SUBJECT: Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan - Eligibility Amendment (FCS01132(b)) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Subsection (a) of Item 34 of Committee of the Whole Report 01-038, adopted by Council at its meeting of December 11, 2001, respecting Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan (FCS01132) which states as follows:

“a) The Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan be available to all full-time, permanent employees of the City of Hamilton.”

be deleted in its entirety and replaced by the following wording:

“a) The Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan be available to City of Hamilton:
   i) all full-time, permanent employees
   ii) all full-time temporary employees under a written contract (repayment schedule cannot exceed contract term); and
   iii) all full-time permanent employees in a job share arrangement (maximum loan amount of $1000).”

Joseph L. Rinaldo
General Manager
Finance and Corporate Services
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Item 34 of Committee of the Whole Report 01-038, adopted by Council as its’ meeting of December 11, 2001, reads as follows:

“34. Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan (FCS01132) (City Wide)
That Council approve an Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan whereby:

a) The Employee Personal Computer Purchase Plan be available to all full-time, permanent employees of the City of Hamilton.
b) The City fund the acquisition of personal computer equipment to a maximum of $2,000 per full-time permanent employee.
c) That funding be provided from working capital and be repaid to the City by way of payroll deduction over a 12, 24 or 36 month period, in accordance with Option 1.”

The recommendation being brought forward at this time would extend this plan to full-time temporary employees (under a contract), and to those employees job sharing a full-time position.

The loan repayment period for full-time temporary-contract staff would not exceed the length of time remaining in their contract period at the time of the loan.

Those staff that are in a job share situation would be eligible to a loan not to exceed $1,000, which is one-half the loan amount provided for full-time, permanent staff.

BACKGROUND:

This program, when originally approved by Council in 2001, was intended to offer the employee the ability to purchase a complete computer system or the necessary components to upgrade an existing system for home use.

Over the past several years, the City has continued to increase its’ use of computers in order to automate manual systems and to analyze data to provide better information for decision-making. At the same time, software manufacturers continue to release new versions of software that provide additional functionality. An increase in staff’s computer literacy allows them to better use technology to its’ fullest potential.

Access to a computer, at home, allows staff to become more familiar and keep current with the software applications used during the day, at their own leisure, without the interruptions experienced during the day. Providing access to a computer, at home, for employees promotes continuous learning and provides new and exciting challenges. Personal learning is then brought back to the workplace. Employee stress levels could be reduced, by allowing them to acquire necessary skills at home, at their own pace.
An Employee Computer Purchase Plan would support the City’s goal of being an “Employer of Choice”.

Since this plan was adopted in 2001, there have been over 2,800 loans processed indicating this plan has been very well received by staff. This plan is available to staff once every 3 years and some staff have processed a second loan through the program.

When this plan was originally approved, it was extended only to full-time permanent employees. There are currently 20 staff hired by the City on a ‘full-time temporary-contract’ basis who, until now, have not been able to take advantage of this program. The City also has staff in a job-share situation who would also benefit from program participation. The intent of this report is to have the benefits offered by this program extended to full-time temporary-contract staff and those in a job share situation.

Program Specifics:
Eligible employees may receive a loan from the City of Hamilton to purchase computer equipment for home use. The needs of the employer would best be met by allowing the employee to purchase the equipment from a retail vendor of their choice. This allows the employee to shop, where convenient, and compare prices as necessary. Only computer equipment and software that support the purpose and intent of this program is eligible. Information Technology staff would provide an acceptable computer specification, based on the City’s own corporate standards for computer equipment. Software for games, the creation of greeting cards or personal income tax programs; and peripherals such as digital cameras and MP3 players, would not be considered eligible.

The minimum loan available is $1,000 and the maximum available is $2,000. All loans would be repaid through payroll deductions over a period of either 12, 24, or 36 months. No loans may exceed a 36 month term. The employee may not request that the payment schedule be altered once it has been established, except to pay the full balance of the loan in its entirety. Employees may request no more than one loan every 3 years during the course of their employment.

Full-time temporary-contract staff would be asked to repay the loan on a schedule not to exceed the number of pays left in their contract period. Full-time permanent staff and job share staff will have the option of repaying the loan over 12, 24 or 36 months. If staff leave the employ of the city, the balance owing is deducted from the final pay.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:
The intent of this report is to have the benefits offered by this program extended to full-time temporary-contract staff and those in a job-share situation. The program was restricted to individuals who were guaranteed a regular salary each pay to ensure the loan repayment could be deducted from their bi-weekly pay. Full-time temporary-contract and job share staff fit this criteria.
ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:
n/a

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:
n/a

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:
n/a

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:
Human Resources and Payroll staff have been consulted.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:
By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
A skilled, innovative and diverse workforce is attracted and retained.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes ☐ No
Life-long learning is supported.