

June 15, 2012 - Report to Council on Achieve Training Workshops

On May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Reeve Stewart, CAO Reith, Councillor Foote and I had the opportunity to attend 2 – one day workshops presented by Achieve Training Centre in partnership with the County of Renfrew Human Resources Department. This training took place in the County Council Chambers and covered the topics of Conflict Resolution Skills and Dealing with Difficult People. Besides municipal staff and council members, the participants in these workshops also included paramedic and health services workers from throughout the county.

The **Conflict Resolution** workshop day highlighted many practical strategies for resolving conflict in the workplace. We drew from our own experiences to assess conflict and apply various communication skills to produce positive results. We learned the ABCD's of the resolution process. These four short cues provide a framework for conflict resolution in any environment:

- **Analyze** the conflict
- **Build** understanding
- **Create** solutions
- **Define** details

Our presenter concluded our day with a role play opportunity and a general discussion on conflict in the workplace. He did impress upon us that for successful conflict resolution to take place all parties must agree to be active participants in the process.

The **Dealing with Difficult People** workshop provided us with many opportunities for much reflection and group discussion. We explored some common categories that many people find difficult; four in particular were: the chronically angry person, the resistant person, the passive-aggressive person and the bullying person. We discussed where these patterns may originate and how to exert influence to elicit behaviour that we prefer.

Throughout the day we were often reminded that ultimately we only control one element in our interactions with a difficult person and that is ourselves! We identified our own intervention styles and how our personal styles can either help or hinder the cycle of escalating difficult behaviour.

We learned the four steps for dealing with difficult people:

- **Get Calm** – shift judgment to curiosity
- **Make it Safe** – demonstrate that you are listening
- **Find Mutual Purpose** – express your desire to meet their needs AND meet yours through conversation
- **Request a Change**- Note the pattern AND invite them to act differently in the future

At the conclusion of our day I enjoyed taking part in a role play scenario as the supervisor of a resistant administrative assistant. It took me back to my days in the classroom where I was often faced with 30 resistant little people on a daily basis!

I appreciate the opportunity that these workshops offer and would like to thank the CAO for informing us of these local professional development events.

Councillor Debbi Grills