their process for hiring Councillors' Assistants. The results varied as each city has its own process and City Council configuration. The municipalities consulted were:

- City of Toronto
- City of Calgary
- City of Edmonton
- City of Mississauga
- City of Vancouver
- City of Montréal
- City of Gatineau
- City of Moncton
- City of Winnipeg

Lastly, Council Support Services provided the consultants with the relevant internal documents and policies. Documents and policies included:

- Job descriptions for Councillors' Assistants
- New hire package for Councillors' Assistants
- Employment Contract for Councillors' Assistants
- Councillor's Office Manual 2005
- 2019 Salary Schedule for Councillors' Assistants
- Employee Benefits Program booklet
- Ward Hiring and Turnover stats
- Exit Interview Questionnaire
- Twitter job posting example
- Non-Disclosure Agreement
- Article: Brampton closes loophole that saw councilor pay consultant \$21K as staffer
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct for Members of Council
- Accessibility Policy
- Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace Policy
- Employment of Family Members Policy
- Equity and Diversity Policy
- Local Transportation Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Protective Measures Program Policy
- Responsible Computing Policy

- Severance Pay for Councillors' Assistants
- Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy
- 2018 Office Management Orientation presentation for Councillors
- Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook

## 2.0 OVERALL FINDINGS

Overall the consultants' review found no systemic problem in the recruitment and hiring process for Councillors' Assistants. Findings suggest the hiring process used by the Councillors varies immensely but there seems to be no uncertainty that the Clerk's Office and Council Support Services is where staffing issues can be addressed. Additionally, all Councillors understood that they were bound by their *Code of Conduct* while participating in the recruitment and hiring process of their staff.

The skill set Councillors look for varies between each Councillor, but most agreed they should have the flexibility and autonomy to choose whom they see fit. Some Councillors are satisfied with the current situation as they have a good team and other Councillors would like to see more guidelines and structure for the process.

Throughout the review, it became evident that there is an issue with the remuneration of Councillors' Assistants, and this should be reviewed further. It was noted that pay equity for Councillors' Assistants amongst all offices is a concern.

On several occasions, stakeholders suggested there is a need for better orientation and information that is provided to new Councillors' Assistants. This would ensure they are informed of the resources available to them should they need to access them.

In a few statements, it was mentioned that Councillors' Assistants do not have a union or access to Human Resources (HR). However, other statements suggest not all Councillors' Assistants want a unionized environment and feel they can access Human Resources through Council Support Services.

## 3.0 ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The consultants recorded answers and statements throughout the interviews, and they reviewed, analyzed and summarized the key findings by each stakeholder group.

### 3.1 Councillors

Between January 20<sup>th</sup> and February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 17 of the 23 Councillors were interviewed for the purpose of this review. Most of the interviews were conducted in person at City Hall and the average interview lasted 45 minutes.

The remaining six Councillors were invited to participate in this review however, two declined for personal reasons and four did not follow up after several invitations.

The questionnaire identified topics such as the type of process they were using to recruit and hire their assistants, if they had any previous relationship with the assistant and its importance, the type of skills they were looking for when selecting assistants and contracted vendors, if previous political experience was a determining factor, if they were aware of candidates' rights in general, if they knew that their *Code of Conduct* was playing a role in the process, how they inform their assistants of their rights, where they go for support in hiring assistants and/or contracted vendors and finally what their overall impression was of the actual process and how it could be improved.

During the interviews, it was evident that there were different perspectives between recently elected Councillors and Councillors who have served more than one term. New term Councillors were able to express a more current perspective of the hiring process while longer standing Councillors were less likely to have been involved in the process as recently and believe that the staff in their office are a suitable fit.

Overall there are two main trends concerning the process. One group is of the opinion that the current process works for them, and they are satisfied with their process and the team in their office. Additionally, they felt there would not be opposition to a non-mandatory recruitment and hiring process standard and guidelines. The other group was openly in favour of some sort of standard process however, it appears to be important that the Councillors can retain some autonomy in the selection process.

### *3.1.1 Themes*

Overall, findings suggest the hiring process used by the Councillors varies immensely. As one Councillor said, "it's cowboy country." The consultants found that several Councillors have experimented with different processes over the years as trial and error.

A main point from several Councillors noted that once they were elected, they realized that they had to get their team in place as soon as possible. However, there was a short period in between the time they were elected and their first day on the job. This led to several Councillors choosing to hire volunteers from their campaign or individuals they already knew personally or professionally.

The consultants found that a variety of techniques are used by Councillors for recruitment. The use of their personal network for references, the City website, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media platforms were mentioned. At least 10 of the Councillors stated that they used the services of Council Support Services to assist them in the recruitment process. Council Support Services have been asked to do job postings, pull resumes and the first round of screening. Common comments about the job postings provided by Council Support Services were that they did not include the Councillor's name who was hiring, and the process can be lengthy. As a result, this could make a difference when potential candidates choose to apply.

The standard process differs greatly between each office. At least ten Councillors' Offices are using some form of a standard hiring process which may include posting the job with a job description, a screening process and an interview. Some Councillors conduct interviews by using a panel approach

which might involve themselves, their staff and Council Support Services. One office gets the entire office involved in the recruitment process and some offices administer skills tests as part of the interview. It could be described as a formalized process.

At least two Councillors delegate most of the recruitment process to an assistant and get involved only at the interview stage.

One Councillor prefers to hold the interview with candidates in a public place, such as a coffee shop. This approach appears more favourable to get to know the candidates. The majority of the other Councillors conduct their interviews at City Hall in their office or a boardroom by themselves or with someone else present.

One Councillor expressed that he does not wish to have the Clerk's Office involved in the process, with the exception of doing the job posting.

The Councillors were asked about the importance of knowing the candidate before they hire. Although several Councillors stated that they first hired people they knew, the vast majority said that this is not a determining factor in making their selection. As it currently stands, it appears there is a mix of Councillors' Assistants who knew the Councillor prior while the others had no previous relationship. One Councillor made an interesting comment, stating that if they do not know the candidate before they find it is better and less awkward. Several Councillors stated that they look predominantly at the candidate's competencies and references, looking for the best person for the job.

### *3.1.2 Skills*

When asked about their practice regarding the recruitment and hiring of contracted vendors, some Councillors stated that they already knew them beforehand, or they were referred to them. Others ask for the assistance of their staff to find contracted vendors. One office has a selection process and uses a contract with a statement of work. In this last instance, the Councillor is open to guidelines, however, they wish to retain the final decision of the selected contacted vendor.

The Councillors were asked about what skills they specifically look for when hiring Councillors' Assistants and contracted vendors. The vast majority of Councillors stated that a Councillor's Assistant requires excellent interpersonal skills which was mainly described as customer service, communication, being able to respond to their constituents and retail experience. Most Councillors said that the Councillor's Assistant job is "customer service." Two Councillors stated that they attach some importance to the candidate's political views.

Two offices are looking for Councillors' Assistants who are able to express themselves in both official languages. One Councillor mentioned that they are looking for diversity such as speaking a foreign language.

Councillors who hire contracted vendors all stated that they hire the contracted vendor based off a service requirement. This was the answer of all the Councillors interviewed.

Except for three Councillors, all Councillors do not attach importance to the candidate's past experience in a political environment. Several Councillors stated that the Councillor's Assistant position is about serving the public. The general perception was that their constituents are concerned with basic level City services and the bulk of their office's requests are linked to resolving these issues.

### 3.1.3 Rights

Councillors were asked if they were aware of the rights of the candidates while they were involved in the recruitment and hiring process. They were also asked if they knew that their own *Code of Conduct* applied to them during this process.

Two Councillors believed they could be more aware of these rights and the remaining Councillors appeared to be at ease with this subject. Eight Councillors referred to some training that was provided in the workplace when they came into office, online courses, information and orientation from the Clerk's Office. Most of them also referred to their personal professional experience.

One Councillor considers that there "might be a gap" on this issue. The Councillor indicated that there are no guidelines, structure and accountability.

All Councillors understood that they were bound by their *Code of Conduct* while participating in the recruitment and hiring process of their staff.

A question was asked about the role of the Councillors in making sure that their assistants are being made aware of their rights once hired. Most Councillors indicated that the assistants were informed by the Clerk's Office and that the City provides some training to cover this area. Four Councillors appeared to be more involved in providing their assistants with relevant information, explaining their role and responsibilities. One Councillor even mentioned that they created and posted a Team Code of Conduct and their *Code of Conduct for Members of Council* in their office.

### 3.1.4 Recruitment and Hiring Process

The Councillors were asked to give their impression of the overall recruitment and hiring process. The comments varied and this is a summary:

- The choice of a Councillor's Assistant differs between each Councillor, but they should have the flexibility and autonomy in this regard;
- Some Councillors are satisfied with the current situation as they have a good team;
- Some Councillors would like to see more guidelines and structure for the process;
- There is an issue with the remuneration of Councillors' Assistants, and this should be standardized;
- The City could provide the office staff or deal with the entire process except for the final selection;
- Some Councillors hired a personal acquaintance without them having the proper skills; and
- Some Councillors have little managerial experience and should seek more support.

### 3.1.5 Shortcomings

They were asked about any specific shortcomings in their recruitment and hiring process and ways they could improve it in future. About half of the Councillors were satisfied with the process they have been using to date, whether they use Council Support Services or not. Two Councillors indicated that a formal process through Council Support Services might be lengthy.

A few of them did encourage the implementation of guidelines, standardization and revisiting the current model. One issue raised was that a Councillor can fire a Councillor's Assistant if they wish to spend some of their budget for other purposes which can affect their job security. By implementing a standard budget for the staff costs it would improve wage inconsistencies between all Councillors' Assistants.

Councillors were asked about which resources they would consult if they had any question regarding the recruitment and hiring process. The majority pointed to Council Support Services or the Clerk's Office. There seems to be no ambiguity that this is where staffing issues must be addressed.

To conclude the interview, the Councillors were asked to provide a final comment if they wished. Their comments included:

- The onboarding process is cumbersome, and the hiring of assistants is not an easy task;
- Pay equity for Councillors' Assistants amongst all Councillors' offices is an issue;
- There is a need for more information for the newly hired assistants, as it's not obvious for them to know where and how to get support if they encounter any issue;
- Councillors' Assistants do not have a union or access to Human Resources, they are isolated;
- There should be a simple guide on the staffing process based on the one for other City employees; and
- There is a need to retain some flexibility for the Councillors.

Just like the process varies between each office, the issues vary for each Councillor. Each office has its own unique needs and almost all Councillors were in favour of retaining some flexibility in the recruitment and hiring process.

## 3.2 Councillors' Assistants

Over a period of two weeks in late January 2020, 26 Councillors' Assistants were met on a voluntary basis. The majority of the participants were women between the ages of 25 and 35 years old.

There are two main trends concerning the hiring process. One group is of the opinion that the process works fine for them and the majority of the Councillors' Assistants are satisfied with the hiring process. For this first group, there was a feeling that there would not be any opposition to the suggestion of a non-mandatory standard process or the availability of staffing guidelines. The other group was openly

in favour of some sort of standard process. What appears to be the most important factor is that there be some autonomy and flexibility in the selection process.

### 3.2.1 Roles

Various questions were asked about their role and duties as a Councillor's Assistant. The consultants asked them when they were hired, what were the main skill sets they were selected on, what kind of selection process they went through to get hired, if they knew their Councillor before being hired, if they were informed of their rights as employees during the hiring process, if they knew where to turn to during the hiring process if they had any questions, if they were informed about the *Code of Conduct*, if their perception was that the assistants around them were satisfied with the current hiring process, if there had been any shortcomings during their hiring process and their level of satisfaction regarding the hiring process. They were also asked if they wanted to add anything else to their interview.

Most of the Councillors' Assistants indicated they do case work, answer the phone, do the agenda and calendar for the Councillor, answer emails from residents, problem solve or connect residents to the appropriate services. Some assistants manage the budget for the office, do all communications, social media and newsletters. They ensure liaison with stakeholders on certain files. Some need to travel between two offices because they are in a remote area and further away from City Hall. In some offices, Councillors' Assistants will deal with strategic and political files. In some cases, a Councillor's Assistant will replace the Councillor at different events or meetings. Only one assistant talked about being responsible for ethics and the *Code of Conduct* in particular. On rare instances a Councillors Assistant indicated they organize political rallies.

### 3.2.2 Recruitment and Hiring Process

The Councillors' Assistants that we met were hired between May 2012 and September of 2019. Three different ways to hire Councillors Assistants were found and are described as follows:

- 1) Some Councillors Assistants knew the Councillor during their election campaign or through community work. Others were referred to the Councillor and were hired during an informal process. Some indicated they met with the Councillor in a public place such as at a coffee shop to discuss what the work entails, their views of the Councillor's political agenda and to determine if it would be a good fit for both parties. Once the candidate was selected, the employment contract came from the Clerk's Office with an information package containing information on employees' rights, pay, benefits, *Code of Conduct* and other relevant information. Some assistants participated in an orientation offered by the Clerk's Office to all new employees while others declined the invitation. Some met with Council Support Services and the information package was explained in detail.
- 2) The job posting was available on the Councillor's social media, website or newsletter. At that point, the Councillor's Office Manager organized a first-structured interview and if it was a possible match, a second interview was organized with the Councillor and the Office Manager. Those interviews took place in a boardroom at City Hall. Then the employment contract was issued by the Clerk's Office with an information package containing information on employees' rights, pay, benefits, *Code of Conduct*, etc. Some Councillors' Assistants

participated in an orientation offered by the Clerk's Office to all new employees. Some declined the invitation. Some were met by Council Support Services and the information package was explained in detail.

- 3) The posting of the job was available on the City of Ottawa's online job portal. The advertisement did not state for which Councillor the position was for. This seemed to have been something that was not optimal. Interviews were then organized by Council Support Services and took place in a boardroom at City Hall, followed by a second interview to meet the Councillor and see if there was a fit. These interviews were focused on customer service skills, organizational skills, and a high level of interpersonal skills. Some situational questions were also asked. Then the employment contract was issued by the Clerk's Office with an information package containing information on employees' rights, pay, benefits, *Code of Conduct*, etc. Some assistants participated in an orientation offered by the Clerk's Office to all new employees. Some declined the invitation. Some were met by Council Support Services where all the information package was explained in detail.

More than half of the interviewees did not previously know the Councillor they are working for. Only a few of the assistants were able to negotiate their salary. The remuneration is conditional on the salary budget available within each Councillor's office.

Some assistants were informed of the job opening through word of mouth, through social media, through the Councillor directly, or through the City's online job portal.

### *3.2.3 Skills and Experience*

Councillors' Assistants were hired mainly for customer service, interpersonal skills, organizational skills, communication skills and software knowledge. In some cases, political or journalism experience was important and specific experience related to the Councillor's platform i.e., environment or parks and recreation.

Most of the assistants did not have previous political experience and indicated this was not experience the Councillor was looking for as customer service experience was better for the work to be performed.

### *3.2.4 Rights*

On the topic of Councillors' Assistants being informed of accommodation measures, discrimination and employees' rights, they were all given a package with their employment contract informing them on those topics. Only the Councillors' Assistants who applied for the job through the City's online job portal were asked if they needed accommodations (special needs or accommodation due to a handicap) for their interviews, as this type of question relating to accommodation is part of the City portal's hiring process. As for the existence of a *Code of Conduct*, most assistants were already aware of it. All received their employment contract in a package prepared by the Clerk's Office where the information on the *Code of Conduct* was included.

### *3.2.5 Shortcomings*

Regarding the satisfaction of the hiring process, more than 90 per cent of the interviewees said that the way they were hired was very good. Some appreciated the structured interview organized by the Clerk's Office, some felt that the casual meeting in a coffee shop was much better than a structured interview, that there is a need for flexibility in the hiring process as there is a need for a "good fit" with their office, and each Ward is different. Some said that a Councillor is as good as their staff. Due to this, they feel it is very important that there should not be a strict hiring process. Some assistants are not satisfied because the Councillors hire, and the staff's input is not taken into consideration. Dynamics in the office is very important because they have to share the space with each other. They must get along; therefore it would be optimal to include the staff in the hiring process. It seems that with the current term of Council, there is more tension. It is not appropriate to say that it is scary to come to work in every office.

Some of the identified shortcomings in the hiring process were around the fact that the advertisement on the City portal doesn't indicate for which Councillor the vacancy to fill is for. Due to the time frame the Councillor is hired for, a staffing process needs to be flexible and efficient. Another issue would be around the salary given to each assistant. There is no consistency, as a Councillor may have different needs for an assistant and may pay them higher than in another ward. However, bonuses are offered to compensate throughout the year in some offices.

Some new Councillors have not managed staff in their life prior to being elected. For these, Human Resources or the Clerk's Office should be more involved to guide Councillors in how to manage an office and staff. If there was more preparation with the selection process, the right people would be hired, therefore reducing the turnover. During the orientation, some Councillors' Assistants reported being informed that since they are not employees per se, they don't have protection, they could lose their jobs if the Councillor chooses to do so.

Another shortcoming in the hiring process is that if people want to complain, they have to complain to the Councillor, so it should be through an arm's length process. Having some third-party supervision during the hiring process would be fair and a good safety measure. HR needs to be a representative, not a deciding party. Some thought that the hiring process should be at the discretion of the Councillor and that it needs to be flexible. It would be a huge detriment if the City gets involved in the hiring process. Some Councillors' Assistants felt that HR and the City do have a hidden agenda; They are not neutral arbiters in this process. There is room for more structure: HR could be part of the interviews but should not have a say in who gets to be hired. One assistant reported that they wouldn't be here if that was the case. Very few have reported that people have been fired because of their views and Councillors were told that they should fire someone in their office if they want their file to advance.

Most of the interviewees reported that they would have gone to see the Clerk's Office, Council Support Services, the Office Manager or the Councillor if they had questions about the hiring process.

Some Councillors' Assistants suggested improving the hiring process by reviewing who is involved in interviews, job security and the protection and prevention of harassment.

Having an HR representative on the selection board or having more than one person present during the interview process could be a good idea. Some Councillors' Assistants believe the City's bureaucracy should not be involved in the hiring process. A few Councillors' Assistants reported that sometimes they are bullied because of the work they do.

Some interviewees reported the review of the recruitment and hiring process is about the behaviour of one Councillor. They don't think that the hiring process is the issue. It is about the amount of power the Councillors have over their employees; they can be fired without cause. The problem lies with the fact that the assistants have no protection once hired, as opposed to how they are being hired.

About job security, one Councillor's Assistant reported it would be nice, if Councillors were to terminate someone, that the assistants be informed of that decision, what their expectations are and clarify what their political role is if this is the case. They are in a political role unlike other employees at the City of Ottawa. That freedom has to remain.

The issue is not about the hiring process but about having better protection around prevention of harassment. Maybe a policy should be put in place just for political staff, and that the delegated person to review those complaints be at arm's length from the City and therefore totally independent.

Some interviewees reported that there is so much emphasis on the needs of the Councillors, the loyalty, the flexibility but we overlook the fact that this leaves room for abusing the Councillors' Assistants.

On a scale of one to 10, one being not satisfied and 10 being very satisfied, all the interviewees gave a satisfaction of 6 and above. The majority are very happy by the way they were hired. Some comments were about the length of time it takes when you go through HR because the process includes posting and screening. HR could be there to support the Councillor's Office more, participate on the interview boards and be there for them and not for the City.

The last question for all interviewees was if they had any comments to add. The comments were more in relation to the employees' protection, job security, the lack of definition of the Councillor's Assistant role and that they are not recognized as City staff. The majority of the interviewees felt they were in a safe workplace but also felt that if they were to complain about being harassed, a proper system protecting them should be in place. They also mentioned that a proper performance assessment program should be in place to protect them and that the current mentality is to protect the Councillors and not the Councillors' Assistants.

Just like the process varies across the offices, the issues vary for each Councillor's Office. Each Ward has its specificities and almost all Councillors' Assistants were in favour of some flexibility in the recruitment and hiring process.

### 3.3 Contracted Vendors

Council Support Services provided the consultants with a list of 8 contracted vendors. All of them were contacted for the purpose of answering a series of predetermined questions. Of these 8 vendors, 6 responded to the invitation.

The questions covered the type of process by which they were hired, if they had any previous relationship with the Councillor, the type of skills they were hired for, if previous political experience was a determining factor, if they were aware of any rights that they were entitled to, if they knew that the Councillors were bound by a *Code of Conduct*, if they were satisfied with the actual hiring process and finally if they had a contract in place for their services.

The majority of the contracted vendors were hired without any type of process. One vendor indicated that there was an interview. Most of them already knew the Councillor from past professional experience or as an acquaintance. Most contracted vendors were all hired for specific skills whether it was social media, computer skills, or social skills. There was no request for previous experience in a political environment. About half of the vendors indicated that they were informed of their rights and knew that the Councillors had a *Code of Conduct*.

All the contracted vendors are fully satisfied with the way by which they were hired. Only one contracted vendor indicated that they have signed a contract in the past. All others simply submit an invoice or a time sheet to be paid for their services.

The information gathered from the contracted vendors is consistent with the information collected from the Councillors. These vendors were hired for specific skills and there was no formality to engage into their service agreement. The vendors are mostly individuals whom the Councillor already knew.

### 3.4 Other City of Ottawa Employees

Over a period of four weeks in late January and early February 2020, 14 employees of the City of Ottawa were met on a voluntary basis or offered their comments. Questions were asked about their knowledge of how recruitment and hiring is done for the Councillors' Assistants. We asked them what were the main skill sets that Councillors' Assistants were selected on, what kind of selection process is used to hire them, if they knew if new Councillors' Assistants were informed of their rights as employees during the hiring process, if they knew where they could turn to during the hiring process if they had any questions, if the Councillors' Assistants were informed about the *Code of Conduct*, if their perception was that the people on Council Row were satisfied with the current hiring process, and if there are any shortcomings in the existing hiring process, in their opinion.

Overall, there are two main trends concerning the hiring process. Some think that the process could be improved and that the City could be of better guidance to the newly appointed Councillors and their staff, specifically with training related to office management. In terms of having a standard hiring process, most employees think that there needs to be flexibility because of the different mandates and political agendas of the Councillors.

The majority knows that the Councillors may choose the mechanism they wish to use to hire their staff, whether through a structured process managed through HR services, through their office or through a more informal process, i.e. over coffee, for example. Half of the interviewees think that there should be specific skill set for the Councillor's Assistant position to allow for transparency, and those positions should be hired through a structured process through HR services. This would

ensure that the right staff are hired for the right job. Some, however, think that there should be flexibility as Councillors may have different needs based on their responsibilities and their vision for their respective Wards. More support may be provided to the Councillors that don't have any previous experience in hiring and managing an office.

There could be an improvement in the involvement of the City in hiring the Councillors' staff. Employees could be better informed of their rights through orientation.

A better structured pay scale based on relevant job skills should be looked into to ensure consistency in the salaries offered to Councillors' Assistants.

#### 4.0 CITY'S WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY SPECIALIST

From a gender perspective, the gender-equity specialist wished to provide feedback on the questionnaire and the following comments were brought forward as follows:

Although the issue triggering the review falls under the mandate of human resources, it is indeed considered a women and gender equity issue. As you know, Councillors' Assistants are not strictly part of the City's workforce (or at least not counted as such), and the hiring process is not highly structured. Women in positions such as "Councillors' Assistants" are for multiple reasons subject to disfavoured gender power relations in the workplace which is why a gender-sensitive approach is key to data collection.

Please note that when a group has allegedly experienced some form of gender-based violence (as direct victims or as bystanders) there is an expected intimidation that comes with having to answer questions on "personal" experiences. This includes the fact that individuals who may have experienced some form of harassment and have not reported it would feel ashamed to meaningfully participate (shame of delayed response). Bystanders who have information would also abstain from responding to questions due to the shame of non-response. Sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace are usually linked to subtle gender biases in the organizational culture and lack of accountability pathways or mechanisms of reporting rather than lack of information or guidelines.

The questionnaire puts great emphasis on "knowledge" more than "experience." It is of value to get input from the target group collectively about the caveats of this position and the overall experience and perceived risk. Questions may put Councillors' Assistants on the spot or may indicate that bettering the current situation is their responsibility.

The following recommendations were suggested, going forward:

- Add an approach to data collection that addresses broader perceptions on "work environment and organizational culture." If it is too much of a pressure to go back to a target group, a tool could be developed for anonymous feedback online, asking general questions about the situation and how it can be improved;

- Engage stakeholders after preliminary data has been collected who could discuss the early findings of the recruitment process, and identify gaps from both a human resources and equity gender perspective; and
- Examine staff awareness on current City measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace from a system perspective, so that access to critical information on safety can be assessed. For example, it was not possible to find any source on the standard recruitment and hiring process of Councillors' Assistants. The info should be accessible to all, especially to City staff working on gender and human resources issues.

## 5.0 EXTERNAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

At the request of the Clerk's Office, the consultants reached out to three external stakeholder groups for their statements regarding the recruitment and hiring process for Councillors' Assistants. They were interviewed and were given the opportunity to review their comments and amend them if necessary.

### 5.1 City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)

On February 4, 2020, Ms. Valerie Stam, Executive Director for CAWI, was interviewed for this review and asked to share her view regarding the hiring of Councillors' Assistants. This is her statement:

Ms. Stam does not have a good knowledge of the HR process concerning the hiring of Councillors' Assistants. She knows that they are not part of a union and not given the same benefits as other City employees.

In terms of hiring, she believes that there are some basic practices that should be instated. For example, holding interviews in the workplace i.e., Councillor's Office, or somewhere else at City Hall.

From her perspective she finds that it is quite unexpected that when a problem arose (referring to recent events) about the recruitment and hiring practice of the assistants, the ensemble of Councillors did not appear to quite know what the process was to address the specific situation. This process, and the role of the Integrity Commissioner, also seems to not be well known by the public. If this is the process that must be undertaken to address ethical issues with the Councillors, then the public would need to be made aware of it.

Ms. Stam is of the opinion that right now there is an opportunity to see if the recourse involving the Integrity Commissioner is the proper one and if there is a need for additional options depending on the specific nature of the matter i.e., financial issues, workplace violence, harassment, etc. The nature of sexual harassment is different than financial embezzlement, for example, and should be treated differently.

The opportunity could also serve in reviewing the harassment in the workplace policy, the pay equity, gender-specific accommodations and promote the awareness of these policies. CAWI is a women's organization, but they don't specifically deal with violence against women issues. Their comments on the recruitment and hiring process are broader and more general, there are other organizations with

more specific mandates related to this matter. A major point would be to have a more transparent process. We should look at standardizing the remuneration for the assistants, giving equal pay for equal work, the possibility of offering flexible work schedules, and a supportive environment for childcare and eldercare, so as to attract a gender-diverse workforce. In conclusion, she submitted the idea of implementing some sort of employee organization or union for the assistants might be an interesting option to consider.

## 5.2 Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)

On February 13, 2020, Ms. Erin Leigh, Executive Director for OCTEVAW, was interviewed for this review and asked to share her view regarding the hiring of Councillors' Assistants. This is her statement:

“We believe that the report of this review of the recruitment and hiring process of Councillors' Assistants should be shared and rendered public. Any recommendation put forward by the Clerk's Office should be done in partnership with community organizations having expertise in gender-based violence and violence against women.

With respect to hiring and recruitment policies and frameworks, generally speaking, we think that the more formalized the process, the better. The more it has the same framework across the board, the better. This is a rudimentary principle and therefore creating a standardized process is our most basic request. In particular, the City appears to be addressing this area of human resources because survivors of sexual violence have shone a light into its dark corners. We believe that the City has to look at its entire framework and beyond. The City cannot make its review solely about hiring and recruitment of Councillors' Assistants; it cannot be an isolated exercise as gender-based violence is endemic across society. Likewise, the light may have been shone on the weaknesses of this particular aspect of the City's HR framework, but it cannot stop here. The City needs to be proactive and broaden the scope of its review.

In the current context, the media played a vital accountability role, but only because of survivors' courage in coming forward. When survivors come forward, there is no personal reward for doing so. We don't know how many other survivors have not been in a position to come forward, and never blame anyone for remaining private in these matters. Survivors of sexual violence are motivated to come forward and disclose to prevent further violence from occurring. However, the City should be proactive in preventing violence. The burden of addressing these issues should not rely on an individual or individuals having the courage to come forward. We need to ensure that whatever is in place shifts this labour to the City.

I would suggest that in a year or two, after whatever recommendations are implemented, that a review be done. This could be an anonymous survey to all individuals who presented themselves as candidates and the ones who were hired. This should be for Councillors' Assistants as well as all City staff. While the City is making a concerted effort to address

violence in this context, it cannot be allowed to be a one-off moment where time and resources are dedicated in light of media controversy. This can't be temporary lip service.

We must ensure that the City is continuously committed to addressing this issue, learning and improving in its approaches to help prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Now happens to be a moment where the City and more mainstream actors are caring about this issue, but this cannot end once the media has stopped covering this issue.

So that brings us to some of the specific mechanisms and measures that can be put in place in hiring and recruitment of Councillors Assistants to help prevent and respond to sexual violence. A possible control measure would be the introduction of a follow-up email or survey with all applicants to know if they felt safe, if they experienced any sexual misconduct or other discriminatory practices. The modalities of this feedback could be worked out with the Clerk's Office (whether anonymous or not, etc.). The idea is to help open avenues for complainants/survivors to be able to disclose sexual misconduct or other wrongdoing and to indicate the City's commitment to being proactive and supportive in these instances.

For the Councillors, this would be an oversight mechanism working in real time, a deterrent for any misconduct.

Broadly speaking, in developing a framework that is survivor centric, OCTEVAW typically looks at how a system is able to promote prevention; support survivors; respond to incidents sensitively and hold perpetrators to account. My hope is that this review will use a similar lens to ensure that the breadth of what needs to be done is captured.

From a prevention perspective, there are a few things that come to mind. The City could formalize the process, by having:

- more than one person conducting candidate interviews;
- standard job descriptions and advertisement practices;
- the names of the applicants hidden when sorting the resumes; and
- interviews on City properties and within working hours.

These are measures that should be in place to help prevent violence, avoid discrimination and create a more inclusive process overall.

For the electronic job postings, there could be a link for the applicants that would lead them to a site explaining the recruitment and hiring process as well as the recourses if there was any sexual misconduct or other form of discrimination. This information has to be provided with accessible and plain language summary. We must stay away from complicated legal language.

I don't know what system exists now at the City, but they should review any existing code of conduct to see how gender-based violence and violence against women and other Human Rights Code violations are being dealt with. Current sanctions should be reviewed to determine their appropriateness, with support from experts working on gender-based violence and violence against women.

In the interview rooms, there could be some prevention and support material clearly visible about the recruitment and hiring process and, once again, what are the recourses available to remind the applicants of their rights. I would like to reiterate that a Councillor should have someone else in the interview, but if it's a Councillors staff member, this creates a power imbalance. There should be someone present at the interview that is impartial.

I'd like to now turn attention to how the City should respond in situations where a survivor/complainant discloses sexual misconduct. What is the support provided to her/them? I think we need to make sure that the City provides the Councillors' Assistants and the candidates to these positions, with references for community support services, such as a pamphlet (OCTEVAW and others have referral resources available already that can be used or adapted). All this should be available right at the beginning of the process. People should be able to know that they can communicate with community resources to be their advocate, to help with the recourse available. In addition to making information available about what community resources are available, there could be an internal City support mechanism with representatives from existing external community resources. This would be available on City locations and funded by the City i.e. CALACS Francophone d'Ottawa, Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre and the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa. The City should also ensure that regardless of the avenue a survivor/complainant discloses that they are treated with compassion, fairness and their privacy is respected. We have heard in the community that survivors that came forward went to HR and that their disclosures were blocked from advancing and that they were shared with the Councillor. This is a serious breach of trust and privacy. The City should have an any door type of policy – a survivor/complainant should be able to disclose in whatever way feels most appropriate and safest for her/them without fear of being blocked or her privacy breached.

I think there is a need for more public awareness about the existence of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. When we do public messaging, the information has to be very explicit and an organization like ours would welcome a proper practice, supporting explicit messages. In addition to the scope of this review, there has to be a thorough review of the complaint and investigation process by the Integrity Commissioner with respect to sexual misconduct and other forms of violence against women and gender-based violence, as well as ensuring that it is clearly communicated to all.

Right now, our perspective is that the burden of the process rests entirely on the survivor/complainant. An example of a different way to proceed would be that someone could submit, anonymously, or not, a complaint. This is the process that exists at OC Transpo as a result of the partnership developed with GBV and VAW experts in the city on the Women's Safety Stakeholder Working Group. A review of complaints may give enough information to undertake concrete actions. There has to be a record of complaints without obliging an individual to come forward.

There has to be a clear protocol about the complaining process and the different avenues available. The options for Police and Hospital should be options offered in the protocol, but never pressured. This is where specific organizations, with expertise in VAW and GBV (SASC, ORCC, CALACS francophone d'Ottawa), would be helpful in helping the parties involved in navigating the process.

There should also be a review of dispute resolution alternatives and it should ensure that they are trauma informed and take account of power imbalances that are inherent in situations of violence against women and gender-based violence. For example, there shouldn't be a 'mediated' session between the complainant and accused if the complainant doesn't feel safe participating. The burden of proof should not mirror that of the criminal justice system and members of the community should be made aware of the difference in the burden of proof when dealing with an administrative investigation and recourses. Is there a system like the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board that could be implemented for the survivors/victims at the City? This could be implemented as a possible recourse based on support, in addition to, or in lieu of, an investigation of the Integrity Commissioner.

We are involved in reviewing closed police files where there were complaints of domestic and sexual violence and no charges were laid. In the same manner, we would suggest that there could be an oversight of the Integrity Commissioner's decisions by front line advocates.

My final comment is that there is a spectrum of people causing harm, serial predators and others not serial in nature. We have to believe every survivor. We shouldn't have to expect a dozen survivors to disclose to believe one survivor. Whatever moves forward should be institutionalized in the long term, and not a pilot that disappears after a year or two. This is an endemic issue and there has to be permanent mechanisms in place.”

### 5.3 Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE)

On February 3, 2020, Ms. Valerie Collicott the Policy and Administrative Coordinator at WISE and Ms. Hailey Di Caita were interviewed for this review and asked to share their view regarding the hiring of Councillors' Assistants. This is their joint statement:

They first stated that they are not very familiar with the staffing process involving the Councillor's Assistants.

From their point of view, there seems to be the normal administrative process of the City with the Human Resources Department; however, it appears that the Councillor Assistant candidates are not going through the same process. It seems like the Councillor is the employer and that the Councillors Assistants are working under the full authority of the Councillors. It's as if there is no other link in the middle.

WISE is promoting a fair and safe workplace at the City. They have often done workplace audits for women's safety. They examine the social and physical environments looking for any impact on women's safety. They could also see themselves looking at hiring practices. They are aware that there

is a Code of Conduct at the City but wonder who is monitoring it, overseeing it, they stated that we have to make sure that there is a mechanism in place to perform these tasks.

They think that there should be a link between the regular human resource administrative practices and the hiring process by the Councillors, i.e., someone sitting on the interview board, some resources to be able to receive complaints. They would like to see some resolution mechanisms readily available for the complainants before it gets to the formal complaint level.

They are not sure if there this is the actual practice, but they advocate a formal recruiting and hiring process because they want to see transparency. Within that process, the candidates would be explained how the hiring process works, who is making which decision. This process would also inform the candidates of their recourse if needed. They are wondering if there are clear job descriptions. From what they know, it seems as if not everyone is clear about what is being asked of them. Having clear job descriptions would prevent that inappropriate requests be made to the assistants. Several candidates might be young and inexperienced, this would offer them some protection and clearly dictates what is allowed or not. It would also benefit the Councillors as everyone would know what the ground rules are.

There should be an orientation or information to inform the assistants about their rights, whatever recourse is available, what steps they must follow in situations of need, this has to be clear. One issue is that they may have a situation with a Councillor and there is a need to have another resource to intervene. This process should also be standardized across all Councillors' Offices.

There has to be a strong complaint mechanism, clear to everyone, including a swift investigation process into issues. Otherwise it does not create a healthy working environment. An existing problem might be that the assistants are probably isolated from other Councillors' assistants for a variety of reasons. This may prevent them from coming forward and making any complaint.

The Councillors' Assistants could be hired through the regular Human Resources Department process. Then they would have access to all the same advantages of the other City employees. They should get the same employment protection and benefits as the other City employees. Finally, we would like to make sure that if a potential assistant has a need for accommodations, the Councillor has the financial resources to provide them. This way the Councillors would not be able to discriminate against people with disabilities due to a lack of funds.

## 6.0 EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Both experts were identified by the Clerk's Office. They were interviewed in person and were given the opportunity to review their comments and amend it if necessary.

### 6.1 Dr. Jennifer Robson - Carleton University

Dr. Robson is an Associate Professor of Political Management at Carleton University's Kroeger College. She holds several degrees: BA Hon. Psychology, MA Political Science and a PhD in Public

Policy. She is also a Fellow with the Public Policy Forum. She currently teaches Policy and Political Management.

Prior to joining Carleton University, she was the director of policy of a national non-profit organization and worked in the federal public service. She previously worked as a political aide to two federal Cabinet ministers, including three years (1997 to 2000) as an aide to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. She also worked for the Director of Policy and Research in the Prime Minister's Office from 1995 to 1997. As a political aide, her role was to perform research, policy reviews and to provide political advice to decision makers.

Among Dr. Robson's research and teaching interests is gender equity, as well as the roles and governance of political staff. She has made several appearances in a variety of media and public panels. Her expert opinion is sought on a variety of contemporary and trending public issues. She has served as an external expert to the Privy Council Office, the federal department of Employment and Social Development and the federal Department of Finance. She is currently working with the City of Toronto on a research project and regularly collaborates with community-based organizations on research and policy projects. Dr. Robson's experience is both practical and academic.

As part of this review, Dr. Robson was provided with the templates for the Councillor's Assistant full-time and part-time contracts. It is on the basis of this contractual agreement that she commented on the hiring process of the Councillor's Assistant position. Upon reading the contract, she noted that the governance and accountability of the City, the Councillor and the employee are not well defined.

Dr. Robson compared the municipal rules on staffing to those for elected federal legislators and members of the executive (Cabinet). Dr. Robson noted that political assistants, whether in federal or municipal political offices, are precarious employees who serve at the pleasure of elected officials. However, she noted that in the federal system, separate governance arrangements cover each the executive and legislative offices of elected officials. These arrangements hold ministers accountable to Parliament, recognize the right of the House of Commons to set rules for itself, and aim to protect the non-partisan nature of the public service. In the House of Commons, the Board of Internal Economy (made up of MPs) sets annual budgets for MP offices, rules on the use of Member budgets and sets some general parameters for human resources practices. By contrast, ministerial office staff budgets and standardized job descriptions are set by the Treasury Board, with informal oversight of political staff by the Prime Minister's Office. In the case of municipal government, the legislative and executive functions are merged. In principle, there are important differences between a political employment with the City (public service) and employment in the political office of a municipal Councillor.

Dr. Robson stated that, as currently drafted, the employment contracts for Councillors' Assistants do not adequately articulate separate roles and accountabilities for the elected Councillor, the employee or the a-political public service of the City. In this particular contract, the City is the employer and the Councillors are not a party to the agreement. Although not a party to the agreement, it is the Councillor who dictates the pay rate and details of the assistant's job description and expected tasks. Dr. Robson questioned whether the City of Ottawa should be named as the legal employer when assistants for elected Councillors are recruited and chosen by individual Councillors. Further,

Councillors' Assistants can be expected to work in political capacities that will advance the re-election prospects of a Councillor. Instead, if the intent of the current contract is to mimic an executive branch model, she asks whether there ought to be some form of central oversight and regulation of human resources in Councillors' offices, as is practiced federally in staffing ministerial offices.

In addition to this broader question of governance, Dr. Robson believes that the current contract used by Ottawa Councillors has at least four other challenges: transparency, coordination with other City policies, access to training for staff, and dispute resolution processes.

Dr. Robson commented on the wording of the contract that requires Councillors' assistants to obey and carry out all lawful orders of the Councillor. This appears to be a unilateral agreement as there is no reciprocal obligation clearly outlined for the Councillor to respect any legal obligation, such as their Code of Conduct. There is no direction or protection for employees if a Councillor were to give unreasonable direction.

Dr. Robson also commented on the confidentiality clause of the contract. From her perspective it is overly broad and, as worded, seems to have no reasonable limits on duration or exemptions. This appears to deny any option for whistle-blowers or even standard language on disclosure for legal requirements. Furthermore, the contract does not provide the parties with any direction on handling records generated during the normal business of a Councillor's office. Dr. Robson stated that, at the federal level, there are several and clearer policies guiding political and public service employees. To that effect, the House of Commons has a standard employment letter and with annexed material to deal with confidentiality and other matters. Likewise, federal ministerial staff are subject to various laws and policies governing confidentiality and government documents.

The Councillor's Assistant contract contains a clause stating that the employee agrees not to disclose their terms of employment, such as salary and benefits, with other employees of the City of Ottawa. Dr. Robson believes that this is not an enforceable clause. Additionally, this could be used as an easy justification to fire an employee who may contravene the clause, deliberately or not. She referred to federal ministerial and House of Commons' practices where standard ranges of pay for different staff positions are published and updated periodically.

Dr. Robson pointed out that the contract obliges employees to observe the general workplace rules of the Employer and to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the requirement of their position. This poses an issue as the contract does not define what are the "workplace rules" nor what is to be considered the required "manner." Dr. Robson did note that the contract requires that the employee attest that they have been able to read the Employee Code of Conduct, the Responsible Computing and Workplace Harassment policies. These documents may not be a complete collection of the above-mentioned workplace rules. They should, in her view, be more clearly named as conditions (or not) of employment in the contract. Dr. Robson states that she was able to locate and review the Employee Code of Conduct for the City, but not the other two policy documents. In her review of the Code, she noted that some requirements of the Code may be at odds with the requirements of the employment contract. For example, the Code requires City employees to be impartial, while the employment contract requires assistants to obey their Councillor.

Dr. Robson commented on the dispute resolution clause of the contract. From her perspective it is simply not logical to impose a time limit of five (5) days from the incident for the employee to file a complaint with the City Clerk. History has demonstrated that much more than five days is usually required for an alleged victim to make the decision to come forward as well as gathering the necessary evidence for their case. Reading the employment contract for Councillors' Offices, an assistant may believe that they have no right of appeal in the dispute process. Dr. Robson noted that, although the Clerk might not re-examine their own decision, the employees should in principle, still have recourse available to other employees in Ontario, such as the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the City Integrity Commissioner, or even civil proceedings.

Dr. Robson emphasized that an assistant who launches a complaint against their Councillor with the City Clerk is at a considerable disadvantage in economic, political and social power. She wondered whether the dispute resolution process is actually used by the Councillors' employees or whether they instead avoid reporting any concerns they may have for fear of losing their employment. Dr. Robson noted that political staff are often hired with a strong expectation of loyalty by their elected boss. If an elected official feels that loyalty has been broken; they likely will not want to continue employing an assistant.

On a final note, Dr. Robson is glad to hear that the City of Ottawa provides training for workplace harassment. There are also other areas which might be important to provide training for. One of them would be records management and compliance with Access to Information rules.

Dr. Robson made several recommendations regarding the employment of Councillors' Assistants in the City of Ottawa:

- 1) That the employment of Councillors' Assistants be informed by a clearer governance framework for the elected Councillor, the apolitical City administration and the individual employee. This framework should inform any efforts to standardize job descriptions and compensation, and any other terms relating to the employment of Councillors' Assistants.
- 2) That the application of City rules and Codes of Conduct be clarified for Councillors' Assistants and that these be made part of the employment contract, with copies of such rules publicly available for prospective staff. This also includes reconciling the language of the employment contract with the applicable City policy documents.
- 3) That Council, with the City, revise the dispute resolution mechanism to allow for different processes to be used, depending on the nature of the dispute. She also proposes that, due to the nature of the work performed by Councillors' assistants, there might be a need to have their own Code of Conduct. Dr. Robson is not certain whether the City's general harassment policy is appropriately designed to deal with the unique status of Councillors' Assistants. Usually this type of policy requires that the employee's supervisor or manager are the ones responsible for taking the immediate actions and even get an investigation launched if required. A policy regarding staff of Councillors should ensure that the reporting assistant is directed to an appropriate authority, not necessarily their own Councillor.

- 4) That Council explore ways to encourage a diverse pool of prospective candidates when recruiting new assistants to their offices. This might include, at a minimum, more public information on the rules and policies for Councillors' Assistants so that prospective candidates can better understand and evaluate an offer of employment before signing a contract. It might also include a coordinated internship program to provide entry-level experiences to Ottawa youth who aspire to work in politics. As a general assessment, Dr. Robson stated that City Councillors understandably want to hire good and loyal assistants. However, she argued that "we might also want to have Councillor's Office staff that better reflect the diversity of City." Diversity in staff, argues Dr. Robson, is likely to lead to better support for Council and better outcomes for residents of Ottawa.
- 5) That, without limiting the ability of Councillors to hire personnel they trust and who share their political goals, Dr. Robson recommends measures to encourage greater public accountability for the use of public funds to hire staff and contractors. For example, she spoke about a mechanism of public reporting such as annual public reporting on how much each Councillor is spending on wages for their office staff and contractors. This would promote transparency and facilitate public scrutiny regarding the use of public funds.
- 6) That Council include a dedicated budget for each Councillor's Office for the purpose of training and professional development of the Councillors' Assistants. This investment could benefit the Councillors and improve their office professionalism.

## 6.2 Mr. Stéphane Émard-Chabot - University of Ottawa

Mr. Stéphane Émard-Chabot is a full-time lecturer and former Assistant-Dean at the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa. Mr. Émard-Chabot holds a Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com.) and a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.), he is also a member of the Bar of Ontario since 1993.

Before joining the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, he served two consecutive terms as an Ottawa City Councillor and then joined Soloway Wright LLP's municipal law team. Mr. Émard-Chabot has been the external legal counsel for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) since 2008 and has been involved in several cases affecting municipalities across Canada.

He has served as a Board member for various non-profit organizations and is a known commentator for municipal affairs in the region for CBC and Radio-Canada networks. For the purpose of this review he has been provided with the details related to the employment terms of the Councillor's Assistant position and provided his opinion on the existing recruitment and hiring process.

For Mr. Émard-Chabot, the word "abuse" comes to mind when he thinks about the most significant risk flowing from work relationship between the Councillor and the assistant. This is due to the very unique relationship that exists between the two. He is convinced that the level of trust and loyalty from the assistant is of the utmost importance. However, this could lead to serious mishaps.

From his perspective, a Councillor is not just hiring the most qualified individual but also a loyal employee. This particularity does mean that the recruitment and hiring process cannot be more objective, transparent and robust.

For example, something that would be fairly easy to implement would be the creation of a template (or a small number of templates) of a job description setting out basic tasks. As part of the process, he recommends that the Councillor be accompanied by another person for all job interviews. His position is that being alone with a candidate is problematic.

Ideally, there should be someone else present, ideally someone from outside the Councillor's Office, such as a human resource professional. Resorting to a more formal and transparent process is not only important for the future employee but also protects the Councillor from making inadvertent mistakes. He stated that the Councillors come from a variety of backgrounds and they may have no, or limited experience, in hiring employees. There should be minimum safeguards in the process for both parties.

Mr. Émard-Chabot is a former Ottawa City Councillor and stated that there is a practical reality that once in office, some Councillors might be in their position for an extended period of time. This can raise the risk of a certain sense of entitlement in the position and its authority. The formalization of the process and the inclusion of an outside resource along the way could bolster due process and alleviate the risks of inadvertent abuses of authority. Mr. Émard-Chabot firmly reiterated that "a basic practice is that you don't interview a candidate alone."

Mr. Émard-Chabot is also proposing that there should be a standard set of questions to be used for a formal interview process. This does not prevent a Councillor from tailoring this questionnaire. This part of the process would benefit both the parties, it would demonstrate the integrity and credibility of this exercise.

Mr. Émard-Chabot was informed about the dispute resolution process which is part of the Councillor's Assistant contract and asked for his position on this issue.

He stated again that the Councillor-assistant relationship is very important in this unusual working environment. It is most probable that if a work issue arises between them, no matter which side it originates from, the relationship is at risk due to a probable erosion of trust. If the relationship is damaged, there is limited room to maneuver. In a political context, a latent dispute could be damaging if not promptly dealt with. There should be an attempt to resolve issues but it's clear that if the resolution is not effective in re-establishing the relationship, therefore the employment relationship is practically doomed to failure.

He is of the opinion that there is a need for a variety of alternative dispute resolution services. For example, a Human Resource Labour Relations expert could be brought in to provide support into an informal resolution process. At times, some issues could easily be resolved by providing the proper information to the parties and it does not require to be brought forward to the Clerk's Office and seek a decision in a formal setting.

On a final note, he provided his perspective on a fair process to remunerate the assistant. As with the recruitment and hiring process, he thinks that there should be a framework to align the wages of the assistants to ensure pay equity amongst the Councillors' assistants, and equitable treatment over time.

There are some standard benchmarks commonly used elsewhere such as the complexity of the tasks, the experience level and seniority in the position. There should be some basic factors to determine the pay scale. There should also be a minimum pay rate in light of these typical requirements. In conclusion, he added that a formal performance assessment is a proper way which might be used to decide on a pay raise.

## 7.0 OTHER CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

Research was conducted by providing a survey to nine other Canadian municipalities. A basic questionnaire was provided, and some city's representatives answered the questions in writing. In other instances, the consultants were given a general statement about their process for hiring Councillors' Assistant's.

### 7.1 City of Toronto

Members of Council are responsible for all aspects of the recruitment and hiring process including reviewing, screening, testing, interviews, reference checks, selection and job offer and determining level of compensation within the Council-approved salary range for the position. It is up to each Councillor to determine the skills required for the assistants. The City's Human Resources Division is not involved with hiring staff for Members of Council.

The Council staff signs an employment contract which outlines their rights. In addition, appended to the contract is the Human Resources Management and Ethical Framework for Members' staff<sup>1</sup> which is a consolidated framework that sets out the roles and responsibilities of Members of Council for managing the City employees under their authority and affirms applicable City Human Resources policy requirements for Members' staff.

The newly hired office staff underwent an orientation process the start of the most recent Council term (November 2018 – November 2022). This orientation for Council staff focused on the following subjects:

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy;
- Protocol 101 and Representing the City of Toronto;
- Submitting Items to Committee and Council;
- Navigating [toronto.ca/council/](https://www.toronto.ca/council/);

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/council/policies-and-guidelines/human-resources-managementand-ethical-framework-for-members-staff/>

- Serve your City: All about Public Appointments;
- Public Polling – Your Role;
- Council Member Expense Dashboard Demonstration;
- Council Member Knowledge Application Demonstration;
- Health & Safety Training for Supervisors;
- Introduction to Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) and Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT);
- Understanding Changes to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act;
- Special Occasion Permits and Temporary Liquor License Extensions: Your Role in the City's New Process; and
- More than Mapping – Mapping and Location Information in Your Ward.

## 7.2 City of Calgary

There are 14 Ward offices in Calgary, and each consists of a Councillor and up to three employees (these employees can either be full-time or part-time). The Councillor contracts his/her employees, meaning the employment agreement is between the Councillor and the employee and not the City of Calgary.

Many of the benefits for the Ward Assistants are similar to the City of Calgary employees; however, there are some differences. There are a number of Council policies relating to the Ward Assistants, the benefits they are entitled to and the different roles they could have within the Ward office. The City has two specific policies concerning the assistants: Assistants Policy<sup>2</sup> and the Assistants Severance Policy<sup>3</sup>.

For the recruitment process, the Councillor will determine how he/she solicits applications for any openings within the Ward office. The Councillor is able to utilize the City of Calgary recruiting process, should he/she wish to do so; however, this is not mandatory. The Office of the Councillors (Office of the Councillors refers to the collective of all 14 Ward offices) drafts the employment agreements for the Councillor, once he/she has provided the necessary background information and approval (there is an internal form to track this process). The Office of the Councillors also facilitates the signing of the Ward Assistant employment agreements with the Councillor and his/her new hire.

It is the responsibility of the Office of the Councillors to provide an overall overview regarding benefits and the operations within the Office of the Councillors. The Office ensures that any IT-related items, which would be approved by the Councillor, are purchased and ready for distribution (they also ensure security card access is available).

Any specific details about the Ward office and how it operates and the role a new hire will play within the Ward office team is done by the Ward office and/or Councillor. The Office of the Councillors does not have any influence into how a Ward office operates. They may be able to provide best practices; however, the Councillor decides how to operate his/her Ward office.

There are times when the Office of the Councillors may be approached by a Ward Assistant with regards to employment questions. They provide the best advice on a case-by-case basis and/or will provide direction as to where the Ward Assistant could find additional information and/or resources.

Regarding their rights, the Ward Assistants understand the different Council policies (both attachments are included as Schedule A and B to any employment agreements) and that all City employees, including Ward Assistants, are governed by the Employment's Standards set out by the Government of Alberta.

Other Council policies related to Councillors or the Office of the Councillors are available on the City web site<sup>2,3</sup>.

### 7.3 City of Edmonton

For the recruitment of assistants, the Councillors may request that the Employee Services Department (Human Resources) Talent Acquisition Branch, to post a requisition and provide a list of potential candidates. The City requisition site/system is one option available to Councillors' Ward Offices. There are postings that would define the standard duties and scope of work, minimum qualifications, and work experience required for the following positions: Executive Assistant, Senior Council Assistant, Council Assistant. As with business areas within the City of Edmonton, Councillors in the role of a 'Hiring Manager' would determine their exact evaluation criteria, requirements, and interview questions and format.

Councillors may conduct their own recruitment, screening, scheduling/interviews, and candidate selection. The Employee Services Department is (re-engaged to process the Offer Letter and, once accepted, the new employee begins the City's onboarding process. The Councillors have the option of posting through Recruitment Services as one channel as well as Employee Services drafts and processes the offer letter. Upon acceptance of the offer letter, the onboarding process is completed by Administration including payroll, benefits, etc.

The City of Edmonton has standard skills and abilities criteria as well as minimum qualifications for positions that support Councillors. The criteria are used in the recruitment process to inform the job posting. An example of required qualifications for an Executive Assistant is as follows:

- Completed post-secondary diploma or degree and 3 years progressively responsible experience in an administrative role preferred;

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Council-policy-library/PAC005-Councillors-Assistants-Policy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Council-policy-library/CC030-Assistants-Severance-Policy.pdf>

- Thorough knowledge of the principles and techniques of effective office management;
- Detailed understanding of municipal governance and related issues;
- Knowledge of Council initiatives and community leagues;
- Strong interpersonal and customer service skills including the ability to deal with a diverse range of individuals including internal departments and branches and outside groups and agencies;
- Ability to effectively use word processing software (Microsoft Office, Google Docs/Apps);
- Exceptional ability to recognize politically sensitive issues and bringing matters of priority to the Councillor's attention;
- Demonstrated ability to summarize reports, research and analyze information, and compose correspondence; and
- Ability to professionally handle conflict utilizing effective listening skills.

All new employees, including those hired to Councillors' offices, are assigned the standard New Hire Onboarding Process facilitated through HRIS (HR management system) - Taleo Onboarding (Transitions). This includes 20+ tasks to be completed by employees. Tasks include mandatory forms for employee's set-up, reading operational directives, completing mandatory training, and introduction to cultural information about the organization.

There are six mandatory online courses assigned through the onboarding process:

- Code of Conduct;
- FOIP in the City;
- Introduction to Our Respectful Workplace;
- Enviso Awareness (environmental policies);
- New Employee Safety Activities; and
- Drug and Alcohol Directive and Procedures.

Supervisors (Hiring Managers) are also assigned a number of tasks through the Taleo Onboarding system including workplace set-up, setting work expectations, procedures, and key information.

As part of the overall onboarding process, new hires are invited to attend a Corporate New Employee Orientation session and possibly additional role/area specific orientation. Corporate New Employee Orientation sessions are offered quarterly to all new permanent staff, including new hires in Councillors' offices. The focus of these sessions is on City operations, vision, and cultural values.

Role specific orientation is provided at the team level by supervisor or peers. This will include setting performance expectations, work environment information, site-specific safety, and other training or information related to the specific role.

In addition, staff from the Office of the City Clerk provides orientation information for Councillor office staff and may set up group orientation sessions as required.

\*Note - The City of Edmonton defines Onboarding as the entire process through which the new employee is integrated into the organization. This will include administrative tasks, self-directed learning/discovery, conversations, and other experiences. Orientation refers to specific training events that occur to help share information during the onboarding process.

All recruitment to Councillors' offices must follow City Policy HR management for council staff C608. So that Councillors recruit under the City Policy and processes regardless of the specific decision points they make permissible under the Policy e.g. whether to post on edmonton.ca or another channel<sup>4</sup>.

#### 7.4 City of Mississauga

As a general practice, the Councillors determine whether the job will be posted or whether they have a candidate to fill the position. The Councillor may choose someone from the outside (from their network/the community), who they believe meets their constituency needs. The City Human Resources department is not involved in the process with the candidate except in preparing the job postings. It is the City Clerk who is involved in vetting the candidates, conducting the interviews and performing the reference checks. Afterwards, Human Resources prepare the job offer and the contract. The Council staff report to the City Clerk from an administrative standpoint.

Councillors' Office staff are subject to all City policies and procedures. This information is shared through the job offer and the contract.

Upon the start of the term of Council a general overview is provided to the new hired personnel. However, the Councillors have two employees and generally one person is a returning administrator. Should the office have two completely new staff, previous staff are called to provide on-site training.

#### 7.5 City of Vancouver

The Executive assistants, supporting Councillors, are unionized employees and are hired by the Deputy City Clerk.

The Councillors are provided with a discretionary budget which can be used to hire contracted vendors to perform political work. The annual budget is \$30,000 per Councillor. Councillors are required to complete a request to access the discretionary budget submitted for the approval of the City Clerk to ensure compliance of the by-law which specifies how the budget can be utilized. This is governed under the Mayor and Council Expense by-law. Minimum requirements must be met for recruitment of City employees supporting Councillors. The requirements for contracted vendors are approved by the hiring Councillor based on their needs.

Recruitment of unionized employees can be a long process as the candidates would need to meet the eligibility requirements including suitability. Suitability requirement was added in the last 8 years.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Pages/Council-policy-library/CC.aspx>

Employees and contractors must adhere to a Code of Conduct and policies which are reviewed at their orientation.

We have been informed that the process and requirements for hiring contracted vendors are currently under review.

## 7.6 City of Montréal

The City of Montréal has a particular configuration in terms of its political organization. It is divided into 19 Boroughs which has a Borough Mayor and Borough Councillors. In each Borough, the Mayor and the Councillors share the administrative personnel. One of the positions is “Chargé de secrétariat” and the other one is “Responsable de soutien aux élus.”

There are two different processes to recruit and hire personnel for these two jobs. The first one is that the elected official would submit the candidate’s name to the City Human Resources Department (HR) and they would have to hire the individual. For example, it could be an election campaign volunteer.

The second process is more formalized. The Staffing Division of Human Resources would advertise one of the two positions with a standard job description. Then a Staffing Counselor would proceed with the validation of the applicants. Some applicants are interviewed by a board of three persons consisting of HR, an employee of the Borough and someone from the office of the Mayor of that Borough (it could be the Mayor).

Once the selection is made, HR makes an offer to the finalist and sets the remuneration. The job descriptions have already been the subject of an evaluation by HR and they are assigned a specific remuneration. If the standard job description is customized, then HR would reevaluate it and decide on the remuneration.

These two positions are temporary ones. Sometimes there is a letter of offer, however, it is the Borough that takes charge of this.

In 2019, out of 12 recruitment processes, nine used the services of the City HR with the standard process.

Once the candidate has accepted the job offer, it is the responsibility of another HR department to follow up with the employee and ensure that they are made aware of their rights, including the knowledge of the Employee’s Code of Conduct. It’s the same code as the one for all other City employees.

## 7.7 City of Gatineau

The Councillors at the City of Gatineau have the authority to hire service providers under Section 114.4. of the Cities and Towns Act:

“The mayor or a designated Councillor, within the meaning of section 114.5, of a municipality with a population of 100,000 or more may appoint a chief of staff and any other staff members necessary for the orderly administration of the mayor’s or the Councillor’s Office.”

In 2018, the City has developed a document outlining the roles and responsibilities of the “Agents de recherche.” These agents are somewhat the equivalent of contracted vendors for the City of Ottawa. We could qualify them as freelance contractors.

All the support staff for the Councillors are designated as “Agents de recherche.” This originates from the fact that there is a portion of the Councillor’s budget which is called “allocation for research”. These agents are performing several tasks such as management of social media, graphics, citizen assistance, etc.

All of these agents are hired on contract where the Councillor and the agent are the only parties to the contract which is specifically designated as a Service Agreement. The City of Gatineau is not a party to this agreement and there is no employer-employee relationship involved. As a result of this legal separation, there is no standard selection process for the hiring and each Councillor makes its own selection. It should be noted that if a Councillor has a need for assistance regarding the Service Agreement, the Clerk’s Office would be designated to provide support to the Councillor.

There is an agreement in principle that the Councillors would be using the standard Service Agreement. This standard contract has been the subject of a consensual agreement from all the Councillors. Therefore, the practice is to abide by the terms of this template which can always be improved if required. For example, it is possible for the Councillor to annex the terms of reference for the agent’s mandate.

The only formal involvement for the City is with the Finance Department. They are responsible for paying the agents upon receipt of a copy of the contract and an invoice. Finally, all the Councillors have received a formal orientation/training concerning their roles and responsibilities, including their Code of Ethics and Conduct. There is an expectation that this would be reflected in their relationship with their own agents. The detailed expenses of Councillors which are related to research and support are available on the City web site<sup>5</sup>.

## 7.8 City of Moncton

The City Clerk was contacted and, at her request, provided with a set of questions for our review.

The Clerk response was that none of our questions applied to the City of Moncton. All the staff assigned to Members of Council are employees of the City Clerk’s Office and the Mayor’s Offices.

The Councillors do not hire their own personnel and they do not deal with contracted vendors directly. If any Councillor would hire someone, it would be outside the jurisdiction of the City of Moncton.

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<sup>5</sup>[https://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=publications\\_cartes\\_statistiques\\_donnees\\_ouvertes/depenses\\_recherche\\_soutien\\_conseillers&ref=pastilles](https://www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=publications_cartes_statistiques_donnees_ouvertes/depenses_recherche_soutien_conseillers&ref=pastilles)

## 7.9 City of Winnipeg

The information gathered from the City of Winnipeg was provided by the Councillor's Liaison Coordinator.

Some of the City's Councillors are being assisted by the Councillor's Liaison Coordinator to hire personnel in positions designated as Councillors' Assistants.

There is no recruitment and hiring standard. The only requirement is that the assistant is to be hired by contract. The City of Winnipeg provides a contract template designated as a Councillor's Assistant Agreement<sup>6</sup>. The Councillor's Liaison gets a copy of the agreement and completes the arrangements for the assistant to be added to the City payroll. The agreement outlines the authority and obligations of the assistants. This standard format has been approved by consensus and it can be customized with any improvements.

The City has detailed the Councillors' Assistants' eligible and ineligible expenses which is part of the Councillors' Ward Allowance Fund Policy<sup>7</sup>.

The only parties involved in the contract are the Councillor and the assistant. Assistants are working either fulltime or part time there is no rule about the arrangement. The Councillors have the entire discretion of their recruitment and hiring process. The average remuneration is between \$45,000 and \$50,000/year.

The Councillors are provided with a budget of approximately \$84,000 for their expenses and this includes the assistant salary and vacation pay. After six months in their position, the assistants may benefit from the health insurance offered to other City employees, however, the cost is covered by the Councillor's budget.

The Councillor's Assistants and Special Project Personnel are bound by their own Code of Conduct<sup>8</sup> and it is the subject of a specific clause of the Councillor's Assistant Agreement.

Finally, it should be noted that each Councillor's detailed expenses are available on the City website<sup>9</sup>.

## 8.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Council Support Services provided the consultants with several internal documents and policies that could be relevant to the current recruitment and hiring process. The consultants reviewed these documents and made comments and suggestions on the ones applicable to the mandate of the review of the recruitment and hiring process of the Councillors Assistants. Note, the consultants' observations

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.winnipeg.ca/council/pdfs/CWApolicy.pdf>, APPENDIX D.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.winnipeg.ca/council/pdfs/CWApolicy.pdf>, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Supra* note 6.

<sup>9</sup> <https://winnipeg.ca/council/expenses.stm>

of the Councillors' Assistant Agreement do not constitute a legal opinion. These observations are being made from a Human Resources perspective.

## 8.1 The Employment Contract between the City of Ottawa and the Councillor's Assistant

As part of this review, we have examined the full-time Employment Agreement for the position of Councillor's Assistant.

The Agreement is made between the "City of Ottawa" and the "Employee". Section 12 of this contract refers to the "Parties" and the Employee. In fact, it would appear that there are only two parties involved, the City and the Employee. The Councillor is only signing as a person who is recommending the execution of the contract.

Since this contract is binding the City and the Employee, it is interesting that the City appears to dictate the modalities of the remuneration, however, any adjustment of it is at the absolute discretion of the Councillor. This opens the door to discrepancies in the treatment of assistants across all Councillors' offices.

The wording of Section 5 could be reviewed. The usage of "shall obey" seems to have a negative connotation. If the Employee has a *Code of Conduct*, then this would be their responsibility to respect it. When we write about obeying the lawful orders of the Councillor in the discharge of their official duties; are we talking about the Councillor's or the Assistant's official duties?

In this clause, there might be a way to refer specifically to the Councillor's *Code of Conduct*. There could be a copy of the Councillor's *Code of Conduct* annexed to this contract and an acknowledgment that the Employee has read it. There could also be a copy of the *Code of Conduct* applicable for the Employee. As it is, it appears that all responsibilities are on the shoulders of the assistants. It looks like a unilateral agreement.

Section 7 of the Agreement is about the Employee agreeing not to disclose the terms and conditions of their employment. If there is a suggestion to standardize the Councillor's Assistant job, there should be a review of this clause to see how it fits in such approach. This clause also counteracts a transparent process, it leads to believe that the conditions of the Councillor's Assistants must be kept secret and we question the need for this text and its interpretation. Finally, as you will find in Dr. Robson's comments there is no real way to enforce this clause, it's difficult to enforce.

Section 8 states that the Employee shall carry out their duties at a location specified by the Councillor. This is quite vague and open to a large interpretation which might be unfavourable for the Employee. The wording is about "a" location, if there is a need to address the work location, then it should be clearly indicated where it is.

The second part of this Section 8 states that the Employee shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the requirement of the position. This is vague at the minimum. We believe that a description of the requirements should be annexed to the Agreement. This is where a Councillor's Assistant *Code of Conduct* might be useful.

Section 10. a) addresses the termination for “just cause.” We believe that the Ontario Courts might have defined what “just cause” is and what characterizes it. Giving examples of drunkenness, usage of drugs, dishonesty, etc., appears to be a very basic way to define what “just cause” is. There is no context given nor any description of the seriousness of the behaviour at stake and this may be a factor to consider. This clause also states that the Councillor’s Assistant may terminate the assistant’s employment for any breach of the terms if the Agreement. This would include clauses 7 and 8 which we find rather ambiguous. The way this clause is written appears to give “carte blanche” to the Councillor to terminate their employee.

Section 10. b) refers to the Severance Policy for Councillor’s Assistants. We have looked for this policy online and did not find it. If this policy dictates the modalities of the Employee’s termination, it should be annexed to the Agreement.

Section 12 refers to prior agreements of different sorts between the Parties and the Employee. We do not believe that the Councillor appears to be a legal party of this agreement as they are not mentioned in the first portion of the Agreement. This clause may be reviewed if deemed necessary.

Section 13 is about the fact that the Employee must have had the opportunity to read two important policies and the *Code of Conduct*. We are not certain this is being done efficiently in real life. Technically, someone could give a copy of these three documents when the Employee signs the contract, and this would meet the requirement that he or she had been “provided the opportunity to read the complete...”. It does not mean in fact that the Employee already read the documents and therefore was fully cognizant of some of its rights and responsibilities as they sign the contract. This is exactly part of the issue that exists right now and that we may wish to improve. Is it possible to have a clause that would confirm that the Employee knows about their rights and that there is a mechanism in place to ensure this process and that we have a record of it? (Bold and underlining by the author)

Section 15 deals with dispute resolution. This appears to be the only way to resolve any issue under the Agreement. We are in an era where Alternate Dispute Resolution is what is being encouraged in a large number of workplaces; private or public. The actual process, assorted with very limited delays, might be quite strict and does not address the fact that issues may be of different importance.

This section also leads to believe that this is the Employee’s only recourse. We are not sure that resorting to this process deprives the Employee of other legal recourses that may be available. If there are other recourses, it would be transparent to inform the Employee about them.

## 8.2 City Policies

### 8.2.1 *Equity and Diversity Policy*

The *Equity and Diversity Policy* applies to all City employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary and casual employees, summer students and co-op placements, persons acting on behalf of the City (e.g., consultants, contractors), as well as individuals who apply for employment with

the City of Ottawa (e.g. job applicants). It would be best to include that this policy applies to Councillors and their staff. A consideration is that if all individuals that apply through the City portal are made aware of this policy, how are Councillors' Assistants notified of the existence of this policy if they didn't apply through the City portal?

### *8.2.2 Accessibility Policy*

The *Accessibility Policy* applies to all City employees (including Ottawa Public Health), volunteers, and to any individual or organization (third party) that provides goods, services, programs or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City in accordance with AODA legislation. Do Councillors' Assistants have to do the on-line training? Is there a follow-up on this training being completed by Councillors' Assistants?

### *8.2.3 Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace Policy*

The *Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace Policy* applies to all City of Ottawa employees including all regular full-time, part-time, temporary, casual and term employees and volunteers. It would be best to include that this policy applies to Councillors and their staff. Maybe including this information in the onboarding training would be ideal.

### *8.2.4 Employment of Family Members Policy*

The *Employment of Family Members Policy* applies to all City employees and elected officials. It talks about close friends that could be considered as family members. It would be best to include that this policy applies to Councillors and their staff. Our findings suggest some Councillors do hire their close friend that was their Campaign Manager, etc. Maybe a close look at this policy would be advisable to ensure that this is followed by the Councillors when hiring.

### *8.2.5 Local Transportation Policy*

The *Local Transportation Policy* applies to all employees required to travel within the City of Ottawa, while conducting official city business. Employees are required to consider the most effective mode of travel, including eliminating or reducing the requirement for travel and rescheduling appointments to ensure the appropriate use of time and resources. Should this policy include Councillors and their assistants? If so, it needs to be amended.

### *8.2.6 Responsible Computing Policy*

The *Responsible Computing Policy* states “that the City of Ottawa is committed to protecting our employees, partners and the corporation itself from illegal or damaging actions by individuals through the use of information or information technology (IT) assets, either knowingly or unknowingly.” If this policy applies to Councillors and their staff, it should be mentioned.

### 8.2.7 *Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy*

The *Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy* states that “the City of Ottawa is committed to providing a work environment governed by respect and regard for the safety, rights, and dignity of all, where employees can work free from violence and harassment. The City shall not tolerate violence directed at employees by members of the public, between employees, or by an employee towards a member of the public.

The City of Ottawa prohibits harassment from anyone in the workplace, including in the course of employment, in the provision of goods and/or services, and in the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation. This Policy prohibits workplace harassment under any of the categories defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and/or the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

This policy applies to all City of Ottawa workers and workplaces; including any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a City of Ottawa worker works.”

It also states the following: “Department heads shall ensure that policies, procedures and safe work practices are established to achieve departmental compliance with OHSMS and corporate programs including applicable OHS legislation. They shall also maintain a workplace that is free from violence and harassment by assessing the risks of violence and harassment in the workplace, taking measures to control the risks, implementing procedures for reporting and responding to and investigating incidents and complaints. This obligation extends to ensuring that all employees are aware of their rights and obligations under applicable health and safety legislation.

Managers and supervisors are accountable for the health and safety of staff under their supervision, and are responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware violence and harassment is not tolerated and that all employees comply with this policy. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring workers receive adequate training in violence and harassment procedures specific to their workplace and job duties, and for taking appropriate action upon becoming aware of violent or harassing behaviour.

All employees shall work in accordance with OHS legislation and established policies and procedures by modeling and supporting ethical and respectful behaviour in everyday interactions. Employees shall not engage in or condone any form of workplace related violent, threatening, intimidating or other behaviour that would constitute harassment.”

If this policy applies to everyone, then, the Councillor’s Assistants would be protected by this policy. It states all City of Ottawa workers and workplaces. However, in reading the policy further, it talks about the managers’ responsibilities towards preventing harassment, but it does not extend to Councillors and to their staff. Should there be a specific policy applicable to the Councillor’s Assistants only and be managed by an independent party that is not a City of Ottawa representative when a complaint is filed? By having a third party responsible for the harassment complaint process for the Councillors and their staff, it would allow for a certain independence free from both entities, the City and Council.

All of the above policies refer to the *Code of Conduct*. Should there be another code of conduct specifically for Councillors' Assistants? Or changes will be needed to reflect that in all the above mentioned policies.

### 8.3 Codes of Conduct

The City of Ottawa has two Codes of Conduct, an *Employee Code of Conduct* that applies to the Councillors Assistants and a *Code of Conduct for Members of Council*. The consultants reviewed both to review sections that relate to the recruitment and hiring process.

#### 8.3.1 *Code of Conduct for Members of Council*

The *Code of Conduct* applies to Members of Ottawa City Council and citizen members of the Transit Commission, when acting in their official capacity. It states the following:

“Discrimination and Harassment

7. All members of Council have a duty to treat members of the public, one another and staff with respect and without abuse, bullying or intimidation, and to ensure that their work environment is free from discrimination and harassment. The *Ontario Human Rights Code* applies and, where applicable, the City's *Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy*.”

There is no mention of the Councillor's assistants in the *Code of Conduct for Members of Council*. This means that the *Code of Conduct* of the Employees of the City of Ottawa would apply to the Councillors' Assistants.

“Code of Conduct and related policies”, in this document we find the following:

“Does the Integrity Commissioner investigate complaints about City employees? What about City Council staff?

No. The Integrity Commissioner does not have the authority to investigate complaints about City employees. Staff who work in the offices of Members of Council are considered City employees and cannot be investigated by the Integrity Commissioner. Concerns regarding the conduct of City employees should be directed to the appropriate manager, the City Solicitor and/or the City Manager.”

This question found in the *Code of Conduct* and related policies, refers to the City Council staff, when actually it refers to Councillors Assistants. We suggest changing that wording to avoid misunderstandings.

#### 8.3.2 *Employee Code of Conduct*

In this *Code of Conduct*, there is reference to employees of the City and to public servants. Do Councillors' assistants fall under these two terms? If so, then this code would apply to them.

However, there is a section in this code on Impartiality – the duty to loyalty. This is a very important point and was mentioned by a few assistants through our interviews. If the assistants are hired by a Councillor for a specific position whereby they are to endorse the political views of the Councillor, it does put them in a delicate situation if they have to obey this section of the *Code of Conduct*. On one hand, they are loyal to their Councillor and, on the other hand, they are considered employees of the City, therefore, loyal to the City. It puts them in a difficult situation.

The Code of Conduct also refers to the fact that the application of the code is reviewed with each employee through the performance planning cycle. Through our discussions with Councillors' Assistants, there doesn't seem to be such exercise. So how would the values of the *Code of Conduct* be respected every year by the Councillors' Assistant?

#### 8.4 Job Descriptions for Councillors' Assistants and Councillors Office Manual

All job descriptions reviewed are well detailed and reflect the main responsibilities for a Councillors Assistant position as was described by Councillors and their staff throughout this review.

The Councillors' Office Manual was also reviewed. It could be updated to reflect some minor changes that could have occurred after the last review but besides that, nothing to report in the manual in this recruitment and staffing review.

## 9.0 APPENDIX A – ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES

These are the consultant’s notes as a result of the interviews. They are paraphrased comments of the interviewees and several of these notes were read back to the interviewees to ensure accuracy. Pronouns were removed in keeping with the promise of confidentiality. All answers have been displayed non chronological order.

### 9.1 Answers from Councillors

The consultants collected answers from Councillors from 12 questions. Each question is listed and the answers from all Councillors who participated are included in non-chronological order.

#### *9.1.1 What process do you use to hire your staff?*

When I came into office, I kept the staff already in place from the previous Councillor. When I need to hire, I have used two processes. First, I posted online (not the City hiring process), my social media, my website and got some applications. I set up a committee to do the sorting of resumes and the first interviews. I take the final recommendations and have an informal meeting in a public place with the candidates. This was to ensure that they were a proper fit in our office. I also hired former colleagues directly, people I knew and worked with before.

\*\*

What I would do is I would ask my assistants to go through the resumes and do the interviews with standard questions for all the candidates. Then they get back to me with the recommendations. Resumes are gathered from Council Support Services and they are posting the jobs as well. I have been participating in some interviews for the final selection.

\*\*

Different ways over years, first people from my election campaign, next time I asked for references from my contacts after we circulated the job offer. I used my own network. Last time, we got some resumes from the Clerk’s Office.

\*\*

When I came into office, I had previous political experience and I already knew some people with who worked for the City. To start off, I hired individuals whom I knew. Another individual I hired also was someone I knew from past work experience I asked for their resume, did an interview and hired them. Another employee I hired is someone who was referred to me. I asked for a resume and met them in an informal setting to have a discussion and make up my mind. I have used Council Support Services. They provided resumes they got from a previous posting. I had one of my assistants conduct some interviews. Among the individual being interviewed, there was also someone I knew from my past work experience. In the end, this last individual was the one who did best at the interview, and they

were hired. One issue is that when we first come into office, we don't have much time to set up our team. I had about a month and wanted to be ready on the first day I started at City Hall.

\*\*

I have an Office Manager and together we write the requirements of the job to be posted. Then it is posted on different media. The Office Manager does a first screening which is based on the knowledge and experience that we are looking for. Some resumes are chosen, and I get the input of all my staff to come up with a short list. For us it's important to have a good fit, a team player. Then we proceed with the interviews in the presence of another staff member. The final decision is made collectively with my team.

\*\*

I have sourced the resumes from my own social media, and I have also used a different process using the City web site for the posting. The issue with the City posting was that they did not inform the potential candidates which Councillor's Office was requesting the posting. I did not really like this fact, but it generated a lot of resumes. In my opinion, they were less useful than the ones I got from my social network. I held an interview board with the staff of my office. Two staff members did the interviews and I met with the chosen candidate after the interview. We also did a reference check on the chosen candidate. Even the first time I hired an assistant I had set up a three-person panel to do the interviews after the applicants went through a first sort. The interviews were held in a public place.

\*\*

I have been here for a while and most of my staff have been in place for a long period of time. I have done job postings on LinkedIn, Twitter as well as on my Councillor website. I am not interested in following a process dictated by the Clerk's Office. I do not wish them to be involved in my recruitment and hiring process. I would agree that they could do the job posting, however, this would be the extent of their participation in the process. I believe this job is a political one and I don't want to involve any other resources outside my office for strategic reasons. I wish to look after the recruitment and hiring process, but I agree that the City is better equipped to deal with financial aspects and training related to the assistants.

\*\*

I have hired a volunteer from my campaign because, once we are elected, we need to have personnel in place as soon as we come in our office. We have now moved to a formalized process, we asked Council Support Services to hold a formal process by posting the jobs on the City website. We get all the resumes and with my staff members we look at them. It is a collaborative process; the candidates are all ranked and with the assistance of Council Support Services, we schedule the interviews. We got some writing tests and other tests that are being administered by my staff. Some tests are in the format of detailed fictitious assignments. Then we hold a board to conduct the interview. The interview board is comprised of myself, a staff member and someone from Council Support Services. We use standard questions for the candidates and each panel member gets to ask some of the questions. The board

members rank the candidates. We give some importance to having a good fit with our team. I ultimately render my decision on the basis of the entire process having been completed. I prefer the idea of a formal process in a formal setting. It assures that people in the position are qualified for the tasks.

\*\*

I hired one assistant who was already working in this office before, another one came from another Councillor's Office. I have also hired a personal acquaintance, but they went on to get a job with the City of Ottawa. Finally, I hired one from a resume that I was handed over by another Councillor. I have posted a job opportunity on social media and I also used a web site that proposes the resumes of potential candidates for different types of job.

\*\*

First, I identify our needs. I go to Council Support Services to know if they already have resumes available from a previous posting and if not, we post the job on the City website. I ask that the applications go to my Office Manager to do a first screening, I get a shortlist and the candidates are ranked. I would pick three or four finalists and invite them for an interview. My manager looks after this logistic. I use interview questions prepared in advance which is a standard for all the interviewees. The Office Manager and I do the interview and we score the candidates. We then debrief together our evaluation and a person is then offered an assistant position.

\*\*

We sometime reach out to Council Support Services and they do the vetting, they do the reference checks, we interview the people. I have had the same staff for a long period of time, so I do not often hire. Most of my staff was recommended from Council Support Services. The reality is that we don't have a problem in the City. I never experienced any problem. Some people who are hired are coming in and it's a steppingstone for them. Others are coming with more experience, looking for a steady job, and they want to be treated fairly. There was an exceptional situation that arose but most Councillors are professional and respectful. In the end, it's all about respecting people.

\*\*

The process that was used has been to source resumes from Council Support Services; one of the assistants was looking after this. Resumes come in regularly at Council Support Services. I do not post and don't know that my assistant has been doing it. I rely on Council Support Services to do this. Council Support Services is aware of what we need, however, we would have the opportunity to ask them to focus on certain skills if it is required. I do the final interviews with the candidates identified by my staff. It is a one-on-one interview. Recently I've decided to have a second person present and it takes place at my City Hall office.

\*\*

I think that this process is wide open. I was given advice from the Clerk's Office, specifically, not to hire campaign people. However, there is a gap in the period of time between your election and

orientation that we are being offered. I had previous experience in hiring people in a political environment. As I was beginning as a new Councillor, I was looking for at least one assistant with past experience. If I look at candidates working for the City of Ottawa and external candidates, I would give a preference to the ones already working for the City. Internal candidates are usually temporary City employees. I go through Council Support Services, there is a job description and it is posted online on the Ottawa.ca website. Council Support Services gives me the top resumes. This is a new way to proceed for Councillors. I believe Councillors want the flexibility to hire, however, they should be provided guidance if they request it. There is also no process to terminate employees, it's "cowboy country."

\*\*

There is no guidance on how to hire the assistants and I have not sought assistance from Human Resources. I advertise mostly on social media and I'm targeting candidates from my ward. We can also get some references from other Councillors. I do a first interview, in a coffee shop, getting to know the candidate's expectations, telling about the duties. Subsequently, I have an assistant to do a second interview and tell them about the job from an assistant's perspective. I like to do the interview in an informal setting instead of City Hall. I consider it's OK for the protection of the candidate since it's in a public place. I also administer some tests to verify the skills that are required.

\*\*

We created a job description and I shared it on my social media, the City website and in our newsletter. Then we collect the resumes and one assistant does a first screening. There is a phone interview and subsequently some in-person interviews with the candidates having been shortlisted. This interview takes place with me and two other team members. Once the selection is made, we do the reference checks. Originally, I did a very different process, going through my own personal network, LinkedIn, some volunteers or other people that demonstrated an interest. This was far less formal. I did it in a coffee shop because we did not have an office in my ward back at that time. Now it's at the Ward Office, or at City Hall. We had a Councillor orientation on all sorts of things, but this topic was last. By the time I had the orientation, I had already hired my staff. I can see where there are gaps now.

\*\*

What I do is draft the job posting and its advertised by Council Support Services. The applicant's responses are sorted by them. I don't know where it's advertised, however, I also post them on my social media. I look at the ones kept after the first sort and I pick the ones I'm most interested in. I start with a phone interview then I proceed with an in-person interview with three candidates. Finally, I do a second interview with the last two candidates.

\*\*

I advertise with the Clerk's Office on the City website. Originally, I brought someone who had worked with me but now I use the Clerk's Office. They provide me with a template, and we can adjust it a little bit. I ask for the Clerk to send me all the resumes. I go through them. I also ask my Office Manager to

assist me in reviewing the resumes. We draft a shortlist and then I do the in-person interviews. The interviews are all taking place at City Hall, in a boardroom, to avoid distraction and avoid people seeing each other in my office. I always do the interview with my Office Manager. This way people are more comfortable, and I also like to have a second opinion. We debrief between us. We put together a list of two or three finalists and do a second round of interviews. We check the references and we put an offer out, the Clerk's Office does the contract. I do a yearly assessment, and this is done by me or by my Office Manager. If there is an issue involving myself, I like to have the Office Manager doing the assessment.

\*\*

### *9.1.2 How important is it to you to know the candidate before you hire them?*

It's not necessarily important, it doesn't have to be someone I worked with in the past.

\*\*

Not really important, the last three assistants we hired, I only knew one of them before, on a professional basis. I had never met the other ones.

\*\*

The best staff I had was people I knew before in other circumstances. I wouldn't say it's not mandatory.

\*\*

Not really important.

\*\*

It's not that important, I have hired some individuals that I did not know before. I've got a mix in my office.

\*\*

Very important, I hire them for political reason, to advance specific cases and meet the community goals.

\*\*

That doesn't matter, it's primarily a matter of having the right skill sets for me. Initially I hired staff arbitrarily and I realized that I was not getting a good result. It's important that the employees serve the constituent well.

\*\*

It's somewhat important, it depends. If I look for someone to deal with social media or IT, then I look for specific skills. For other tasks, I look for people who demonstrate good social interaction, good customer service. If I know the person before or have a good reference, it's better.

\*\*

Some people want to hire people they know for their loyalty, but I want competent people.

\*\*

It makes it easier, not that it's very important but when you are first elected it is important to have someone you can trust and make sound decisions.

\*\*

Every Councillor hires differently, I like that they live in my ward but it's not necessary.

\*\*

Not important.

\*\*

It is better if I don't know them, it is less awkward, especially if it's someone with whom you already have personal ties.

\*\*

Not important.

\*\*

Not important. What I like is a good reference. I only hired one person whom I knew before.

\*\*

Not important at all.

\*\*

I just want to hire the best person.

\*\*

### *9.1.3 How do you recruit your assistants and contracted vendors?*

I have used contracted vendors; they were people I already knew very well.

\*\*

For the contracted vendors if we are looking for particular skills we recruit in our ward, reach out in our network. There are people who also approached us. We hire people in our community.

\*\*

I occasionally used contracted vendors; I have chosen one because they are in my ward. By reference from peers.

\*\*

For the contracted vendors, it is someone I knew in the past, known for reputation.

\*\*

I hire contracted vendors, two or three, for specific mandates, mostly community events. It's my Office Manager who does the recruitment.

\*\*

For the assistant, I have brought in a potential candidate in the office for a few days and do a try-out. For the contractor vendors, within my staff we discuss which ones we know. I select at least two for an interview and the rest of the process is subjective. I then get a contract in place using the City template. The contract includes a statement of work drafted by an assistant. I do not want this process to take away my autonomy, there could be some guidelines, but I need to have the final say.

\*\*

I don't hire contracted vendors.

\*\*

I don't really hire contracted vendors. Usually, I already know the contractor.

\*\*

I have a standard process. I leave it to my Office Manager to hire contracted vendors.

\*\*

I don't have contracted vendors.

\*\*

I have used some contracted vendors for my website update, and I don't know how they were recruited. It's managed by my admin staff.

\*\*

I use the assistance of Council Support Services.

\*\*

I ask one of my assistants for references. It's also often individuals that I already know for their skills. I have used references from other Councillors.

\*\*

For contracted vendors, I usually know them beforehand or I have some references. Usually it is someone whom I knew before I get to hire them.

\*\*

Contracted vendors are hired by references.

\*\*

The assistants are recruited with a job description based on the Clerk's Office template and it is customized. It is then posted on the City website, our newsletter and social media. For the contracted vendors, I have retained the services of two companies to perform specific tasks i.e., social media and graphics. In both cases, I knew them because I used their services in my past career.

\*\*

I've only recruited contracted vendors once. I hired a researcher in the past on a contract basis and this person was recommended to me.

\*\*

#### *9.1.4 What specific skills are you looking for in hiring assistants and contracted vendors?*

I look for experience in City issues. My assistants are assigned specific cases i.e., planning, transit and transportation, community issues, etc.

\*\*

Good phone skills, they do a lot of work on the phone, good coping skills because some people are not always happy, we also teach them skills on the job. We also look for good team spirit and a personality that gets along with others. Writing skills, it's a big part of the job.

\*\*

It depends, we have the office set up with a high degree of expression in French. For assistants we look for skills in communications, marketing and office skills, customer services, office computer suite.

\*\*

Accountability and responsibility, people with initiative, not requiring a lot of supervision, having previous political experience. People with good interaction with the public, courteous and a good fit for the team. For the contracted vendor, the ability to understand the vision of what I am looking for. The affordability for taxpayer money and the availability of the service.

\*\*

Basically, I want them to be accurate in their job, have whatever education is required, have good communication skills. We have job descriptions for every position in my office. The contracted vendors are selected based on specific skills required for the specific tasks.

\*\*

I personally have them divided among different communities in my ward. All assistants do case work, community association work, all have a City-wide file. The assistants have also dedicated file leads. It is necessary to have high communication skills, interpersonal skills, having skills to represent the office with the community. I am not so much for past experience. I take into consideration their political views; I ask them to be activists.

\*\*

I am looking for the assistants to be bilingual, individuals knowing the community, individuals politically aligned with my own orientations and goals.

\*\*

First, I look for literacy, be personable, acting well with the constituents, being able to respond appropriately to the citizen. Knowing the fact that there are rules at City Hall and being able to respect them. I use contracted vendors who have signed an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) but there is no legal contract in place. I get invoiced and they are paid to accomplish specific mandates.

\*\*

Customer service skills are the most important, someone who supports a team environment. All my personnel are on the same level, there is no hierarchy. They have to get along with each other. For contractors, I look for the fact that they provide a specific service.

\*\*

Customer service experience, good oral and written communication skills, bilingual, computer skills. They have to have some analytical skills to become subject matter experts.

\*\*

I look for people who have skills to help the residents, it's not a sophisticated job. It's customer service.

\*\*

Certainly, interpersonal skills. We are in the people's business. There is a requirement to be able to work on a flexible schedule, weekends, evenings. Ability to deal with residents on the phone, by email, social media and in person.

\*\*

Very organized, computer skills, good judgment, good rapport with people, interpersonal skills, sensitive to other people's reactions. Budgeting skills. I look at their resume. I look for diversity, such as knowing a foreign language.

\*\*

For the assistants, really clear and extensive retail experience, a Liberal Arts Degree such a History or English. It's a customer service job, however, there is a requirement for creativity. I will consider written communication skills, ability to summarize and being able to understand the type of documentation we deal with. I will administer some tests to assess this specific skill. I had an experience with someone I had to let go and unfortunately, I did not test their skills in advance.

For contracted vendors, I need to know that they have the capacity to deliver and its usually normal vendors with whom I have worked with in the past, in some other context.

\*\*

Communication skills, interpersonal skills, empathy and compassion towards residents, customer service skills, all of this is way ahead of technical skills.

\*\*

Obviously, I am looking for people who have served the public before, good interpersonal skills. Individuals with experience in communication and events could be an advantage. I also look for written skills. I look for people with interest in politics and in serving other people.

\*\*

I'm looking for individuals who have a life outside of work, a good personal/professional life balance. I often look for people who have worked in customer service. We are dealing with people who are needy, at times in some sort of crisis. I need people who have worked face to face with the public. If someone has worked for the City before, it's an advantage. I look for the academic training. For example, I consider that academic training in event planning and logistic is great to organize community outreach events. People with political background, some experience in the political world is also good.

\*\*

#### *9.1.5 To what extent do you attach importance to the candidate's years of experience in politics?*

Not a great deal.

\*\*

I would say that it used to be a criterion but not now, it was not necessarily working out. People interested in politics are not necessarily fit for municipal politics, they are more apt to work at the provincial/federal level.

\*\*

That's an important factor because the years of experience help to understand the job like long hours and being flexible if they understand my ward it's also important. If they understand the legislative process, it's a plus.

\*\*

I like them to be aware of local City issues but no need for a political mind, instead I prefer an administrative mind. I assign different portfolios to each assistant i.e., one would look after community and social engagements, another one would do case work, another one does policy, etc. Therefore, I look for skills related to the specific task.

\*\*

Not as much important as their outlook on the City's issues.

\*\*

It is not a prerequisite. I train my staff, they need to be a good communicator, to have good writing skills.

\*\*

There should be some general understanding, however, it's not the first requirement. At the municipal level, this is not as important.

\*\*

None. It's irrelevant for me.

\*\*

Not much because I think you can gain some experience from having worked in a political environment, however, for me its customer service skills that I need. It's OK if you don't have political experience, most people don't.

\*\*

I honestly don't think it's a convincing point. The individual has to be able to get along with colleagues in the offices, be a team player. Everything is about customer service.

\*\*

This is a criterion to which I attach a very high importance, but we can provide this experience to interested individuals, in different ways such as paid internships, coop students and mentorship.

\*\*

Very little for me. We are in the service business.

\*\*

I don't necessarily. The skill set of the position is public skills and others that I used to create the job description.

\*\*

I tend not to want people with lots of experience in a political environment because it not a political job, it's mostly customer service.

\*\*

Little importance, in fact, I eliminated people too politically implicated. I have hired staff with this type of experience; however, it was not a determining factor.

\*\*

For me it's not huge, we are dealing with small constituent requests, garbage pickup, street cleaning and complaints of this nature.

\*\*

Only one of my staff has this kind of past experience.

\*\*

*9.1.6 Are you aware of the rights of the candidates involved in the recruitment process related to the accommodation, discrimination, human rights and other fundamental rights? If so, how were you made aware of these?*

I am very much aware; I know the City staff's rights and I am familiar with Councillors' Assistants rights.

\*\*

I have been involved in a position dealing with accessibility issues and I have hiring experience from previous professional experience. I have been made well aware of the rights of future employees.

\*\*

I think I'm aware of them intuitively, I am not aware that I got any particular training or guidance.

\*\*

Yes, we had information sessions when we were first brought into Council, it was provided by the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

Of course, I have done a lot of training in my past life, I had Human Resources courses, management courses, discrimination awareness training and I have done the online City of Ottawa courses.

\*\*

I am aware, I could be more aware of it though. I'm aware because I did a lot of hiring in my past professional life.

\*\*

I know them as I am an ex-employee of the City. I know these rights very well. I also have some sensibility about gender representation.

\*\*

I think I have a general sense of this. Some of the training provided by the City helps to a certain extent. The training is not really targeting specifically what is permissible or not for us in the hiring process.

\*\*

Yes, I know because I have been an employee. I know what is right or not and I need to create a proper working environment. I want to have an inclusive environment. I know not really from documents but it's just innate.

\*\*

I don't base my hiring decisions on discriminatory factors, I try to have a diversity in my office, but we don't ask personal questions in the process. I make sure that once hired, the employee gets the relevant training such as the harassment policy and whatever recourse is available to them.

For the recruitment, if accommodations were required, we would make the arrangements to suit the applicant's needs.

\*\*

Of course. First of all, I was chair of a Board and I have experience with Human Rights. I also took training on how to work with people with disabilities.

\*\*

Yes, these are the same rights that all City employees have, it comes back to the way we need to treat people.

\*\*

I know this from years of work experience, and I was on a school board where I picked up this experience as well.

\*\*

We had training when we began our term.

\*\*

Yes, I am aware. I know because I had training here at the City, however, in my past experience I was involved in the staffing process.

\*\*

Absolutely, I know it from my life experience, however, there might be a gap there. There are no guidelines, no structure. There is a lack of accountability.

\*\*

Sure, I have some legal background. I got my experience in dealing with employment, performance issues and other HR issues for which I was given the proper assistance from Clerk's.

\*\*

*9.1.7 Are you aware that your Code of Conduct in relation to the recruitment and hiring process apply to you?*

Yes.

\*\*

Yes of course.

\*\*

Sure, yes.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Absolutely.

\*\*

Yes, I've read the Code of Conduct, again I should maybe refresh my memory before I conduct job interviews.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Yes. I think there could be a module in the formal training to tell us about the proper guidelines in the process. This could be an online module. We have some HR training, but it is not specific to the actual context of recruiting and hiring employees.

\*\*

Yes. As far of my conduct, I understand that it applies constantly because I have a 24/7 job. Even when I go out with my family.

\*\*

Yes, I do know that in the discharge of my duty, when acting in my capacity, my code applies.

\*\*

Yes, that's right.

\*\*

I did know that I have responsibilities under my Code of Conduct, and I know that the candidates have fundamental rights.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

I never thought about it, but I recognize that it goes without saying that it applies.

\*\*

I'm aware of it because I got the orientation training when I became a Councillor. I think when we are doing hiring, we should remind ourselves of our code.

\*\*

Yes absolutely. I think that we must admit that the application of the Code varies amongst the Councillors. I think this is more obvious with the Councillors having had a long period of time in office.

\*\*

Yes, I am.

\*\*

#### *9.1.8 What is your impression of the overall recruitment and hiring process?*

I can't speak for other Councillor's Offices. Issues of concern to me for the Councillors' Assistants do not flow from the hiring but once they are here. It's about the lack of knowledge of what rights they have, what type of protection they have, and the recourses available to them which could be improved.

\*\*

During this last term, we worked with the Clerk's Office and were asked if our assistants could sit on some interview boards. I don't know that Council Support Services has followed through on establishing the interview/hiring boards. I think there should be more structure in light of the recent events.

\*\*

From my perspective, I've always tried to do it on my own because I might need someone different in my ward than what they need in other wards. I don't know how other Councillors go about hiring their staff.

\*\*

My impression is that it is very personal to each Councillor. There are tools provided by the City to find candidates, however, each Councillor is able to hire whom they wish. I think this level of flexibility is important although it can be abused. If this occurs, there is a mechanism to deal with it.

\*\*

Each office runs differently, I think it's important to have a good team in the office because it reflects on my service delivery. I think there is not enough budget to have qualified office personnel because there is a cap on what we can spend on personnel. This makes it difficult to recruit good employees and there is also the fact that the City offers better wages to its employees.

I'm hoping that the City would standardize what constitutes the basic office personnel for a Councillor, allowing the budget for it and standardizing the remuneration. We could always make the final selection, but HR could do all the front-end work i.e., posting, shortlisting, references, etc.

\*\*

I think it is very ad hoc process, no guidelines. My concern is around how staff are treated. There should be lots of discretion when comes time to hire but I would like to see a gradual system of penalties before we get to the firing of personal assistants.

\*\*

I have no opinion for the overall process, I am satisfied for my own team. Right now, it works well for me. I think that the City should provide the assistants with better resources for them to know what their different rights and recourses are.

\*\*

I think there is a lot of autonomy, it's important but we need instructions and access to more formal tools to take on this process.

\*\*

When there are no real rules, it leads to the possibility of following an improper process. What I personally do does not follow a specific process and it worked for me, however, it's frustrating that someone's behaviour brings up the possibility of having to create rules. We have the responsibility to ensure that things are done properly, if this means to put in place some rules, then so be it.

\*\*

I don't know too well, it's different among each colleague. I am comfortable with a process that involves my Office Manager and I think the interview should be where the work will occur.

\*\*

The root cause of the problem is that people working in the Councillor's Office should know what is expected of them. Some Councillors bring on their acquaintance and campaign supporters but they are not skilled for the job since the Councillors did not know what the assistant job really entailed. I think the City should provide us with our office staff and then the City is fully responsible. This would avoid any issues like the ones we have right now.

\*\*

I think it's good, we recently underwent a change of staff in my office, but my impression is that I have been able to recruit and retain outstanding staff.

\*\*

I find that it is very unstructured, and I think Councillors like it. I see the reason why some wish to have the power to hire and fire. When I first came in, I made it my own way, I wanted the best people. The reason I now want a more structured process is because I want to show an openness to being fair in the hiring process.

\*\*

I like the flexibility that Councillors have and I've been able to use the same hiring process. It gives us the flexibility to select individuals who have the best chance of success in the role.

\*\*

The first words that come to mind are informal and inconsistent. There are rules, policies but compared to the rest of what happens in the City it's much less formal.

\*\*

There isn't one (process), again it's up to each Councillor and it's done whichever way we want. It's a problem. In a perfect world, this would be structured. Council Support Services should be acting as a lead in this process by facilitating it and ensuring consistency. This would ensure that problems do not arise. For example, we have a grid of salary and we just pick and choose what level we want to give.

\*\*

I don't think enough people know how to take advantage of the Clerk's Office in assisting us in recruitment and hiring. I believe the resource is there but not necessarily used. This resource is known, and it should not come as a surprise to anyone. Some Councillors don't have managerial experience, such as hiring and/or supervising employees and more people should reach out to get the proper assistance. I think that posting the jobs on the City site provides rigour and people looking for a job would naturally go and look there.

\*\*

*9.1.9 In your opinion, have there been any shortcomings in your recruitment and hiring process? If so, which ones and how could the hiring process be improved?*

I have hired with a standard process including posting, sorting, selection with interviews and I also hired individuals I knew before. One has not worked better than the other. Regarding the idea of keeping the same staff in office for each ward, once a Councillor is being replaced, this could be difficult since they might to be a good fit.

\*\*

Personally, I think we did quite well. For the past years, it worked pretty well.

\*\*

We had a couple people we hired that did not work out at the end of the day. I think an issue was about the lack of mentoring and supervision and this was due to some exceptional circumstances.

\*\*

I feel our hiring process has been successful and we have a very low turnover of personnel.

\*\*

I think we are happy with the process right now, but I cannot always hire the best candidate because I cannot afford the pay that is offered elsewhere.

\*\*

I think there should be guidelines, having a panel with others is a good initiative to prevent discrimination. I don't want to take away the Councillor's discretion.

\*\*

I would prefer a certain level of systemic change. The working conditions for assistants vary a lot between different offices and this could be standardized. We have a budget for the overall work of our office and the challenge is that we have to balance the money for our constituent and our support staff. I would like the City to revisit this model and maybe standardize the work conditions of the assistants. The Councillors have the power to hire and fire at leisure if they need more financial resources. This affects the job security of the assistants. There is also a wide difference in wages for the assistants and this is an issue. There should be some standard job descriptions to match specific pay levels.

\*\*

I do things without any issues. One problem I see is that sometimes the Clerk's Office conduct the research and the candidates do not know for whose Councillor's Office they applied for. This is an issue because some individuals prefer to know in advance who they will work for.

\*\*

I think that having a process in a formal way through Council Support Services might be lengthy. We can do the same work in a very short period of time and I don't have to report to anyone. I don't think that there should be a requirement to tell Councillors how to do it, but I think that if City Hall has a process to do their staffing, we should mirror this, and it should be a best practice. I would like to have something similar to what the practice is for other City employees.

\*\*

The way it's done right now with Council Support Services, doing the first screening and advertisement is good. I like that.

\*\*

No shortcoming from my perspective.

\*\*

The choices I made suited my needs, it was a learning curve at the beginning.

\*\*

I'm deliberate about how I hire, I have previous experience in hiring employees and I have a set of best practice. I have a strong team and I do not expect to change things in my subsequent hiring. I think you can have a standard hiring process; however, it comes down to the Councillor's integrity. I have experienced a formal hiring process with another government. I feel that the formal way led to a result which would have been similar if it had been done in an informal process, however, it ensured some integrity.

\*\*

I would like to see the candidates do at least one interview with either the Clerk's Office staff or HR staff because of their expertise. It was very unclear to me of how much I was to pay the assistants, there is no directive. I see that some assistants are doing more work than other City employees and are paid less. There is no guideline on the pay scale.

\*\*

The only thing is that it is a lengthy process by going through the assistance of the Clerk's Office. It's slower but it's consistent, which is the tradeoff.

\*\*

Honestly, I have no qualm about the process I used but I think that not everyone would share that sentiment having spoken to others. There is no check and balance to ensure that no problem arises.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

*9.1.10 How do you ensure that your assistants are made aware of the existence of their rights once they are hired?*

I have a conversation with them as we go through the contract.

\*\*

There is the mandatory online course and I make a point of talking with them so they are comfortable, and about the fact that we promote a respectful work environment. I always ensure that they are not taking abuse from constituents coming or calling our office.

\*\*

All the assistants have a meeting with Council Support Services, and I have arranged some opportunities for an assistant to meet with staff of the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

Basically, I direct my assistants to Council Support Services.

\*\*

Our employees are technically employees of Clerk 's Office. I ensure that they go to the information session, I tell them that they have to go.

\*\*

My Office Manager and myself are showing them their job description and telling them their roles and responsibilities. They also do the internal courses as required; the City is overlooking this training.

\*\*

I know that there is an online training that they have to do and recently there has been a lot of information sent to the assistants as a result of recent events.

\*\*

It's done through City training.

\*\*

One of the things I do is have a conversation about this, making sure that they attend the offered training. I wish to point out that there is a need for clarity with their roles and responsibilities. For example, they are not to take political positions despite the fact that they work in our office, they must abide by the Code of Conduct of the City's employees.

\*\*

I don't personally do anything; however, the Clerk's Office provides them with the information that they need, there has been no issue in my office.

\*\*

They go through all the mandatory training offered. I make sure they meet with Council Support Services and there is the harassment training that is scheduled. Once a year I remind them of the harassment policy and inform them of the available resources if they have any issue.

\*\*

The standard practice is that whenever there are some issues, they are referred to the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

There is an orientation day and my expectation is that this is explained to them at that time. There is also information available on the City website. I hope they understand my position about how to deal with employees.

\*\*

I make sure they take advantage of sessions offered by the City. There is a mandatory orientation for the City staff, and they talk about their rights. There is also an employee harassment course.

\*\*

I don't follow up on that, I rely on HR. Situations might come up at which time I let them know what they need to be aware of, I can direct them to HR as well, it's not a system as such.

\*\*

I render any available relevant documentation, encourage the assistants in taking any training offered by the City. We have regular team meetings and a good dialogue. The employees have access to information via Ozone. At my office we have a board with a scorecard outlining everyone's responsibility and I have posted our Code of Conduct for our team. We drafted our own office Code of Conduct and I also posted my Councillor Code of Conduct on this board.

\*\*

I make sure that they read their contract and check its accuracy. If there are learning opportunities, I make sure they are taking the time to attend them. They are aware that if they have an issue with me, they can address it with my Office Manager.

\*\*

*9.1.11 If you had questions about the recruitment and hiring process, who would you consult with?*

The City Clerk.

\*\*

The Clerk's Office.

\*\*

Depends on the nature but Council Support Services or the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

Primarily, I would go to Council Support Services or the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

I ask my Office Manager, or I go to Council Support Services.

\*\*

Probably Council Support Services.

\*\*

I would consult with Council Support Services.

\*\*

For regular inquiries I would go to Council Support Services and the Clerk's Office if it was a more serious issue.

\*\*

I would go to the City Clerk.

\*\*

Council Support Services.

\*\*

I would go to the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

I would consult with Council Support Services.

\*\*

I would consult with staff of the Clerk's Office.

\*\*

I would go to HR; I also generally seek the advice of the Clerk's Office. At times, I have consulted with my peers.

\*\*

I would go to Council Support Services. If I had bigger issues, I would go to [the Manager of Legislative Services] or [the Manager of Council and Committee Services].

\*\*

I'd go to consult with Council Support Services, they answer any question we have. Council Support Services should be the proper resource.

\*\*

The Clerk's Office should handle the support for this process.

\*\*

#### *9.1.12 Is there anything else you would like to add?*

The issue that remains is about how effectively the assistants can exercise their rights.

\*\*

Just that I hope that some recommendations come out of this and are adopted.

\*\*

The pay scale is designed to allow maximum flexibility. It depends on the experience of the employee. I've always thought that the hiring was the toughest part of the job, I don't know that there is an easy way. The assistant jobs vary from one Councillor to another based on the specifics of the ward. Getting a new employee started is a very difficult process, difficult to get pass, computer, the admin support is not all in sync, it is a cumbersome process.

\*\*

I think that this boils down to judgment. If Councillors are showing good judgment, respect for the people they hire, they don't run into issues.

\*\*

I emphasized that if you haven't qualified people it's an issue. It's also important to make sure that there is a pay equity among the assistants of all Councillors' Offices.

\*\*

I really want to maintain the autonomy but there is a need for more protection for the assistant when it comes to employment termination.

\*\*

We should leave some flexibility. I agree that we should have some framework for the employees and my responsibilities as an employer.

\*\*

No, I think it reflects my thinking and what I would like to see happening.

\*\*

Nothing else to add.

\*\*

I think there should be a one pager when we are just elected to inform us about the staffing process. The process for the other City employees could serve as a guide.

\*\*

I think that leaving the process wide open is an opportunity to bring in problematic situations or manipulate the system. Once we are elected, we get the orientation after we actually come in office. This is sort of too late because we hire people before we know how to do it properly and what it really entails.

\*\*

Our staff are in limbo, if they have some issues they don't really know where to get assistance. They do not have access to Human Resources and a Union representative.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

I think it is important we show to the public that we are hiring to serve them. We have a responsibility to get the best skill level and I think people expect that we have a formal process, that we are not hiring off the street. There is an expectation of professionalism.

\*\*

I'm open to a lot of things; I'm hoping we are not going to be imposed too much of a process. I recognize that our assistants might be vulnerable and there might be a need to provide them with more safeguards. One problem is the isolation of assistants once they are hired.

\*\*

There is an issue with retention of personnel. This is less important with regular City employees.

\*\*

I think the responsibility of the hiring should be taken out of the Councillor's Office and placed in Council Support Services. If a candidate has a problem with the recruitment and hiring process, they would then go to Council Support Services. I think people need to know what their rights are and where to go if they have an issue.

\*\*

## 9.2 Answers from Councillors' Assistants

The consultants collected answers from Councillors' Assistants from 15 questions. Each question is listed and the answers from all Councillors' Assistants who participated are included in non-chronological order.

Participant gender: Seven Males and 19 Females.

Estimated age of participant:

- Three interviewees under 24
- 11 interviewees 25-34
- Six interviewees 35-44
- Four interviewees 45-54
- Two interviewees 55 and over

### 9.2.1 *Please tell us briefly about the work you do (without telling us which Councillor you work for).*

I do everything from case work to answering the phone, answer emails from residents, etc. solving their problems or connecting them to the right service. Figuring out which Councillors to talk to, community group to see, meetings, etc.

\*\*

I do everything. Poverty reduction agenda of the Councillor's mandate and I also do development files, heritage applications, some constituency case work and budgeting in the office.

\*\*

Four of us each have a community we look after within the ward. We handle all issues from that community. We also have environment, transit files, etc. Answer the calls, different locations because we are far from downtown.

\*\*

I run their office. I filter all emails and I have control over their emails. I file emails because we need to keep them. I do the budget. Answer calls. I do their calendar.

\*\*

I handle all communications for parks and recreation and for events, including emails and the calendar.

\*\*

My roles are to handle the transit file, comms, rep for three of the community associations and admin work for constituent work.

\*\*

Answer calls, case work, do triage, specialize in complaints involving by-law responses, property standards, community housing, trees, explain how tree removal work, and I go to the council pop up meeting in a coffee shop.

\*\*

Political staffers, comms work, strategic work, focus on transit and transportation, social media, newsletters, etc.

\*\*

I do everything.... transportation issues, cycling, pedestrians and OC Transpo.

\*\*

Environmental files, co-chair of the environment committee, and one particular area of the ward.

\*\*

Everyone does everything, speak with residents, plan our events together as a team. First schedule people, I handle those. We have a buddy system with the Councillor, transportation, correspondence and tend to reply to stuff that deal with my responsibilities. I do social media and our newsletter.

\*\*

Liaising with stakeholders on any given topic and beyond. I answer phones and solve problems from garbage pick and clogged gutters. Organize meetings, make multiple stakeholders together, setting priorities.

\*\*

Councillors Assistant. Planning and development files, I have that file. Deal with small scale construction projects, help residents in that field. Work with the developers. Help the Councillor with policies, etc.

\*\*

My area is the file on transportation, environment, parks, infrastructure to transit issues. Proactive awareness on the case work related to those topics. Seeking info about the Councillors priorities related to the topics.

\*\*

Scheduling, taking care of Council, Transportation Committee, then event organizer, office budget and expenses and integrity rules and Code of Conduct is up to par. Calls and traffic issues in the ward.

\*\*

Emails, scheduling, newsletter, answer calls, traffic files for the ward.

\*\*

I deal with the Councillors communication, office budget, social media, website and legislative agenda and Council work. Then anything else they need me to do.

\*\*

I am their Executive Assistant, triage emails, manage the office.

\*\*

I am Executive Assistant, scheduling, manage the office.

\*\*

Assistant to the councillor and I take care of his/her work at the town hall, committee, Council, I advise him /her on political issues, a bit "Chief of staff".

\*\*

Manage their calendar, RSVP to invitations, emails, case work, respond and act on their behalf in meetings, review documents, write speeches, attend events with their and social media. Update their website, monitor social media accounts.

\*\*

Mostly involved in community outreach, activities, meetings, weekly bulletin, internet work, case work.

\*\*

I have community association, they chair the board of health, modernization for public health, I do more committee work. Organize events, calls, etc.

\*\*

Responsible for communications support a few main files of the Councillor.

\*\*

I take action on certain files like planning, housing, social services, arts and culture. Organizing political rallies, etc. There is a lot of flexibility and depending on what they organize it, work can vary.

\*\*

I am the Executive Assistant; I oversee all the information gathering needed for the Councillor. I do their scheduling, the daily briefs, I do all the community work, the policies. I also deal with finances; I also supervised the other assistants in the past, but it recently changed. I did all the hiring of the assistants and the first round of interviews. I did the second round of interviews with the Councillor.

### *9.2.2 What process was used to hire you? What year were you hired?*

I found out about the job through a friend working in the office at the time. Then I applied through the City portal, I was contacted for an interview, came here in the Councillor's Office with two of their staff. Pretty standard questions in English and French. September 2019, later that week in July, I got a call about being hired. Then I got my contract through HR staff later that day and I didn't get anything for about a month, I had to ask for it and I was wondering what was going on. That friend had been fired that day. The Councillor told me that he/she wanted to offer me the position of this person. I got my hiring package a few days later.

\*\*

Councillor was elected then they needed staff and I was looking for a change. I reached out to a friend that worked here and I sent them my resume and I came for an interview with the Councillor and two staff members attended. No formal interview questions. And I started two weeks later.

\*\*

I was the Campaign Manager; we had been working well together. There wasn't really a hiring process as such. I was hired in 2018.

\*\*

I applied through the City of Ottawa page; formal resume set up. Then I was contacted by phone and communicated through email with the Councillor and met the Councillor in the boardroom of the Councillor's Office. First interview with the Councillor only and second interview with the Office Manager.

\*\*

In 2018 and the process used I was ending a contract, so I called them to let them know that I helped them out with their campaign. I did their admin work for the campaign, and once elected they called me and hired me because they can trust me.

\*\*

I was scheduled for an internship as a university student with the City of Ottawa. Once my internship was completed, I was hired afterwards. There was a formal meeting with the Councillor. I was hired in 2010. Now, things have changed, so the hiring process is different and more structured. I am responsible for research on social media and also with [Program Manager of Council Support Service]. We met two or three people. We have more structured questions. Bilingualism is an asset.

\*\*

I was involved in the politics and I had contact with the Councillor before and met them during the campaign. So, I sent them a message and responded that I would consider a position. We met on a Saturday in a coffee shop them and me, about what the job would be and also how to structure the office, etc. Then discussed salary and came to an agreement and I accepted, in 2018.

\*\*

I was hired in June 2017. I was advised to apply for a job, and I contacted my Councillor and had a conversation then they asked to give them the resume and offered me a job one week later.

\*\*

October 2018 and I have worked for the Councillor for many years. When there was an opening during the election and they made me an offer, very casual.

\*\*

In 2016, and I saw the opening in the Councillor's newsletter. I subscribed in the ward, I am a journalist and I was interested in what was going on. I contacted them, and since I knew them as a resident, and I liked them and so I applied. I met with the assistant and they did a prescreening. The opening was because of the toxic environment and a good fit was important. Then I met the Councillor and there was a conversation and structured questions, they were prepared. They operate as a human being. They explained what the job was and there is no succession or promotional opportunities. It took a week and then I was hired.

\*\*

2019, then I only started in March and the process that was used was that I saw the announcement on a website, can't remember the website, then I applied, I followed their campaign and I supported their platform. I was met for an interview in a coffee shop with the Councillor and two other people. We had structured questions. I was hired because I have a background on environmental issues. The follow-up calls a week later than I was hired. Start time took a while to negotiate.

\*\*

I started September 2017. In 2017, I worked with the Councillor during the election, then the following summer I worked as a summer student. I knew everyone in the office, they hired me just like that. I did have to create a profile in the City platform. In September 2017, they reached out to me to work

full time. No interview just asked me to work. After this most recent election in December 2018, I reached out to my Councillor for work, I promoted myself and we sat down and had a conversation in the café in City hall. Explained what my strengths and personal interests were. We decided that we were a good fit. For the contract side of things, I needed to sign a new contract.

\*\*

I have worked for two Councillors, my first employer did not win the election, my interview was held in early 2016, and I lost the opportunity, but I was brought in late 2016. We met at a coffee shop and chatted about the position and got to know each other better and I was offered the role. After that election, because we all know each other and they knew that I was looking and the Executive Assistant scheduled a sit-down interview with and the Executive Assistant about policy and procedure and getting to know each other and with the Councillor and the Executive Assistant and me and shortly after I was offered a position.

\*\*

In 2015, mentioned they wanted to hire people and they knew my parents, and this is how we finally had a coffee at Bridgehead with them and the next day the assistant and then I was hired.

\*\*

I worked on their campaign and I came to city hall when they got elected. I was working part time for them during the campaign, and this is why I was hired. Through conversation at the time, we were on the same page and engaged on their platform.

\*\*

This one was that the Program Manager of Council Support Services that called me to the pre-screening questionnaire, my application was through the website. After that I met with the Executive Assistant of the Councillor then I had another interview with the Councillor. All of the interviews were held in the City boardrooms.

\*\*

2016, the first call was from my Councillor. Got an interview with the manager first then came to City Hall and had the interview with the Councillor and the manager in the boardroom. I got a second interview for a structured interview; it was very professional.

\*\*

2018, the process was that the job was posted on the City of Ottawa website. [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] and their assistant interviewed me and asked a series of questions and small tasks reading and grammar. And then they decided not to be suitable fit for the Councillor. Then they kept my resume and within a month, they called me back and I met with the Councillor. Then I met with them at City Hall in their office, it was informal, they went by the reference that they had from [the Program Manager of Council Support Services]. From there I was hired.

\*\*

In 2016 they had a staff member in the office, and I mentioned to this person that I was interested and send my resume over to them. Conducted the interview at City hall themselves with his Executive Assistant. It was very standard interview questions. Then I was hired.

\*\*

2012, at the time, the Councillor approached me, I was hired initially do events for the ward. And started to work part-time, accompanying them and then the role evolved over the years and slid into the Executive Assistant's role. I have been doing this role for three to four years. We met informally for hiring. I was the last hired like that and then we took over the hiring from then. We conduct the Clerk's Office and word of mouth. We interview them at City Hall in a formal setting, with HR present. Important to choose the right fit. Our residents come first, so someone from the ward is the preference, sometimes it is hard to find. They applied through the City of Ottawa website. The Councillor prefers referrals if it works out.

\*\*

2018, an FB announcement that the Councillor made public. A friend shared this with me and that I had experience in politics. The Councillor interviewed me with a team of 5 and the volunteers did interviews over the phone and the Councillor then met me in person in a coffee shop. He/she had a list of questions that he/she went through. I was hired 4-5 days later. He/she interviewed about 15 people.

\*\*

April 2017. I knew the Councillor from the community, and I was hired on the spot. For the second Councillor, I sent them an email and let them know that I was interested. They called me and we met in a coffee shop and discussed and then offered me the job.

\*\*

2018 and I was helping them in their campaign, and they approached me to work for them. Talked about it in a coffee shop then they hired me.

\*\*

April 2017 and I applied on the City portal website. The only thing I didn't like was they didn't say for which Councillor it was. Office Manager called me to interview me. Interview held in a boardroom here and met with the manager and Councillor and asked me a few questions and explained the job and asked me my background. Customer service background. And then they called me back for a second interview, I need to get informed about what was going on in the City and with both of them and asked questions about the city and situational questions and then I was hired.

\*\*

September 2019. A lengthy process applied through the City portal in the Spring. I interviewed with [the Program Manager of Council Support Services], then she had the option to refer me to Councillors that were hiring. I was interviewed by a few Councillors over the phone, I refused a few offers at the time. The salary was not high enough, and I didn't want to work with any of them. Then I re-interviewed with [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] in August and a Councillor was hiring and I interviewed with the Councillor and the Office Manager.

\*\*

In December 2018, I was hired without a process and I was Campaign Manager. They hired me because I knew them. Interview questions for other staff that we hired. It was held in a room with two different people and it was done in a café.

\*\*

### *9.2.3 How well did you know the Councillor before you were hired?*

I did not know them before.

\*\*

I knew them very well.

\*\*

I did not know them personally at all.

\*\*

I didn't.

\*\*

I have known them since 2000 worked for them in a previous job not related to politics.

\*\*

I did not know them. However, other employees were hired because they knew them during their campaign.

\*\*

I knew them fairly well, through other functions I was involved in.

\*\*

I didn't know them before.

\*\*

Very well.

\*\*

I knew them as a resident and on a professional basis.

\*\*

We had worked together because we worked at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

\*\*

I did not know them only once during the campaign period.

\*\*

The first time, not well and I was recommended and for the one I have right now, I knew them very little but mainly about what my colleagues would say about them.

\*\*

Not very well.

\*\*

Not at all before I worked on their campaign.

\*\*

I used to work beside them before and I live in his area.

\*\*

I did not know them.

\*\*

I didn't know them before.

\*\*

I didn't know them at all.

\*\*

I knew them as a parent of my daughters' friend. We met at community events.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

The first one I knew them for seven years and the second one didn't know them at all.

\*\*

Professionally, working on their campaign. I was interested in their work ethics.

\*\*

I didn't know them.

\*\*

Didn't know them.

\*\*

I knew them briefly before this campaign, I knew them well.

\*\*

#### *9.2.4 How were you notified of the hiring process?*

Through a friend.

\*\*

I proactively reached out.

\*\*

On my own.

\*\*

There was no process when I got hired.

\*\*

On my own.

\*\*

I was the one who found them.

\*\*

They approached me.

\*\*

I wasn't I found it on my own.

\*\*

Found it in their weekly newsletter.

\*\*

I saw it on a website it was published in their website.

\*\*

I just knew they were going to be elected so I proposed myself to them as an assistant

\*\*

I made it clear that I was looking to stay on Councillors Row. Someone told me that there was a vacancy.

\*\*

Through word of mouth.

\*\*

Not informed as I got hired right after elections.

\*\*

Through the website, and I knew that there was going to be an opening.

\*\*

City of Ottawa website. I didn't know for which Councillor it was going to be. I would be open to work for any Councillor except for one particular Councillor.

\*\*

Through the City's website.

\*\*

Through a friend.

\*\*

They approached me.

\*\*

Through a friend who had volunteered for her/him

\*\*

Word of mouth.

\*\*

Volunteered on their campaign, and she asked me to join them.

\*\*

Internet City portal.

\*\*

Through the City portal.

\*\*

Through the Councillor they needed to staff from scratch.

\*\*

### *9.2.5 Were you hired on specific skills? Which skills?*

Focused on Office Manager type role, admin skills, answering email, managing social media. They asked me less about drafting policies, constituent relations, I was asked about that, the job requires a bunch of different skills. Then I would take on certain files as they came in.

\*\*

I do believe I was hired because of my attention to details and my political background.

\*\*

I was hired because I had worked for the City previously. In my cover letter included that their platform appealed to me and that I was generally good at navigating in bureaucracy.

\*\*

Before this job I was a manager for a retail store, customer service. Just being open to your community, and strong client service skills.

\*\*

They asked for a copy of my resume. I have thirty years of admin work.

\*\*

I don't believe so, customer service background, useful skills had a lot to do about our similar values and what people need.

\*\*

Yes. At first, they were looking for someone to complete a study on the state of parks and recreation and I was doing my Master's in Sports Management. They were looking for someone in communications, so my skills were important.

\*\*

They were looking for communication skills, I am a writer. We had a similar approach and vision towards City stuff. I knew many things about transportation etc. They knew that they could trust me with the files. I had a good understanding of how city works. They were looking for partners, collaborators, a shared project.

\*\*

Because of my strategic and communications skills etc.

\*\*

They told me that they loved journalists, and this was important for them. Journalists are trained to get to the bottom of things. Soft skills were important. Customer service.

\*\*

Yes because of the municipal and environmental background. I wouldn't have worked for any other Councillor, the platform etc. and customer service, managing relationships.

\*\*

I was the only one who had experience at City hall, I groomed the others in the office. Good interpersonal skills. French and English.

\*\*

Communications and social media and various software.

\*\*

Looking for people with customer service and interaction with people which I had.

\*\*

My areas of interest were around public transportation and communities-based event. I knew quite a bit about it already. Because I knew how politics worked in Ottawa and it was a natural fit when they got in office.

\*\*

I think it was of my experience in the previous office, event planning, Code of Conduct, budget, organizational skills.

\*\*

I was told because of my customer service. I had graduated from Algonquin in accounting.

\*\*

Business admin background and my past administrative experience. I had fifteen years of experience in a senior admin role.

\*\*

Extensive office experience, in administrative setting and as an Executive Assistant.

\*\*

My knowledge of the ward, my contacts in the ward and then the Councillor's gut feeling. I had done previously fundraisers and we did work a bit together at that time. So, they could of known me through that.

\*\*

Yes, according to my experience in written and oral communication. He/she had a service mentality. He/she was looking for soft skills, someone who believed in his vision of service to his constituents. He/she talked to me about political partisanship to see if I was partisan and so on. If I was following the City of Ottawa's news on things.

\*\*

Knowledge of the community I had admin skills, organization skills and leadership skills.

\*\*

Computer skills, trainer, bilingual, I have done customer service etc.

\*\*

Customer service, Algonquin College residence, emergency situation, worked in a call center.

\*\*

I was hired on community health experience, had communications experience.

\*\*

I have politics, I have long history in organizing in politics. I have written in politics for a long time. We have an active office.

\*\*

### *9.2.6 Were you hired based on years of political experience?*

None.

\*\*

I was asked about it, I worked in Australia in politics. I wouldn't consider political experience as opposed to policy experience.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes, for all I just explained before.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes, and the Councillors knowledge of me.

\*\*

None.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Honestly more about customer service experience, journalism background.

\*\*

No, they didn't want that background.

\*\*

Not years but recent and issue-based knowledge on the topic.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No, I had none.

\*\*

I think so, I brought that to the table, and I think they wanted someone with previous experience.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Not necessarily. Especially with communications. He did not want experience in politics.

\*\*

Yes, in community work.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

*9.2.7 Were you informed of your rights regarding the hiring process with respect to accommodation, discrimination, human rights? If so, how did you know?*

Yes, I think it must have been through my HR for my interview. And through my HR packages.

\*\*

Nothing about that no.

\*\*

Nothing about it.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

I was not informed.

\*\*

No, they did not ask that, I did mention that I would need accommodation for family issues.

\*\*

I was told this stuff when I started. Personally, I was myself informed about my rights.

\*\*

When I started I was provided with an employee handbook.

\*\*

I cannot remember. I doubt it.

\*\*

They might have said that, but I don't remember. Something that was not addressed, political staff and the employees of the City. What are expectations around the political staff. I knew that there was an issue about not expressing political views. I think that has to be looked into. You cannot expect to change the hiring process and see changes in the difference between political staff and employees of the City.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

I believe it came up about Ottawa's policies but no scripted in-depth notification.

\*\*

I don't think so.

\*\*

No but I was part of the hiring process of other staff and I made sure that it was placed into the new hire's information package.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes, there was room for me to ask for accommodation.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes, when we came through the contract and read the contract with me, so I was informed then.

\*\*

When I signed my City contract, it came up.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No but we did have an orientation by the City for new employees. I cannot remember if they talked about that.

\*\*

They talked about flexibility for snow days. They didn't ask about anything else.

\*\*

I don't remember but I recall on the bottom of the job posting it was there.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

*9.2.8 During the hiring process, were you aware of the existence of a Code of Conduct?*

Not during the process.

\*\*

I made myself aware of that and I attended the orientation process, it was brought up during this and the Councillor also gave me a booklet and in it there was the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

\*\*

Yes, because I had worked for the city before. So nowhere in the process was it mentioned.

\*\*

Yes, during the interview.

\*\*

Yes, I know that there was a Code of Conduct. Because I knew them, we didn't speak about this.

\*\*

Everything was clear from the beginning. I cannot remember a Code of Conduct from the start. We have to behave properly.

\*\*

I believe that there was a Code of Conduct, they mentioned it, City Code of Conduct to follow.

\*\*

I wasn't.

\*\*

In the HR package, I received.

\*\*

It was in general terms, sure.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

Yes, that was when I was very first hired.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

When I signed my contract, I was.

\*\*

Yes, I was in charge of it.

\*\*

I was told that we had an HR rep, it was [the former Program Manager of Council Support Services], and that I could go to [the former Program Manager of Council Support Services] if I had something, I didn't feel comfortable to talk to my Councillor. I do remember receiving a booklet.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

It was mentioned I got an email link that was the Code of Conduct.

\*\*

Yes, the first thing that was discussed.

\*\*

Yes, during the orientation, nothing had to do with our rights as employees, it was mainly around Councillors. Don't make a scene etc. [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] takes care of the Councillors and not for us.

\*\*

Yes, through the HR package.

\*\*

No, I don't remember.

\*\*

I worked for the City I knew about it. They talked to me about what the job entails etc. We act as professional, support more than political pressure.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

Yes, I was made aware of it through the HR package I received.

\*\*

*9.2.9 Is your perception that those around you are satisfied with the current selection process? Are you personally satisfied with the current selection process?*

I would say in general people are not. The way I was hired the process was fine, but I don't think our office is the norm.

\*\*

I think that most of the assistants are satisfied, I did the hires in our office. I posted the jobs on the Councillor's social media and asked Council Support Services, I got over one hundred and fifty applicants. I sorted them and shortlisted twenty-five for interviews. Four were retained for a second interview with me and the Councillor. I think this was fair.

\*\*

I think the majority of the assistants are satisfied in general. I would be against a standard process with a predetermined pool of candidates that the Councillor should hire from. I would also not be in favour of a union standard hiring process.

\*\*

I am confident that my skills and experience are required. Hiring process as a whole, every Councillor has a different process. We don't have to be stringent but having something more consistent. Some people are not satisfied with the hiring process. There is a lack of collegiality now. My last hire, we put emphasis on skills for the people can work under pressure. Hires must speak French and [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] was on the board, they knows what the qualities are of the Councillors Assistant.

\*\*

Within my office yes. I know that people from other offices were not happy by the way they hire people. The process I went through was great for me.

\*\*

There seems to be a problem to see other people in Councillor's Row. So, I don't know. So, I am personally happy with the hiring process.

\*\*

It's hard to say, we don't discuss with the other wards. Most people are surprised at the many hours of work. I have seen a major improvement since I was hired. From what I can see, [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] is helping a lot and it's going well. We have had good support from [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] and their team.

\*\*

Our office is satisfied with the process. We work collaboratively on it. We talk about the fit of the new hire. In other offices, I do hear that it is not as good. And others that it is a very good hiring process. It's a mixed bag.

\*\*

Yes, I believe so, but I understand that they hire for fit. We work well together, none of my colleagues have complained about the hiring process.

\*\*

I think that with the staff I work with, yes, they are happy, and we understand that there are issues elsewhere.

\*\*

I wanted to come to meet you because if there is one point that I want to make it is that, around twenty-three Councillors, a handful of outstanding Councillors, some fit in between those that are not very good. I don't want to see that the ones that are doing it right, they need to operate as they see fit. They need to be able to hire the "best fit". A Councillor is as good as their staff are. This is very important, there should not be a box of ridged hiring process. Every ward is different, so there needs to be flexibility. On the City website, they don't tell you which Councillor you are applying for. For me the process was great.

\*\*

Yes, I think so and I was happy with the way I was hired.

\*\*

Yes, I was satisfied with the way I was hired.

\*\*

I would say yes. I do have conversations outside of my office and the general consensus is a level of satisfaction about the job and the hiring process.

\*\*

Everyone in our office is very happy with the way we were hired.

\*\*

I don't think that there is a standard hiring process. I went on the campaign knowing that I was going to be hired after. It is an unusual work, diverse wards. I don't know that the hiring process is the problem,

working there is actually that our role is poorly defined. It is challenging to build communities amongst other Councillors Assistants, either the public opinion will taint that relationship.

\*\*

Yes, to both questions. I am very picky before I work for someone.

\*\*

I think that this term of Council, there is more tension. Maybe before it was different. People think that the Councillor's Row has a bad reputation. There is a lot of people advocating for stuff and it is for a specific situation. I was never affected by that. For me everything was done professionally. I am super happy with my environment. It is not appropriate to say that it is scary to come to work in every office.

\*\*

No people are not happy in general but within our office yes.

\*\*

I have no issues with the selection process, and I haven't heard anything different. I am not at City hall I am in the Councillor's Ward Office.

\*\*

Yes, I do believe that everyone is happy. Every office is different, in what they do, etc. In our ward we have a written test and I don't know what's done elsewhere.

\*\*

It's hard to tell. We don't get a lot of opportunity to interact with the staff. It's unique to each Councillor. Flexible process.

\*\*

I was satisfied with the way it worked for me. Others are not satisfied. The assistants are not satisfied because the Councillors hire and the staffer's input is not taken into consideration. Dynamic in the office is very important, you share the space with these people, so you have to get along. It would be important to include staff in the hiring process.

\*\*

I haven't talked to anyone unhappy, besides the Chiarelli issues. I am happy on the way I was hired.

\*\*

No, they are not happy. This term of Council is very different than the last. The last one was friendlier and the situation with Chiarelli raised tension among Councillors and some are very vocal.

[the Program Manager of Council Support Services] offered support for us during the crisis. I was never concerned when I was hired besides the Chiarelli situation. I was happy the way I was hired.

\*\*

Yes, I am satisfied with the way I was hired. Some others do hiring in a different way. It didn't seem to be prepared; they couldn't respond to my questions about other stuff.

\*\*

In our office yes. In other offices it varies.

\*\*

*9.2.10 In your opinion, have there been any shortcomings in the hiring process? If so, which ones and how could the hiring process be improved?*

I think that in fact it is not that Councillors can choose the way they hire, they should have flexibility, but everyone is hired in different ways and it is inconsistent. It can contribute to the turnover rate. That is partially due to the way they are hired. Each Councillor controls the salary and duties, we are all paid for different things, there is no consistency and we do all the same job. I don't know if it is because of the hiring process is the key to the way the budget is administered. There isn't a salary range, it is up to the Councillor and their budget. We received bonuses this year.

\*\*

Some new Councillors have not managed staff in their life. For those, HR of the City should be more involved to get some help. HR gives you some guidance. On the other extreme, some people have been here for a long time, they sort of wing it. They don't care about their education or background. A lot of people show up for a few weeks and then they disappear. If there were more preparation, we would hire the right people.

\*\*

Not that I can think of, it was two interviews.

\*\*

If I was to do the hiring process again, I would prefer to have a selection tool to assess specific skills, writing is an example.

\*\*

I cannot really say anything because of the way I was hired.

\*\*

[the Program Manager of Council Support Services] is no longer involved now. The service is available, but not everyone is using it. It is not mandatory.

\*\*

If we go through the City website, it doesn't tell you which Councillor you are going to work for. Through our orientation day, we were told that we could lose our job, the City Clerk threatened me that I could lose my job. So, we don't have protection as employees.

\*\*

My experience was good. My understanding is that if you go on the City's website, there is no indication of which Councillor is hiring. I think that it is normal to have a more informal first meeting.

\*\*

The shortcomings in the hiring process is that if people have complaints, they have to complain to the Councillor, so it should be an arms length process where they could complain.

\*\*

I really can't find any wrong in the process.

\*\*

No, the hiring process is fine.

\*\*

I would say that there is not a lot of oversight. The support staff to the Clerk's Office could be accompanying the assistant when they are hired halfway through the mandate. They don't have the same orientation as those that are hired right after the elections.

\*\*

I think that there has to be change and everything is going to be different; people represent different parts of the City and some elected officials will operate differently because of that. Political leanings might be different and choosing a team that will believe in the work that they do.

\*\*

No shortcomings in the way I was hired. In other offices, the way they proceed is through the City website because they don't know for which Councillor they are hired for. You need to have the same views of the Councillor. That posting does not explain what the job is all about. Each Councillor manages the offices differently.

\*\*

I do think that having some third-party supervision would be fair and a good safety measure. It needs to be as an HR rep but not a deciding party. It should be at the discretion of the Councillor the hiring. Have a flexible interview process.

\*\*

Nothing in the hiring process.

\*\*

I don't think so. It was my first real job, and nothing would have turned me away from it.

\*\*

No. At the time everything was OK.

\*\*

For our office I oversee it and I do it myself. I don't think there are any shortcomings.

\*\*

I don't think so. The Clerk's Office has been very helpful, and they are there to help us. They are efficient. [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] was very helpful and accommodating.

\*\*

The process benefits the candidates, but at a systemic level, it leaves room for vision.

\*\*

The first Councillor who hired me, the staff was not informed that I was coming onboard. The second hiring process was very good. We all started the same day and we are all on the same page, same level, etc. When someone leaves during the term, they need to be added in the group midway through the term.

\*\*

There seems to be processes where positions are posted online then waiting 10 days. At the moment we follow a process. There are advantages to the flexibility but disadvantages too.

\*\*

If we could know which Councillor they are hiring for.

\*\*

I don't think so.

\*\*

We've had no one leave out of the office. So, we chose the right people. We were lucky in that sense. It is difficult to know whether people will get along well together or not. We are political staff so it's different for us. It would be a huge detriment if the City gets involved in the hiring process. HR and the City do have a hidden agenda. They are not neutral arbiter in this process. Yes, there could be improvement. There is room for more structure, HR could be part of the interview. HR should not have a say in who

gets to be hired. I wouldn't be here if that was the case. People have been fired because of their politics. People have been fired because of their views and Councillors were told that they should fire someone if they want to have a file advanced.

\*\*

*9.2.11 After you were hired, were you informed of the existence of policies affecting employee rights?*

HR package and the Code of Conduct.

\*\*

Yes, orientation day.

\*\*

No, I can't say I was. I learned about it because I went to the Councillors orientation, we did not have one for the assistants.

\*\*

Yes, within the HR package.

\*\*

We met with the City Clerk and before taking office, through an onboarding day. We were informed there.

\*\*

It's been a while, I forgot.

\*\*

Yes, through orientation day.

\*\*

Through orientation day. It was done at that time.

\*\*

In the package that was given to me.

\*\*

I think I read the package and it was in there. I think that we are well treated in my office/ward. No turnover in our office.

\*\*

Some of this was in our contract, I was in contact with the previous person that had my job. I believe that we had to do many training such as safety and discrimination, health care, etc.

\*\*

Yes, in the package.

\*\*

After you are hired with the information you get as a newbie.

\*\*

Yes, via the package form HR.

\*\*

Not by the Councillor but by other Councillors' Assistants. My orientation three-hour session was only given to me one month later. By then I knew all of what was discussed. That PowerPoint presentation needs to be changed because it doesn't apply to Councillors staff.

\*\*

Yes, through [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] and through the package and the orientation session.

\*\*

I was taught about the City and to be careful on social media. The first person was [the former Program Manager of Council Support Services] and spoke with me, went over the contract with them. Their door was always open. My first day was an orientation session to familiarize myself.

\*\*

Yes, in the package. On Ozone as well. Orientation session was also done.

\*\*

Yes, during employee orientation.

\*\*

Probably not. Employees that I hire now do orientation.

\*\*

No, and I missed it. We were told I was not a City employee. That leaves room for abuse.

\*\*

I wasn't informed other than the package I received. It was sent one month later. There was something about the Code of Conduct. Three months after I was informed that I have to go to orientation. I had to convince my Councillor that I wanted to go. They covered the basic HR stuff. Conduct, harassment, policy, how the City works etc.

\*\*

No not really. Personally, I am aware of my rights, younger people are not.

\*\*

Yes, I got the package, Code of Conduct, City policies, etc. I had to read everything before going further into the process to fill out.

\*\*

Yes, I learned things through the media. I spent a half day with [the Program Manager of Council Support Services], going through our package about our rights and role etc. [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] really honored and explained their role and support function HR support role for us.

\*\*

Yes, in the HR package.

\*\*

*9.2.12 If you had questions about the recruitment and hiring process, who would you have consulted with?*

I would have contacted the Councillor.

\*\*

I would go to the City Clerk's Office.

\*\*

I would have consulted with City HR, prior to the offer I would have spoken to the Councillor.

\*\*

For me I have family that work for the City, so I could have asked them but otherwise I don't know.

\*\*

Who would I go to, but it doesn't apply to me?

\*\*

I don't know, it's been too long. It's not clear where to go.

\*\*

The Councillor.

\*\*

I would have consulted with my colleague in charge of the office.

\*\*

I would have gone to the head of admin on Council Row, [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] and ask questions there. She wasn't there at that time.

\*\*

I guess I would have called the assistant in the office.

\*\*

I probably talked to former employees. I knew my way around.

\*\*

Probably the Councillor first, [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] would have been my go-to person.

\*\*

With the HR rep, [former Program Manager of Council Support Services] or [the Program Manager of Council Support Services].

\*\*

I don't know at the time; I wouldn't have known. [The Councillor] or their assistant.

\*\*

Probably my coworker.

\*\*

With the Councillor directly or the Executive Assistant.

\*\*

To my manager in the interview or the receptionist.

\*\*

I don't know. Probably ask the Program Manager of Council Support Services.

\*\*

I would have gone to the Council Support Services or HR services.

\*\*

The Program Manager of Council Support Services.

\*\*

I don't know. I have no idea. There was no portal.

\*\*

For Councillors, it would have been the Program Manager of Council Support Services.

\*\*

Now we would talk to the Program Manager of Council Support Services.

\*\*

Asked the Office Manager or the Councillor, and after I asked the Program Manager of Council Support Services/HR for any questions.

\*\*

The Program Manager of Council Support Services.

\*\*

My Councillor.

\*\*

### *9.2.13 Is there anything else you would like to add to help us review the process?*

Not specifically. It is the overall inconsistency within each office, it is done differently. Because we are hired by the Councillor and paid by the City. It contributes to lower retention rate. So many things happen at once, we have tons of different kinds of responsibilities. Complaints for residents, etc.

\*\*

I think for the hiring process I don't believe there are things I would change; Councillors must have the right to hire who they want. When I got hired, I expected to have more information, what the different City's departments services are. Nobody ever gave me an orientation. This is something that is lacking. I also wish there was an HR resources, like a Chief HR Officer, under the Integrity Commissioner because he manages the complaints and the Code of Conduct. I would take this role away from the Clerk's Office. I think that the Councillors Code of Conduct applies to me and I am bounded by it. There should be anonymous feedback and offboarding interview.

\*\*

The location and the structure of the interview. The City does this review because it reactive because of the media pressure. A lot of interviews to run after an election. There is a lot of turnover because people are not the right fit. There is no dedicated HR person for Council Row.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

The hiring process for the Councillors, given the type of job they have, they have to be hands on but somebody else could be in the room with them.

\*\*

No, I don't think so.

\*\*

I believe that you should look at more than just the hiring process. Protection in place and having an HR rep when they meet us. More than one person during the interview. We don't want to see the City's bureaucracy in the hiring process. We see cynicism in our work. The conditions we work in, we sometimes get bullied because of the work we do. We don't want the City to control who Councillors hire. Our protection is with the Councillor. We are concerned with this process. We don't know [the Program Manager of Council Support Services] role. Are they our HR rep, who do they work for? That role should be independent. They don't have the power to help us in our work. We feel they are an "antiHR rep". Low key hostility in power.

\*\*

I think that all this is about the behaviour of one Councillor. I don't think that is the issue. If we want to foster a change in the assistant, it is about the amount of power the Councillors' have over their employees, they can be fired without cause. Job security is nonexistent. The problem lies there with no protection once hired as opposed to how we are hired.

\*\*

No, need an arm's length body to complain to.

\*\*

I understand why we are here, there is a challenge in that. I think my only comment would be, is that whatever comes out of this, is guidelines that everyone should follow. Councillors need to keep their independence. It wouldn't allow Councillors to hire the right staff. Hiring is the most important thing they do.

\*\*

It would have been nice to have the HR person present at the interview. I think that it would be helpful that HR could help us more, be more involved from the start and be there for us as opposed to towards the city. It would be nice if they were to terminate someone, which they are allowed to do, that we would be informed of that and what our expectations are and to clarify what is our political part. We would hate for them to get curtailed; we are in a political role not employees of the City. We cannot lose that freedom.

\*\*

Obviously, each Councillor hires people their own way. Then it seems that some do a hybrid of both. It could be confusing if someone is totally new, they could be confused. When they advertise through the City website, they don't say for which Councillor.

\*\*

Knowing that I have a privileged point of view. I realized that having an interview at the coffee shop, I didn't feel that I could have suggested another place, and it would have been doable. A coffee shop may not be comfortable for everyone, Councillors should offer different locations, where the candidate may feel more comfortable.

\*\*

The critical thing is that having a generic process would work. This study is being done because of what is going on. The onus should not be on the Councillor to hire someone with HR presence. It is a question of having a policy on harassment. As a newcomer, there is no clear process when you're hired. I didn't have a conversation about anything. It would be cool to have an orientation day on the position per se. Benefit from best practices from other offices.

\*\*

I think that there is a lot of value in sourcing candidates from various sources for the assistants. The ad for City assistant posting doesn't say which Councillor, it is not right. It seems ridiculous not to know for which Councillor. Going through the city each time would not be beneficial.

\*\*

The hiring process per se, no further comment.

\*\*

For me the process was professional, I heard that some people are doing it in a coffee shop. In a boardroom it made sense. I was in a City Hall facility, receptionist, HR rep, another manager.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No, we haven't had any issues that had come up in the media. We are rural based ward, so it is quite different than 90% of the rest of the wards. I use external board to advertise the vacancy when there is one.

\*\*

No. For our office, I wouldn't want the process to be a cookie cutter type of process. It has to be flexible because we need different fits. We work very close physically, so everyone needs to get along.

\*\*

I worked in federal politics. I find we give a lot of weight to the Councillors' needs, flexibility and loyalty, and we don't look at the room it leaves for mistreating employees.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

I would like the process to be as simple as possible, they are elected officials, a little more transparency, it needs to be quick and easy.

\*\*

Having a second person during interviews. It is more casual with two persons as opposed to one person.

\*\*

I guess that only thing that I want to share is the offices are managed and how the salaries are defined. \$20,000 difference at one point. It should be more consistent.

\*\*

Not have the City involved in who a Councillor wants to hire. Have a more formalized setting to hire. \*\*

*9.2.14 On a scale of one to 10, how satisfied are you with the current recruitment and hiring process?*

Seven but we just hired someone in our office, we had a HR person in the room, HR helped us with the process. We decided that this is going to be the way to hire someone.

\*\*

Seven for my process, it could have gone better and for how things are done generally it is a three.

\*\*

10 to be honest. It was all formal communication, kept professional. Fair chance in having two interviews. Job related to the questions.

\*\*

I cannot answer that.

\*\*

10 I am doing it.

\*\*

Hiring process is only part of the whole.

\*\*

Eight out of 10. If I compare with the beginning, I saw five different assistants, and the situation has moved in the right direction.

\*\*

10 no complaints, I had a great time.

\*\*

Six out of 10 lots of room for improvement. Councillor's are in a particular position and they must be able to hire people that feel comfortable with. It is absolutely required to ask the assistant's to be on the same page as the Councillor. There could be abuse when interviews could be conducted in places and be asked weird questions.

\*\*

10 out of 10 in our office.

\*\*

10 have no issues with it.

\*\*

Eight out of 10.

\*\*

Nine out of 10.

\*\*

10.

\*\*

Seven or eight out of 10.

\*\*

10.

\*\*

10.

\*\*

Eight out of 10. There is a disconnect between the roles we are giving the newbies. What we needed had to fit in the generic job description that the Program Manager of Council Support Services gave us. We put something out there that is not true. It was going to take a week or two if we wanted to change things. It should be more flexible and easier and fast. And putting the job up for fifteen days and then we had to wait for HR to do the screening. And this takes a long time. I could have done the screening myself. It was frustrating. It could have been easier just to post on the local paper or the newsletter.

\*\*

I have no issues, nine or 10.

\*\*

10.

\*\*

Eight or nine out of 10.

\*\*

Seven out of 10.

\*\*

Eight out of 10. It's hard to comment on an inexistent process.

\*\*

Nine or 10 out of 10. It is not a practice used across the board.

\*\*

Eight or nine out of 10. Specifically, because it is about the hiring process. I am on level one with the HR support. 10 on the structure we have put in place in our office. I am thrilled with the way things have been done in place and having multiple board members on the interview panel.

\*\*

*9.2.15 Is there anything else you would like to add?*

I feel strongly about the issues of people not being qualified and tied to the recruitment process and people are not adequately compensated for the work they do. Restructure the whole jobs. In every office, someone in the office that is managing the office should be paid more. Cost of living adjustments. Council treat people as disposable. If the City wants to build themselves to be an employer of choice, they need to change how they retain their staff.

\*\*

In my other job, we had training and all the personnel was in the same room therefore all employees were receiving the same information.

\*\*

Start treating people with respect.

\*\*

I don't think so.

\*\*

The problems are about the definition of the role of the political staff of the City. We do have a different role than other staff people. Our role is to promote the views of our councillor, the code forbids us to say what our Councillor thinks because we don't necessarily support the Mayor. We should be recognized as a political staff. Because that is what we are. If they expect us to act as bureaucrats, then we should have the union. We have at this point, nowhere to go to complain. So, if you complain about your Councillor to the City's responsible person, then your neck is on the line.

\*\*

Safety in the workplace. Assistants went home because Chiarelli went to his office. My workplace is my office not City Hall. I don't feel that the hallway is not safe. People in Chiarelli's office felt not safe.

\*\*

There needs to be an explicit part, there needs to be more representative of the Canadian population. What protection the political staff could have in terms of union representation. No support to the staff after the Chiarelli thing went out, no support offered to us, they were not proactive, be supporting.

\*\*

No

\*\*

I am not quite sure.

\*\*

Integrity Commissioner is the go to person with a harassment complaint. If a person feels that they are doing a career limiting move, there should more focus on retraining Councillors on harassment and treating employees.

\*\*

Nothing else. I don't believe that this is a generic civil service job. You need to care for the community you are working in. It is not for everybody.

\*\*

No. Separate from the hiring process, for me after the probationary period, there should be a performance assessment.

\*\*

The City should have some guidelines about how they should hire people and it should be more formal and follow the process.

\*\*

In terms of the level of protection, lack of protection we have in terms of job security. I have been here for 11 years and if he doesn't get elected, I am out of a job. We should have some sort of job security. There is something that could be done to protect us. But we are political staff. Right now, if I had a problem with my Councillor with harassment or felt uncomfortable, I don't know where I could go to in confidence, I wouldn't be protected. I have been here long enough to understand that there is no protection.

\*\*

I got nothing right now.

\*\*

No, it's all good.

\*\*

There should be more consideration for the Councillors employees. There was harassment between two of our employees, and this individual has left now. You can be fired easily depending on what the Councillor wants. There is no process governing harassment. A policy would be needed.

\*\*

Protection to staffers once they are hired, the elected official should not have that much power to fire them. No job security, getting dismissed. It could be a question of wanting to fire someone because of their age.... It is unjust reason. This would never be allowed. To complain about the Councillor on how they treat you, nothing can be done. Some went to the [former Program Manager of

Council Support Services] and they said that there is no option. The City cannot control how the Councillor treats you. You suck it up or you leave. When there is a lot of turnover that's a red flag.

\*\*

My hiring was simple, I am satisfied.

\*\*

I am happy this is happening; I think that the Clerk's office mentality is to protect the Councillor first and they don't think about us. I understand it's about politics. They should talk to us to see what the solution to this issue would be. I don't think that the union is the solution.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

The City needs to put in place a structure where employees may be part of a union. The employer could offer us a union. People should be able to have access to representation. Federally it is to the employer to recognize the union because of the complicated structure we have.

\*\*

### 9.3 Answers from Contracted Vendors

The consultants collected answers from contracted vendors from 12 questions. Each question is listed and the answers from all contracted vendors who participated are included in non-chronological order.

#### 9.3.1 *What process was used to hire you?*

There was no job description, I was approached by a Councillor's Assistant and I had worked for the Councillor before.

\*\*

I was hired by the Councillor's Assistant. I knew someone in the Councillor's Office, I was referred.

\*\*

I had an interview and that was basically it and testing basic knowledge about the City of Ottawa, getting to know you.

\*\*

I approached the Councillor whom I worked for as volunteer, we got an informal meeting to discuss my personal aspirations, I expressed my wish to work for the government and I was offered a part-time job in the Councillor's Office while I was attending school.

\*\*

I had an interview after I had sent a resume. I needed a flexible part-time job. The interview was at the Councillor's Office and I was able to speak with the assistant already in place.

\*\*

I had an interview. I couldn't tell you if there were other candidates.

\*\*

### *9.3.2 How well did you know your employer before you were hired?*

I had known the Councillor professionally for about four years through different job.

\*\*

Yes, we had met a few times.

\*\*

I did not know the Councillor at all.

\*\*

I did volunteer work during the campaign season and participate in a yearly event.

\*\*

I had seen the Councillor and met them in different social events in the area where I live.

\*\*

I knew the Councillor pretty well, they're well known in the community for their outstanding work.

\*\*

### *9.3.3 How were you notified of the hiring process?*

There was no process in particular.

\*\*

Not notified specifically.

\*\*

I was not aware of a process.

\*\*

There is no specific process.

\*\*

There was no specific process.

\*\*

I knew that the Councillor needed someone to address some issues in the community and to be their liaison on equity and diversity issues particularly.

\*\*

#### *9.3.4 Were you hired on specific skills? Which skills?*

I am managing social media, writing skills.

\*\*

It was about being social, outgoing, willing to talk to people. Social skills.

\*\*

I was hired for computer skills.

\*\*

I can't really think of specific skills I have a good work ethics; I have a reasonable understanding of computers.

\*\*

I don't know that I was hired on specific skills, they needed office support.

\*\*

My skills are communication, mobilization of volunteers in the community, event planner, consultation in the community.

\*\*

#### *9.3.5 Were you hired on the basis of years of political experience?*

Definitely not, first experience in political environment.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

No.

\*\*

I wasn't hired based on political experience, but for my computer knowledge and experience.

\*\*

I was not hired on this basis.

\*\*

Probably a little bit but more my foundation in the community.

\*\*

*9.3.6 Were you informed of your rights regarding the hiring process with respect to accommodation, discrimination, human rights? If so, how did you know?*

I was informed verbally.

\*\*

Not specifically.

\*\*

I do not remember.

\*\*

I was informed on my rights before I accepted the job.

\*\*

Yes, I was informed verbally and was informed that I could ask personnel of the office.

\*\*

I believe I was; I just forget it now.

\*\*

*9.3.7 During the hiring process, were you aware of the existence of a Code of Conduct for the Councillors?*

Yes, I was aware.

\*\*

Yes, it got sent to me before signing anything. I don't remember exactly which one.

\*\*

I was aware of a Code of Conduct, but I had not read it.

\*\*

I was not aware of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

\*\*

I was aware that the Councillors have a general way to act, I don't think I saw the Code as such. I believe it was discussed.

\*\*

I believe so.

\*\*

*9.3.8 Is your perception that those around you are satisfied with the current selection process? Are you personally satisfied with the current selection process?*

The people I come across seem pretty happy.

\*\*

I was very satisfied, and I would believe that some other people like me would agree.

\*\*

Other contracted vendors I know seem satisfied and so far, it's the best job I ever worked.

\*\*

I am satisfied with the current selection process.

\*\*

I was satisfied.

\*\*

Yes, very satisfied as well as other people I know.

\*\*

*9.3.9 In your opinion, have there been any shortcomings in the hiring process? If so, which ones and how could the hiring process be improved?*

Nothing.

\*\*

I think it was good no adjustment to be made.

\*\*

I would say I was satisfied. My previous interview experiences were pretty relaxed, I have worked in retail in the past.

\*\*

I haven't personally experienced any shortcomings as I didn't go through a formal interview.

\*\*

I think it was done in a timely manner and I was comfortable with the way it went.

\*\*

Not that I can think of.

\*\*

*9.3.10 Following your hiring, have you been informed of the existence of policies regarding the rights of contracted vendors?*

Maybe not.

\*\*

I haven't been.

\*\*

I was given the legal document, initially a contract, which was then taken away by HR because they realized that I was a contracted vendor instead of an assistant. I assume that my rights as vendor are the same.

\*\*

I was not informed about any contracted vendors since I wasn't working with any contracted vendors.

\*\*

Yes.

\*\*

I believe so.

\*\*

*9.3.11 Do you have a signed contract or do you just send an invoice?*

I do invoices.

\*\*

I just invoice.

\*\*

I just do invoices right now.

\*\*

I signed a contract a while ago.

\*\*

I am being contacted on a need basis, particularly in the summer. I submit my hours on a time sheet provided by the Councillor's Office.

\*\*

I submit my hours worked via an invoice.

\*\*

*9.3.12 Is there anything else you would like to add?*

No. (answer from all interviewees)

\*\*

## 9.4 Answers from Other City of Ottawa Employees

The consultants collected answers from relevant City of Ottawa employees from seven questions. Each question is listed and the answers from all employees who participated are included in non-chronological order.

*9.4.1 Do you believe that the recruitment and hiring processes should be based on a specific skills assessment for the assistants and the contracted vendors?*

The interviewees believe that there isn't a common set of skills, it is dependent on the ward and skills set may be different. Rural wards are different than the City ones. It varies from one Councillor to another. Competencies like discretion, customer service, community involvement and judgment are surely very important in the role of assistants. The needs are not consistent, there is a consistent variety of skills they look for, but every Councillor's Assistant should be hired on the same skill set. It was reported that it would be beneficial for Councillors to structure their office based on their needs. If it's

the admin or political experience they are looking for, then this is their need. But a more structured job description, if there are similarities, which there are, would reduce the high turnover on both sides. It applies for assistants and outside of what is done in the regular duties of the office. And contract vendors should be hired for “one off work”, like web pages, etc. and not on a regular basis.

\*\*

We don't have anything to do with contracted vendors. All Councillors' requirements are different and use the assistant position differently. Much dependent on the Councillors assessment.

\*\*

Absolutely, there should be a transparent process, guidelines for the Councillors. For example, it could suggest having two people for the interviews, the review of resumes should also be transparent, the process should also be equitable.

\*\*

I do believe that if you are hiring for an assistant position, you should be hiring against a defined job description. For the contracted vendors, my opinion is that this option can be used for convenience and to skirt the hiring process of assistants.

\*\*

For the assistants, in a perfect world, the Councillors would resort to HR Services. The Councillors have a high degree of confidence and some of them may rely more on their political instinct. Some of them are insisting on chemistry and loyalty. You don't want to take away the ability for them to hire people that they feel suited to work at their side; however, there should be some required skills. I believe that the experience shows that assistants being hired on instinct are not always successful and eventually some Councillors tend to look for a more formal process.

It should be mentioned that the employer-employee relationship is very different in the setting of a Councillor's office compared to other work environment. For contracted vendors, as long as expenses are public and there are some accountability measures, reporting, it's the Councillor's own issue. There is a risk for nepotism. However, I do not think that there should be any micromanagement about their right to enter into contractual agreements.

\*\*

For the assistants, I don't think that there should be a standard skill assessment because all the wards have their own particularities. In some wards, you may need the assistants to do mostly case work. In others it's more major issues management and legislative work. In addition, there are also the basic administrative tasks that need to be done. As an example, the Councillor's scheduling may be of paramount importance in an office but not in another one. The assessment of skills cannot be standardized with a single job description. Each office customizes the tasks of their assistants. The mixing and matching of tasks for the assistant position is defined by each Councillor. For the contracted vendors, normally the Councillors want to use vendors from their ward. They should get

several quotes; they should make sure that the vendors provide proper and detailed invoices. There should be a service agreement and a specific mandate. This would avoid any perception of improper spending of public funds.

\*\*

For the position of assistant, I say yes. The reason is that it's a high-stress job and if you don't have the right skills then you are setting people up for failure. For the contracted vendors, there should be an assessment since their job is more precarious, they are hired for a specific expertise therefore it should be assessed. If a contracted vendor is doing the same job as a person already in place in an assistant position, the person should then be hired as an assistant and having the same work benefits, even if it is for a short period of time.

\*\*

Yes, for the assistants and for the contracted vendors. For the assistants, there would be different skill sets: basic administrative skills such as answering phone calls. Secondly, policy writing skills, consultation and research. The third set of skills would be for the constituency person, preferably at the ward office and looking at the day-to-day requests from the citizen. This assistant would be at the ward office during opening hours. For the contracted vendor, the City has a procurement office and they have a list of prequalified vendors.

#### *9.4.2 What is your impression of the overall process used by the Councillors for recruiting and hiring their assistants and contracted vendors?*

The perception of interviewees on the overall process for recruiting and hiring municipal Councillors for administrative staff and contract vendors is that admin staff are politicians. So, to a certain degree, there needs to be flexibility in the recruitment and hiring process. It should be based on the Councillors' needs. However, the system could be improved. The more experienced Councillors may use the tools that are offered them. For the less experienced ones, there should be more support on the part of the Councillors' Services, be more proactive to help them. What we have at the moment is very unstructured, and it lacks in tools to help them recruit staff for new Councillors that have no prior experience in office work. There is not enough training and guidelines to help Councillors. A PowerPoint presentation is not enough. There needs to be a proper onboarding training to ease the setup of an office for a new elected official.

\*\*

For the assistants, I would say it's really depending on the Councillor's needs.

\*\*

We don't know about it; I don't know that there is anything published to describe the process. I don't know if the assistants are regrouped or have a union, they may be isolated.

\*\*

I think that many Councillors have very little experience in hiring. This is a skill set that is required to understand Human Resources and what are the legal obligations. You would want to have a process to hire the best employees. Some might want to hire individuals who helped them at some point, but others would like to have a process that would protect them better from any liability issue. I don't know that all the Councillors are well aware of the hiring process and what it entails.

\*\*

First, from my experience, I believe that there is a need to support the Councillors. The issue is how can the Administration assess the personal compatibility with a Councillor, considering that the important fact that a Councillor and their assistant are working in a very close proximity?

Councillors have difficult jobs and not all of them have previous management experience. Doing HR functions is not necessarily an easy task. It is important that the potential assistants are well aware of the job's requirements, that they can deal with a high level of complaints, that they can deal with confidentiality requirements. This fact is not always known by the newly elected Councillors as they are coming into office. Having the Clerk's Office taking part in the process is a good way to fill this gap.

\*\*

There are pros and cons. One disadvantage of the actual situation is that people are possibly denied the rights that they have as a potential candidate and may be subjected to inappropriate hiring practices.

An advantage is that Councillors are not bound by the City's onerous hiring process. The Councillors have some flexibility and take advantage of being able to fast-track the process.

\*\*

I think that right now the Councillors can hire whoever they want, even if they are being advised of not hiring campaign volunteers. This results in the fact that the City has to fire some assistants due to the lack of proper qualifications for the job.

\*\*

#### *9.4.3 Has there been any shortcomings in the recruitment and hiring process of Councillors Assistants?*

Challenge is that you come from the street and you become a manager i.e. Councillor. You may not have been exposed to challenges of running an office. It comes with the nature of the work. The tendency over time is that it is going to be people that help them get elected. It may not be the same skill set and different roles that they need. There will be a learning curve for new Councillors.

\*\*

Councillors don't keep their staff; it is like a revolving door. It could be the Councillor's personality.

\*\*

The shortcomings may be around the orientation and the communication to new staff about what support is available, what their rights are and what is in their contracts. In the last few months we have been reviewing that. In the media, Councillors' Assistants felt they didn't have any protection, they felt isolated and they may not know what support is available to them. When the process is not structured, it becomes confusing and staff don't get their information right away and they can miss money because they are not put on the payroll in a timely fashion. I believe that if it is not the right person that is chosen, turnover is an issue. We have limited involvement in the selection, but we could be more involved through our service. We could provide more tools in recruitment and hiring practices.

\*\*

Yes, it is good for anyone applying for an assistant job to understand the criteria under which they are assessed and how the selection will be done: what would be the questions asked, will there be any scoring, any priority given as per the employment equity lens. The City has an inclusion policy, we have diversity commitments, are the Councillor making any attention to this? We are not the private sector, the standards have to be higher, transparency, fairness, because the salary of Councillors and assistants are paid by the public. If someone was to contest the fact that they did not get the job is there a documented process to justify the final decision.

\*\*

I believe that employees should have access to better knowledge of their recourse when issues arise with their Councillor. It is quite delicate to police these issues. Giving more resources to all parties, such as best practices, could be done but we cannot impose on the Councillor to use the resources.

\*\*

Suitability and skills for the environment. It's a fast pace job, you have to deal with unsatisfied citizen, you have to deal with the City bureaucracy. Therefore, I believe that potential candidates should be properly warned. This can be done by a setting up a structured interview with standard questions assessing expectations and suitability for the job. There has to be a conversation about the particularity of the job such as flexible hours, need for a high level of tolerance, working under stress.

\*\*

When assistants were hired, they did not get all the information about what their rights were. Recently this has been changed and new employees are better informed about what it entails to work in the position of Councillor's Assistant. I find that new employees might not read and understand their contract, which contains a lot of information. On the other side I believe that the Councillors might need some training in order to get to know better their employee's contract.

\*\*

I think that not every assistant possesses the proper skill sets, experience or education. You can prevent this by formalizing the process and the Councillors have to agree to this. The Councillors should have the final decision on the hiring; however, it should be within a proper hiring practice. A job description

with required qualifications, a proper job advertisement, interviews with an appropriate scoring, is something that would meet the condition of a proper administrative process. A list of selected qualified potential candidates could be presented to the Councillor for the final say. For example, the Clerk's Office could administer the process and the Councillor could sit on the interview panel.

*9.4.4 Are you were aware of the process used to inform Councillors Assistants and their contracted vendors of the existence of policies affecting their rights?*

Most of that stuff gets done when they meet the Clerk's Office, orientation day.

\*\*

Yes, when they are hired, they are given a package with information, Code of Conduct, employees' rights, harassment, security, city orientation day, etc.

\*\*

Before they got the package but now, we are informing them through an orientation session and answer questions.

\*\*

I don't know what Councillors do when they hire someone, but in our office, we do talk to them about their contract, the Code of Conduct, the policies related to their rights, required training. So, whether they read it or not, we have no control on that. Since 2019, they have had consistent orientation, but it's not required. Since April, everybody came to the orientation session.

\*\*

No, part of the orientation is the harassment violence policy, the assistants are informed that they have to take the online courses.

\*\*

I don't know.

\*\*

I am not aware that there is some, I believe that this should be part of the orientation process for Councillors. I know that the orientation has a section on hiring employees.

\*\*

There is a sign-on package for the assistants, including the City employee's Code of Conduct. There is information at the Clerk's Office concerning the different resources available.

\*\*

It would be good if there was a standard process. Sometimes, City Management does not get to see the assistants at all before they are actually hired. This is particularly true with contracted vendors.

\*\*

Yes. I think the orientation package and the content of the contract deals with this issue. I don't know about the contracted vendors; I do not know what the terms of their contract are.

\*\*

No and I don't know that when people are at the applicant stage that they are being informed, just like they are usually not anywhere else. Once hired I don't know if they receive training to inform them of their rights.

\*\*

*9.4.5 Have you ever answered questions about the recruitment and hiring process from Councillors, Councillors Assistants and contracted vendors?*

At a very high level, a Member of Council needs to know what they need to hire someone for. How to proceed with a poster or if they had someone in mind.

\*\*

For Councillors they ask me to post a job or for interview questions. For contractor vendors, I was asked what they need to do to have a contract vendor start.

\*\*

Never been asked anything.

\*\*

No, I don't think so.

\*\*

Never been asked to, they go to the Clerk's Office or to someone else.

\*\*

We receive calls from individuals who wish to be a Councillor's Assistant and we gather their resumes. We have helped Councillors to hire assistants in the past. We encountered several issues and we had to provide support and information.

\*\*

For the Councillors, the questions are often about what they are obliged to do, or not to do, in regard to their assistants. For the employees, the questions are often concerning what they are entitled to;

their employment benefits, time off, overtime and HR matters. I have no contact with the contracted vendors.

\*\*

Yes. The questions from assistants are generally about remuneration and working hours.

\*\*

*9.4.6 What role do you believe you can play in the process of recruiting and hiring Councillors Assistants and contracted vendors?*

Little other than identifying what their legal responsibilities are, Code of Conduct, health and safety. It is done through our onboarding session and online training is offered.

\*\*

We do that now. If the Councillor's Offices needed more support, we could definitely help.

\*\*

Hoping to be able to improve the consistency of the experience the assistants have. It seems very often that the questions should be fairly routine, the answers should be the same. The office of the Program Manager of Council Support Services should have the tools to help them better in their staffing. How salaries are determined, etc. There are a couple of job descriptions that are set, and the Councillor has the discretion of hiring them at the level they want. They also have bonuses at the end of the year and distribute the bonus during the year. It is at the discretion of the Councillor. There is a provision in the contract that says that they cannot disclose their salary to anyone.

\*\*

My position is what we can help them post competitions, do interviews, pull resumes and screen them, and assist the Program Manager of Council Support Services with orientation. And after hiring if they have questions, we can answer them.

\*\*

We could consider providing more support for the recruitment and hiring services. This could be in the form of specific training regarding best HR practices in the hiring process.

\*\*

I think we could provide different hiring processes that are being used for any other City staff. As an example, we could provide best practices for onboarding, offboarding.

\*\*

Human Resources Department does not understand all the particularities of the assistant job. Answers concerning benefits, entitlements for Councillors' Assistants are different. The Clerk's Office would

be the natural bridge to deal with the administration of Human Resources. The Office is in a position to offer the proper advice based on its long experience and provide the best advice to both the Councillors and the assistants. They understand the working environment. For the contracted vendors, the Clerk's Office could provide the Councillors with a template for a generic statement of work (SOW), proper invoice guidelines, offering the liaison with Procurement and HR as required.

\*\*

I would like to have a training program set up for Councillors around management skills as well as the development of skills for the assistants. Provide some guidelines for the Councillors in hiring their staff.

\*\*

#### *9.4.7 Is there anything else you would like to add?*

I think that there are a lot of things, advantages of flexibility that we wouldn't want to lose. What are the options they have, they could pick from options. Ensuring that staff that go into these roles, they know in what positions they are in. They need to inform their new staff of their rights and where they could go if they need further assistance.

\*\*

Regarding the pay scale, I do not know that the Councillor is expected to use a specific pay level, they have total discretion. In the political domain in general, it is a normal practice. It could be nice that the Clerk's Office could provide a standard job description with suggested pay scale. This should not be imposed to the Councillor. Sets of templates would be a nice tool.

\*\*

There is no relation between the scale and the tasks. Some Councillors pay all assistants the same, others give them a raise on a regular basis. I would recommend having an HR budget and an office budget. This is because some Councillors are using more funds on other things than paying their assistants properly. Right now, the Councillor's budget is in part adjusted yearly on the cost of living, however, the Councillors have the discretion to adjust their employees wage. This results in inequities in the assistants' salary. There are Councillors who have paid year-end bonuses instead of increasing pay scale. This is another issue which creates wages inequity and is a source of frustration for the assistants. Not giving a raise is affecting the assistant's pension.

\*\*

There is a need to have better guidelines on the use of salary scale.

\*\*

The implementation of the pay scale is not standard, and this leads to the fact that, at the end of the year, some Councillors give bonuses to alleviate discrepancies.

\*\*

No, I think I said everything.

\*\*

It would be an idea to have the assistants network, group together, doesn't have to be a union as such. Isolation is never good. Being able to share opinions amongst them is always healthy. I think there are good City policies and I don't know why they should not apply to all the assistants. I don't know that they all have access to all resources. There is the new employee orientation for the City employees, I don't know that the assistants are going through this process, if not, they should.

\*\*

I would say that the application of HR best practices that we use for the other City employees should be applied for the assistants in the Councillors' Offices. This would benefit their reputation and the reputation of the City. It would protect the Councillors and the employees. The HR best practices are based in part on the most recent court decisions and HR legal obligations. There should be no reason not to follow these best practices.

\*\*

The offices using Council Support Services on a regular basis raise their chance of success and are best protected from undesirable risks and issues. However, we should not get on a rigid system, the Councillors should have the flexibility as well as being able to access the professional resources for their staffing needs. They should keep the final say unless they contravene applicable rules.

\*\*

It is very unusual that the Councillor would engage in progressive discipline with its staff, normally once an issue arises, the trust relationship is in peril.

\*\*

We were part of an amalgamation during which different management habits came in and there has been a continuation of staffing procedure that were in place before.

\*\*