

LEAPP CASE STUDY SERIES

MUNICIPAL PROFILE: HASTINGS COUNTY



As Jim Pine states in this LEAPP interview, leadership development is a top priority for the municipal sector as more and more senior staff retire. In addition, Jim describes how he has witnessed the role of CAO changing, which requires that we rethink the qualities of successful leadership. Jim is passionate that the current administration not be complacent in addressing these challenges to leadership capacity as the current situation demands immediate action.

MUNICIPAL PROFILE: HASTINGS COUNTY

With a population of more than 130,000 (including the separated cities of Belleville and Quinte West), Hastings County is the second largest County (geographically speaking) area in the province. Located in Eastern Ontario, Hastings County contains fourteen lower-tier municipalities.

The region has historically supported a strong forest-based economy and continues to do so with its diverse forest resources. But with the traditional sectors of the economy changing, the County is well positioned as result of innovative work being done at Loyalist College, located in Belleville and Bancroft. The College offers many programs to support a skilled labour force in the local retail, manufacturing and increasingly in Internet based business sectors of the county and regional economies.



MUNICIPAL PROFILE: HASTINGS COUNTY

LEADER IN FOCUS: JIM PINE

Given his extensive experience in municipal affairs, knowledge of the operations of the provincial government, and commitment to leadership development, Hastings County's Chief Administrative Officer Jim Pine was nominated Chair of the Leadership Excellence Advancement Pilot Project Leaders' Roundtable.



Jim Pine, current Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Hastings County, has over thirty years of municipal affairs experience. Jim began his career with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing holding a variety of positions in London, Toronto and Kingston where he was Director of the Eastern Municipal Services Office. Jim has also held various CAO positions across the region, including the City of Quinte West and Township of Sidney before joining Hastings County in 2002.

Along with his formal education from Queen's University, Jim has had several informal mentors throughout his career which prepared him for his various leadership roles. Recognizing the value of mentorship, Jim currently acts as a mentor for municipal professionals though the

Ontario Municipal Administrators Association (OMAA).

When discussing his legacy for the County, Jim described an organization focused on helping people and serving its citizens.

"Our goal is to help and improve the lives of individuals, families and communities in Hastings County. I continually remind my staff to approach each day with the goal of helping their community. We align all our actions and programs around this core value of community service."

Moving on to the topic of his potential successors, Jim explains that some candidates are more prepared than others for these demanding jobs. However, in general more training and development is required to expand the pool of talent.

MUNICIPAL PROFILE: HASTINGS COUNTY

SUCCESSION PLANNING, RECRUITING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

The difficulty in recruiting and retaining high potential employees has only intensified in recent years, which inspired Jim to set the goal for Hastings County to become an “Employer of Choice”

“We have realized that we can’t be complacent when it comes to recruiting, which led us to set an ambitious goal of being an Employer of Choice. In Hastings County, we strive to attract, motivate and retain the best employees. This is reflected in our priorities outlined in the County’s 2010 Strategic Plan.”

Recognizing the importance of recruiting new staff to the organization, Hastings County was one of the first municipalities to participate in the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) Internship Program.

Hastings County has also been very much focused on growing the capabilities of its existing professional and management staff. Providing staff with opportunities to better understand the complexities and challenges faced by municipal managers was at the core of its collaboration with its neighbouring neighbours, Prince Edward County and the County of Lennox & Addington to develop a management training program.

The three counties recognized early on that they needed the help of an educational institution that had extensive experience in training and development. Together the municipalities and Loyalist College developed a unique, year-long program entitled *Managing and Leading in a Municipal Environment*. To date, more than 200 employees from Hastings County alone have participated in the program.

While Hastings County has yet to implement a formal succession plan, the County has taken the first step in mapping the demographics of the organization. It forecasted that more than 30% of active municipal employees are eligible to retire within the next 5 to 10 years. Jim explained that addressing the succession challenge evident from this data is the next step for the administration.



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FAST FORWARD: THE NEW REQUISITES OF LEADERSHIP

Considering his experience in municipal affairs, Jim can attest to the evolution of the CAO's office. Jim explains that recent economic, political and regulatory changes have influenced the nature of his work as a municipal leader. More recently, municipalities underwent a tremendous period of transformation, which resulted in new service areas and high public expectations.

"I have seen radical change and new challenges emerge since the mid 1990's, when municipalities underwent a process of tremendous transformation. These changes require highly skilled professionals working for municipal governments to deliver vital services."

Jim predicts that professionalism, integrity and strong political acuity will be essential skills for upcoming CAOs. Meanwhile, the core competencies, including communication, motivation and negotiation skills will remain relevant. Perhaps the biggest challenge for future CAOs will be working with numerous stakeholders from the public and private sectors.

Jim explains that incoming CAOs will need to be conversant in the principles of multi-sector partnerships, as these initiatives will become more and more common.

"I am involved in new service areas which I would have never predicted when I began my career as a CAO. For example, I'm working on a \$200 million broadband initiative (Eastern Ontario Regional Network). I see these types of projects and partnerships with business and government becoming more common in the future."



Jim goes on to explain that the external environment will require CAOs to venture into new areas, including technology, communications and immigrant attraction and retention.



Madoc Township, Hastings County

MUNICIPAL PROFILE: HASTINGS COUNTY

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE ADVANCEMENT PILOT PROJECT

Jim is emphatic that the current demographic situation at the municipal level requires immediate action. This prompted Jim to Chair the LEAPP Leaders Roundtable. He is confident that LEAPP can develop productive partnerships and actionable strategies for both the province and municipal sector.

"I hope that we can get out of our respective silos and create a formal partnership with the province to develop actionable strategies to address leadership challenges. I hope to see a blueprint for leadership development in both the provincial and municipal sector in Ontario."

Jim explains that municipalities need to work collaboratively and form a better partnership with the provincial government.

Given his many years of involvement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Jim has experienced many examples of successful cooperation across ministries in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) to resolve various challenges. Jim believes the municipal sector needs to model something similar to the OPS collaborative model by establishing a cross-municipal collaborative network and involve the province to address this leadership challenge.

Jim anticipates implementing talent management, knowledge transfer, branding and recruiting strategies from LEAPP. Continuing his leadership role with LEAPP, Jim also hopes to collaborate with the province and other municipalities to share resources and lessons learned.

