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Report 2024-159

Report Title: Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Cost Analysis 2024

Committee Name: Corporate Support

Committee Meeting Date: December 3, 2024

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Approved by: Jennifer Moore, CAO

Council Meeting Date: December 18, 2024

Strategic Plan Priorities: ☐ Innovate for Service Excellence
☐ Ignite Economic Opportunity
☐ Foster a Thriving Community
☒ Propel Sustainable Growth
☐ Champion a Vibrant Future

Information Report

“That the Corporate Support Committee receive Report 2024-159 ‘Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Cost Analysis 2024’ for information; and

Further That the Committee recommend that County Council receive this report for information only.”

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information and key factors contributing to the higher than normal costs associated with WSIB claims as requested at the Community Health Committee meeting on November 6, 2024.

Background

The County of Northumberland is a Schedule 2 employer with WSIB. As a Schedule 2 employer the County does not pay premiums based on job codes and gross payroll instead the County reimburses WSIB for all costs plus an administration fee. Until 2023, the County had 2 WSIB accounts, one account for the Golden Plough Lodge employees and one for all other County employees. In 2023, following an actuarial review, it was recommended that the County open an additional account with WSIB for the paramedics.

In 2024 to date, there have been 50 claims submitted County wide with 15 of those being from the Paramedic group, 21 claims from the Golden Plough Lodge and 14 claims for the rest of the County. Due to the nature of work, it is not unusual for the paramedics or staff at the Golden Plough Lodge to have more claims than the rest of the County.

The cost of WSIB at the end of September 2024 was \$1,045,760 inclusive of 2024 claims costs and retro payments as noted below.

2024 claims at the end of September is \$469,780:

Paramedics \$246,418

GPL \$201,614

County \$21,748

A claim in 2021 originally approved as Short-Term Disability and then Long-Term Disability was, in 2024, deemed work related and reclassified as a WSIB compensable claim. The claim was approved by WSIB and Loss of Earnings benefits were approved and paid back to 2021 the date of original absence. The cost of this retroactive claim was \$204,804.

A second claim originally approved as Short-Term Disability in 2023 was deemed work related and reclassified as a WSIB compensable claim in 2024. The claim was approved, and Loss of Earnings and Health Care benefits were approved back to 2023 the date of the original absence. The cost of this retroactive claim was \$30,098.

Additionally, there are 5 claims from previous years that are currently active with WSIB, with the employees continuing to receive benefits for loss of earnings and health care. These claims total \$341,078.

Consultations

Human Resources works closely with Finance and the operating departments to review WSIB costs.

Occupational Health Services is instrumental in the employees early and safe return to work program. Monthly case management meetings are scheduled with managers, human resources and occupational health to review updated functional ability information on employees who are absent due to occupational or non-occupational injuries or illnesses.

Working together with the managers and occupational health, the focus is on timely intervention, safe accommodations and efficient and effective reintegration into the workforce that aligns with the employee's physical and/or cognitive abilities and restrictions.

Claims submitted by first responders who are diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and meet specific employment and diagnostic criteria are presumed to have a compensable claim arising out of their employment, unless the contrary is shown. This limits the County's ability to challenge these types of claims.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

N/A

Discussion / Options

Staff will continue to collaborate on preventative measures to reduce the risk of occupational accidents, illnesses or disease.

Financial Impact

Actuarial reviews of all WSIB claims and the County's ability to pay for both current and future claims are completed every couple of years.

The Actuaries also recommend a percentage of the County's annual payroll to be set aside to cover potential liabilities associated with workplace injuries or illnesses. These amounts are captured in the benefits section of each departments budget.

The County's current accrual rates are:

Paramedics 1.38%

GPL 2.15%

County 1.38%

\$671,604 was budgeted in the accruals for 2024.

Member Municipality Impacts

N/A

Conclusion / Outcomes

Staff recommend that the Corporate Support Committee receive the WSIB Cost Analysis report for information purposes only.

Attachments

N/A