

Presented To:	City Council
Presented:	Tuesday, Feb 23, 2016
Report Date	Friday, Jan 22, 2016
Type:	Managers' Reports

Request for Decision

Women in Government

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury receives the report dated January 22, 2016 from the Executive Director of Administrative Services/City Clerk entitled "Women in Government";

AND THAT Council endorses the Women in Government initiative.

Background

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in Canada, a date which also coincides with our next municipal and school board election.

Historically, women have been underrepresented in political leadership roles at all levels of government. Numbers revealed during staff's post election analysis and in consultation with other municipalities across Ontario reinforce this fact as shown in the table below:

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Danielle Wicklander
Legislative Compliance Coordinator
Digitally Signed Jan 22, 16

Division Review

Brigitte Sobush
Deputy City Clerk
Digitally Signed Jan 27, 16

Recommended by the Department

Caroline Hallsworth
Executive Director, Administrative
Services/City Clerk
Digitally Signed Jan 28, 16

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Kevin Fowke
Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Feb 10, 16

	Men	Women
Municipal Councils		
Candidates for Council	77.49% (5,480)	22.5% (1,591)
Elected Council Members	72.95% (2,082)	27% (772)
City of Greater Sudbury		
Candidates for Council	90.69% (78)	9.30% (8)
Elected Council Members	69.23% (9)	30.77% (4)

The statistics in the table reveal that across Ontario, when women make the decision to run they are 10% more likely to be elected than their male counterparts.

Women in our community hold a number of leadership roles in business, education and healthcare to name a few sectors, however, that leadership is not transferring to the political sector.

Programs to encourage more women to run for office are not a new concept. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Equal Voice have both done extensive work in this regard including providing them with the necessary tools in order to do so. It is based upon these models that staff has launched their of Women in Government Project, in order to help identify and break down the barriers to female political participation in our community.

Through conversations and research staff has uncovered a common thread; women typically don't make the move from considering running for office to actually throwing their name into the ring until they are asked to do so or they are told that they should. Additionally, there is a fear of the unknown when it comes to politics and quite a bit of stigma that is attached not only to politics in general but those who run and are elected. As one councillor stated during an interview, "*knowing how few women there are, you don't know what you're getting yourself into.*"

Lyne McLeod, the first women elected party leader in Ontario at the Liberal convention in 1992 summarizes the reluctance: "*While I prefer to avoid adding to the stereotypes about who women are and what they can do, I do think that women are less conditioned by society to put themselves forward and are therefore more likely to wait to be asked to run.*"

This project serves as that "ask". What staff is looking to do is plant a seed amongst women in our community to encourage them to consider running for office. The community is asking them to take a leap into the unknown. Through this project staff is also seeking to demystify the political process for women in our community, and make it familiar, real and relatable to their everyday lives.

This project will create open and honest discussions about what holds women back from taking political leadership roles, and help to understand and address these barriers.

The demands on female politicians differ from those of their male counterparts and often they have to take on a different voice or approach to it. Research suggests that by building a network, framing up a system and bringing together women who have gone through the process with those who are considering it, we can build a safety net of sorts for those women who would like to run but may be reluctant to do so for a variety of reasons.

The role of the City of Greater Sudbury in this project is to facilitate an environment for like minded women to come together and use each other as resources and supports. In order to make the political process more familiar, and as the culmination of this project the City will be hosting two events. Costs are expected to be minimal and will be covered from the Election Reserve Fund.

The first being a "Women in Government Day" to take place during the last week of September 2016. This event will create an opportunity for women to be introduced to the processes involved in running for office by hearing from those who have either run or who have been the ones behind the candidate. It is hoped that the day will facilitate open discussions with respect to the barriers women face, both perceived and actual and identify solutions to address them and provide them with the tools to do so and ultimately encourage more women to seek office in our community.

Following the "Women in Government Day" participants will also be given the opportunity to sign up for the second event, being referred to as "*mentor speed dating.*" This even will seek to match potential candidates with a mentor who will act as a resource and support to them as they consider/run for office.

It is the ultimate hope that by stripping away as many of the unknowns as possible and offering up the "ask" this project will encourage more women to join in the political process and run as candidates in our next election.