

New administrator starts work

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South Bruce Peninsula has hired an administrator.

Jacque Farrow-Lawrence began her job Monday.

"I am looking forward to the experience," Farrow-Lawrence said Wednesday during a break in a town budget meeting. "No one can tell what the outcome will be, but I will be doing my very best and hopefully the council will agree that that's what is taking place and will satisfy council's expectations."

Farrow-Lawrence started out in municipal government in 1981 and has been a senior municipal administrator for more than 20 years.

She was most recently a clerk with the Town of Arnprior in eastern Ontario for about two and a half years.

Before her job in Arnprior she was director of human resources and administration for the County of Annapolis in Nova Scotia since 1995. She also stepped in to serve as chief administrative officer twice.

Farrow-Lawrence said so far she has been catching up on the organizational structure and some of the basic procedures of the town.

She expects a big part of her job will be in human resources management.

Farrow-Lawrence's husband Robert Farrow is from the Chesley area and that played a major role in her decision to apply for the position at South Bruce Peninsula.

"My husband was very interested in looking to move back home," she said. "He has been in Nova Scotia since 1998 or thereabouts so he was looking for an opportunity to move back to an area he was familiar with."

Farrow-Lawrence said she thinks the position is a good fit for her education and experience and the area is a good fit for her.

"The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is a lovely place. It is a rural area, which is what we are used to," she said. "You have water all around and it is a beautiful, scenic location."

In September, council decided to appoint an administrator because the town needed someone who could make final decisions above the level of department heads.

Clerk Angie Cathrae took on the role of administrator for three months until the role was transferred to director of financial services Tracey Neifer in December.

The town had been without a CAO since March when the municipality issued a news release announcing Rhonda Cook's departure. No explanation has ever been given about why Cook is no longer with the municipality.

Staff worked on a new organization chart for the municipality without a CAO, with the heads of the various departments reporting to council. After testing the new structure for about six months, staff suggested that council retain the CAO position.

Council opted to go with an administrator, which Mayor John Close explained is different than a CAO.

"We found out we needed somebody with experience in (human resources) and administration," said Close. "We brought in an administrator rather than a CAO. The clerk is going to be that person dealing with parliamentary procedures, et cetera, while our administrator is going to be dealing more internally with HR and departments, working that way."

Close said council is glad to have Farrow-Lawrence with the municipality.

"She brings a wealth of experience with her from Nova Scotia and Ontario, so we are looking forward to working with her," he said.