

Purchasing bylaw passed by Caledon Town council

By Bill Rea

The Town has passed a bylaw to update its purchasing policies, and it saw some revisions in the last couple of weeks.

The proposal was the subject of a public information meeting last month, and a main point of the discussion was the staff position that a shop-local approach would not be followed.

Amedeo Valentino, manager of purchasing and risk management for the Town, had stated at the August meeting that the Municipal Act does not allow for preferences to be shown to local suppliers, since it could be seen as discriminatory. That was a problem for several councillors.

In the final report on the matter, Valentino stuck by the position.

“The Town will not practise local preference,” he wrote. “The Town will endeavor to achieve the best value in its commercial transactions through totally fair, open competition for all vendors, regardless of their location, and all vendors will be permitted to compete solely on the basis of their ability to provide best values, when and where the Town is required to disburse public funds.”

Councillor Patti Foley tried to get some relaxation on that, but Valentino stressed it's a matter of law.

Some of the ceilings governing purchases are going to change.

The current practice for direct purchases is to require just one quotation if it's for \$5,000 or less. The original plan was to keep that as is, but it was revised to hike the ceiling to \$10,000.

Currently, for purchases between \$5,000 and \$20,000, three quotations are needed. The plan originally was to increase it to \$25,000, but it's going up to \$50,000.

Any purchases above that will require a formal procurement process, involving reports to council.

That would involve the manager of purchasing issuing two reports to council annually on the single and sole source purchases up to \$50,000. Currently, single-source purchases have to be approved by council, and the proposal is to send them to council if they are in excess of \$50,000. In the case of sole-source purchases, the plan is to have the manager of purchasing and chief financial officer okay them. As well, the current process allows staff to make purchases of up to \$250,000 if council has already approved them, through the budget, etc. That ceiling is increasing to \$2 million.

Valentino agreed that jump is considerable, but said it would make it easier for staff to do business, especially during construction season. Having to go to council for projects less than that would delay them. He stressed this would only be for projects that council has already approved.

Valentino also told Councillor Allan Thompson the new practices will come into effect Jan. 1. He pointed out staff suggested that date because fall is a busy time and they were trying to avoid confusion.