

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk
Meeting Date: September 28, 2026
Report Code: CR-26-092
Subject: Appointment of a New Integrity Commissioner

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-092 respecting the appointment of an integrity commissioner, City Council directs staff to bring forward a by-law at the November 30, 2026 Regular Council meeting to:

1. Appoint Lauren Chee-Hing of Gridin Advocates as the City's integrity commissioner; and
2. Execute the Retainer Agreement for Integrity Commissioner Services with Lauren Chee-Hing as outlined in the report.

Highlights:

- Principles *Integrity* provided notice that they would no longer be offering integrity commissioner services beginning in 2027.
- Grey County Clerks undertook a joint recruitment process for a new integrity commissioner.
- Staff recommend the appointment of Lauren Chee-Hing of Gridin Advocates as the City's new integrity commissioner effective December 1, 2026.
- The appointment by-law will come forward at the November 30, 2026, Regular Council meeting to avoid the restricted acts period.

Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Municipal Act, 2001](#)

[Municipal Conflict of Interest Act](#)

By-law No. 2018-032 – Agreement with Principles *Integrity* to provide integrity commissioner services

By-law No., 2024-144 – Amending agreement with Principles *Integrity* to extend integrity commissioner services

[Report No. CR-26-077](#) – Integrity Commissioner Update

Background:

The *Municipal Act* authorizes the City to appoint an Integrity Commissioner who reports to Council and performs, independently, the functions assigned by legislation and Council.

On March 19, 2018, City Council passed By-law No. 2018-032 to enter into an agreement with Principles *Integrity* for integrity commissioner services. The agreement was extended for five (5) years in 2024 by By-law No. 2024-144.

The City received notice from Principles *Integrity* that it would no longer offer integrity commissioner services beginning January 1, 2027.

Like 2017 when Principles *Integrity* was first appointed, all Grey County municipalities undertook a joint recruitment process which was led by the County of Grey. Grey County Clerks and CAOs agreed it was important to have the new integrity commissioner in place for the new term of Council to provide continuity of education and service.

Analysis and Options:

The Clerk or their designate from Grey County and its lower tier municipalities reviewed integrity commissioner submissions and interviewed

two candidates. At the conclusion of this process, all representatives agreed that Lauren Chee-Hing of Gridin Advocates was the preferred candidate.

Terms of the Retainer for Integrity Commissioner Services Agreement with Lauren Chee-Hing of Gridin Advocates can be summarized as follows:

- Three-year term, renewable upon mutual agreement;
- No retainer fee;
- \$300 per hour for the term of the agreement;
- The City will be notified if fees on a single matter will exceed \$5,000; and
- There are costs for education, training, attendance at Council meetings, travel, and accommodation.

The current Council is subject to the restricted acts provision in section 275 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. During the restricted period, Council may not appoint or remove a municipal officer. It could be argued that an integrity commissioner is an officer of the municipality for this purpose because the role is created and required by statute and its duties are prescribed by the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Accordingly, staff will bring forward the by-law at the first meeting of the new Council (November 30) to avoid the restricted acts period. The intention is for Lauren Chee-Hing to provide training at the orientation session held on November 24 and 25, hosted by Grey County, as well attend a continuing education session specific to Owen Sound in 2027.

Resource Alignment:

Financial Resources

There is no retainer fee, and the hourly rate is \$300 for the three-year term. The 2026 operating budget includes \$5,000 for integrity commissioner services and to date approximately \$14,000 has been spent.

Human Resources

Approximately 10 hours were involved in the recruitment of the new integrity commissioner and the drafting of reports.

Time and Scheduling

The new integrity commissioner will begin providing services to Owen Sound on December 1, 2026, for a three-year term.

Technology and Infrastructure

N/A.

Climate and Environmental Impacts:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Communication and Engagement:

The City's website will be updated to reflect the new integrity commissioner on December 1, 2026, after the passing of the appointment by-law. A training session will be held for Council, committee, and board members in 2027.

Report Developed in Consultation With:

Grey County Clerks

Attachments:

None.

Reviewed by:

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk at bbloomfield@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1247.