

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ATIKOKAN

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Date: 12 December 2016

Moved By



Seconded By



WHEREAS the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services continues to try to shut down Service Ontario Centres across Ontario, particularly in northern and rural areas, or reduce their operating hours; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has announced that as of Spring 2017, the one full-time staff working 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week at the Service Ontario Centre in Atikokan will be reduced to part-time hours of only 4 hours per day or 20 hours per week, and the office services will also be reduced to 4 hours per day; and

WHEREAS the closest Service Ontario Centre to Atikokan is located approximately 160 kilometres away in Fort Frances or 200 kilometres away in Thunder Bay; and

WHEREAS small, northern towns like Atikokan, rely on government facilities like the Service Ontario Centre to foster a sense of community, identity, and stability; and

WHEREAS small, northern towns like Atikokan, rely heavily on tourism to drive their local economies and, therefore, require their Service Ontario Centre to be open throughout the week to provide hunting and fishing licenses; and

WHEREAS with a population of just 2,800, Atikokan needs every good-paying job it can get to support local schools, sports, businesses and the tax base; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' study failed to include the economic impact of removing jobs from the community; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services' website says it is committed to "delivering vital programs, services, and products...to help create a better quality of life for Ontario's families"; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's website states its mandate as "working with local governments and partners across Ontario to build safe and strong urban and rural communities with dynamic local economies"; and

WHEREAS the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' mandate letter says it will "ensure continued growth in the north" and "deliver on the priorities of northerners"; and

WHEREAS reducing Service Ontario hours and eliminating one full-time position does not respect the government's commitment to quality of life, the priorities of northerners, or fostering dynamic local economies; and

WHEREAS Service Ontario's efforts to save money conflict with the government's mandate regarding vibrant and dynamic northern community economies; and

WHEREAS Atikokan has been targeted for numerous government downsizings over the last several years, and once again our struggling town is being hit;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services rescind its decision to eliminate the full-time job in Atikokan; and

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FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services maintain full-time hours at the Service Ontario Centre in Atikokan, in keeping with the government's stated commitment to the economic well-being of northern communities, and thereby ensuring that Atikokan residents can access government services where they live; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Marie-France Lalonde, Minister of Government and Consumer Services; Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay - Atikokan; Patrick Brown, Leader of the Opposition; Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party and to councils representing Northern Ontario towns with a Service Centre for their support.

RECORDED VOTE	COUNCIL MEMBER			
	YEA	NAY	CARRIED	DEFEATED
BOYKO, Samantha				
DAVIDSON, Marlene				
FERGUSON, Rob				
MAKARENKO, Mary				
MOSLEY, Harold				
SHINE, Liz				
BROWN, Dennis				

RESOLUTION NO 288/16

CARRIED BY Dennis Brown