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November 8, 2024

Fire Service Delivery Review

At the meeting held on November 6, 2024, Council of the Township of Mulmur passed the following resolution:

Moved by Lyon and Seconded by Clark

That the Council of the Township of Mulmur support in principle, the dissolution of the Fire Boards servicing the Township of Mulmur;

And that Council support the further exploration of a *North Dufferin Fire Service Area* that would include the approximate geographic area currently served by Shelburne & District, Mulmur-Melancthon and Rosemont & District Fire Boards;

And further that this report and motion be forwarded to the County of Dufferin and participating municipalities, with a request that the municipalities provide an indication of Council's interest in further exploring a North Dufferin Fire Service Area.

Carried.

Sincerely,

Roseann Knechtel
Roseann Knechtel, Clerk



STAFF REPORT

TO: Council
FROM: Tracey Atkinson, CAO/Planner
MEETING DATE: November 6, 2024
SUBJECT: Fire Services Delivery Review

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from Council regarding the delivery of fire services.

Background:

2020 Service Delivery Review

The County of Dufferin's Service Delivery Review (December 18, 2020) included recommendations to explore alternative structures and governance mechanisms for fire departments currently governed by fire boards, examining reporting structures and dissolving boards. An excerpt of the report is included in Schedule A.

On March 15, 2021, the Council of the Town of Shelburne passed the following motion:

Be it resolved that Council supports in principle, the recommendations specific to indoor recreation and fire services from the County of Dufferin Service Delivery Review Part A and the dissolution of the boards of management whereby each service area would be directly delivered by the Town of Shelburne;

And that Staff is directed to review and outline the processes to move forward with the dissolution of the two boards and outline the estimated timelines and estimated costs in a follow up report;

And that Council directs Staff to incorporate this general direction in the scope of work that would be required within the Town's Service Delivery Review, as well as Parks and Recreation Master Plan as both projects will be completed in the 2021 calendar year.

2024 Fire Protection and Prevention Review

At its regular meeting on September 12, 2024, Dufferin County Council passed the following resolution:

That the report from the Chief Administrative Officer, dated September 12, 2024, regarding a Fire Protection and Prevention Review, be received;

And that the Multi-Jurisdictional Fire Prevention and Protection Modernization Plan Report be forwarded to all Dufferin local municipalities and fire boards for their consideration;

And that comments from the local municipalities be brought back to Council by end of year to decide next steps.

The 2024 Dufferin County study recommended a “single operational model” for fire service, either through Orangeville or Dufferin, and identified challenges with existing fire service boards causing inconsistencies.

2024 Lower Tier Responses to County Review

Mulmur Council passed the following motion at their regular meeting on October 2, 2024, following a discussion related to exploring the creation of a North Dufferin Fire Service Area (which would generally reflect the areas served currently by Shelburne, Rosemont and Mulmur-Melancthon departments):

That Council receive the County of Dufferin Fire Service Delivery Report and recommendations made within;

And that Council direct the CAO to coordinate discussions with participating lower tier municipalities, Fire Chiefs and Councils and report back on applicable options for the Township of Mulmur by the December meeting.

The Council of the Town of Mono passed the following motion at their October, 2024 meeting.

That Council for the Town of Mono receive the Dufferin County Multi-Jurisdictional Fire Prevention and Protection Modernization Plan prepared by Emergency Management Group.

The Township of Amaranth passed a motion April 7, 2021 in response to Shelburne’s motion.

Be it resolved that:

Council of the Township of Amaranth will continue to financially support the Centre Dufferin Recreation Centre and the Shelburne & District Fire Department operating expenses.

Council will place payments for capital costs in a separate reserve account until the Town of Shelburne has reached a decision regarding dissolution of the associated boards.

Council requests that the motion be forwarded to all contributing lower tier municipalities and the respective Clerks/CAOs.

The Council of the Town of Grand Valley discussed fire services at their September 24th meeting and requested that the Fire Board review the report and advise the Councils of their preferred recommendation by the beginning of December.

The Council of the Township of Melancthon considered Mulmur's motion regarding a North Dufferin Service Area at its meeting held on October 17th, 2024, and directed the CAO to advise that, at this time, Melancthon Council feels that it is too early to have a conversation about exploring the creation of a North Dufferin Fire Service Area. Melancthon Council would like to move forward with the recommendations contained in the County of Dufferin Fire Service Delivery Report and see what the outcome of that is before they are willing to participate in any discussions.

The Council of the Town of Shelburne is anticipated to receive a report from their CAO at their November 25th meeting. Following Shelburne's motion in 2021, Mulmur Township did meet with Shelburne to discuss fire boards and possible dissolution. Shelburne has continued to explore fire services and boards. Shelburne undertook a Service Delivery Review (reported July 12, 2021, presented Nov 22, 2021, budget report Nov 29, 2021)

Adjala-Tosorontio: Staff are not aware of any recent motions or direction related to fire services. It is noted that earlier in 2024, the Adjala-Tosorontio Fire Chief made recommendations to cease participation in the Rosemont fire board. A motion was passed on May 8, 2024:

That Staff Report FIRE 2024-002: Rosemont District Fire Department (RDFD) be referred to Staff to allow for the completion of public and stakeholder consultation.

Through discussions with Adjala-Tosorontio regarding the Rosemont fire board, it was apparent that further discussions were warranted on the following governance and operational topics: agreement clauses, mutual aid, personal vehicle use, transparency, increasing budget, purchasing, shortage of reports to municipalities, circulation of annual report, roles and responsibilities, job descriptions, compensation structure, liability, tier b response, legislative updates and approach to training.

2024 Community Risk Assessment and Alternative Governance Structures

Mulmur's 2024 Community Risk Assessment provides additional considerations related to fire service delivery. Previous studies have identified very few remaining fire boards within the Province. In recent years a few of the remaining boards have undertaken pilot studies and entered into new governance models to remove their previous board structures. Recently, the Town of Minto entered into an agreement with Mapleton and Wellington North (March 5, 2024) for fees for service and fire service management team. Other models include an advisory committee. The Town of Lincoln & Town of Grimsby commenced a pilot study in 2021 for shared services and now have established the Niagara West Fire and Emergency Services as a composite fire department.

ANALYSIS

Following the direction from the October 2024 Council meeting, staff initiated discussions and research related to establishing a North Dufferin Fire Service Area.

There appears to be interest to explore a North Dufferin Fire Service Area by some of the participating municipalities within the Northern portion of Dufferin, depending on the governance structure being proposed.

For the purpose of further discussions, the following terms are defined:

North Dufferin Fire Service Area: could be the geographic area currently served by Shelburne Fire, Mulmur-Melancthon Fire and Rosemont Fire.

North Dufferin Fire Agreement: could be an agreement between the municipalities within the North Dufferin Fire Service Area which would address fee structure, report structure, governance and transfer/rental of capital assets.

North Dufferin Fire Department: could be a single department operated under the governance of the Town of Shelburne, with the Fire Chief reporting directly to the Shelburne CAO, and the Rosemont and Mulmur-Melancthon (substations) Chiefs reporting to the Shelburne Chief.

Fire Services Oversight Committee: could be a group composed of elected officials and staff from municipalities within the North Dufferin Fire Service Area that provides oversight and input but does not manage fire staff or approve a budget.

Assets of existing boards:

Consideration of a North Dufferin Fire Service Area must consider the existing and future asset needs, as well as the feasibility of transitioning transferring, renting or paying for future assets or services. If there is support to explore a North Dufferin Fire Service Area this matter Council may wish to secure the assistance of a third-party financial consultant.

Mulmur has a considerable share of existing services. Therefore, it is important for Mulmur to understand the financial implications of existing fire service agreements with respect to past contributions, ceasing participation and dissolving boards.

	Shelburne	Rosement	Mulmur-Melancthon
Notice Requirement	One fiscal year	One fiscal year	Two fiscal years
Cease Participation by one municipality	Monies for share of capital assets (excluding fire hall) based on historic value over 5 years based on a 5-year average contribution and such payout may be over 5 years. Ceasing participation in the board does not preclude buying services from the Board.	If a municipality ceases participation one fiscal year notice is required. Remaining parties have the option of purchasing Mulmur's share of assets as appraised, over a 5 – year payout.	If a municipality ceases participation two fiscal years notice is required. Debt and assets remain the property and responsibility of the Department.
Dissolving Board	Shelburne retains fire hall ownership, and the remaining assets will be appraised and distributed based on a 5-year average contribution.	Assets and reserves are split based on unanimous valuing of all assets, (including land, buildings, vehicles, equipment) based on the 5-year average of cost sharing, except for those assets purchased based on 1/3 contributions are to be separately disposed.	If the “department” is dissolved the assets are split 50/50 between Mulmur and Melancthon (including the fire hall).

It is also recognized that there would be staff assets to be assessed, and that there may be transitional roles and associated costs to transition.

Annual Costs

The following information is provided for high-level comparison. The information should be considered approximate.

	Shelburne	Rosemont	Mulmur-Melancthon
Operational (2024 budget)	\$65,534 (9.4%)	\$168,283 (52%)	\$185,710 (76%)
Capital (2024 budget)	\$28,890	\$73,034	\$85,000 (50%)
2024 Costs (Operating & Capital)	\$94,424	\$241,317	\$270,710
2023 Call Volume	25 (2 medical)	59 (36% medical)	66 (50% medical)
Operating and Capital Costs divided by call volume	\$3,777	\$4,090	\$4,102
Number of Households served	5,081 (all) 295 (Mulmur)	1,279 (all) 738 (Mulmur)	844 (all) 678 (Mulmur)
Operating & Capital Costs divided by Number of Households	\$320	\$346	\$430
Operating Costs divided by Number of Households	\$222	\$228	\$274

Service Level

Discussions are warranted related to service levels and consistency throughout a North Dufferin Fire Service Area. Concerns have been expressed related to consistency in wages, training, equipment and benefits. There have also been discussions related to opportunities to strengthen relations, reduce capital investment and the use of mutual aid and tiered response (fire department role/responsibility in medical emergencies).

Operational Matters

It is noted that the Township’s Conflict of Interest Policy provides direction related to pecuniary and private interests, and provides guidance for declaration a conflict of interest for employees of the fire board. It is noted that Fire Chiefs and firefighters roles, responsibilities and compensation may be directly impacted by the creation of a North Dufferin Service Department.

Once the governance discussions have progressed it will be important to gain a better understanding of possible operational issues and solutions. This would be an appropriate time to engage with the fire chiefs of the existing departments. It is important to have the input of the fire experts in reviewing service area boundaries, equipment, facilities and staffing needs.

Next Steps

Many municipalities are interested in further discussions related to a North Dufferin Service Area. Mulmur needs to clearly articulate what it is proposing and provide a framework for further discussions. For example, clarity is required around governance structure and municipal input model for participating municipalities.

If a joint meeting is to occur, it would benefit from some information gathering and surveying prior to a meeting. A facilitated meeting may also be helpful but should be budgeted for as a shared cost. Likewise, if there is interest in further exploring a joint venture, additional resources should be budgeted for financial analysis.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

It's in our Nature: Grow - We commit to developing a framework to shape our Township in a manner that protects our agriculture, natural resources and our rural character. We will embrace technology, support energy conservation, climate change mitigation and assess environmental impacts in our decision-making process to grow the Township in a sustainable manner.

Financial Impacts

Financial impacts of any changes to the delivery of fire services will be assessed at the appropriate stage.

Environmental Impacts:

There are no environment impacts assessed in the review of governance structure and sharing arrangements. There may be positive and negative impacts related to operational changes.

Recommendation:

It is recommended:

That the Council of the Township of Mulmur support in principle, the dissolution of the Fire Boards servicing the Township of Mulmur;

And that Council support the further exploration of a *North Dufferin Fire Service Area* that would include the approximate geographic area currently served by Shelburne & District, Mulmur-Melancthon and Rosemont & District Fire Boards; and

And that this report and motion be forwarded to the participating municipalities, with a request that the municipalities provide an indication of Council's interest in further exploring a North Dufferin Fire Service Area.

Submitted by: Tracey Atkinson, Chief Administrative Officer

Schedule A – 2020 County of Dufferin Service Delivery Review Excerpt

Schedule B – Town of Minto Shared Fire Service Management Team Agreement

8. Fire Services

The responsibilities of local municipal Councils for the delivery of fire protection services are included in The Fire Protection and Prevention Act (1997) (“FPPA”). At a high level, the services provided by fire departments include public safety and prevention, providing fire suppression and conducting inspections to enforce the Fire Code. Across the County, Fire Services are provided by eight different Fire Departments, including three fire departments from outside of Dufferin County. The objective of the review was to streamline governance and accountability structures in order to reduce risks and find efficiencies within fire services. In order to achieve that there are three recommendations proposed below:

9. Explore alternative structures/governance mechanisms for Fire Departments currently governed by Fire Boards
10. Establish a regional Fire Chiefs Association
11. Improve reporting and performance measurement

These recommendations are detailed further below, and align to the following Service Delivery Review Framework focus areas:

- Governance (Boards), Accountability, Roles and Responsibilities
- Capacity and Competencies

8.1 Recommendation 9: Explore alternative structures/governance mechanisms for Fire Departments currently governed by Fire Boards

Explore the dissolution of current Fire Boards of Management and transfer the Fire Departments to a Member Municipality to reduce risk and increase efficiencies.

CURRENT STATE CHALLENGES

- Governance structures that create operational risk management concerns for some Fire Boards of Management, resulting in uncertainty among Municipal staff leadership regarding adherence to policies and procedures, despite Fire Boards being covered under Municipal insurance policies.
- A lack of direct involvement by municipal staff in the discussions of Fire Boards.
- The Fire Boards have not implemented a Board Skills Matrix to identify required Board Member Skills sets to ensure the board has the best composition of skills and expertise possible to oversee a Fire Department.
- There is no formally documented training or orientation provided to new Board Members to orient them to the operations of the Fire Board/Fire Department.
- Limited training or orientation provided to Board Members regarding the municipal legislative requirements involved in providing fire services, and technical requirements of service delivery

- At least two of the Fire Boards operate under the insurance policy of one of the participating member municipalities, which is viewed as a risk by CAOs as they have no direct authority to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.
- There does not appear to be any formal approach to a coordinated approach to procurement or asset planning across the Fire Departments.
- Fire Chiefs overall felt that the scope of their portfolio was significant, in particular for part-time resources. They noted that additional help in ensuring that procurement guidelines, IT requirements, and Human Resources policies were followed and budgeting and financial management support would be welcome.
- While Joint Board of Management agreements identify board Secretary and Treasury support provided by the municipality to the Fire Board, they do not account for other support/skills that are required for effective operations of a municipal department such as IT and IT security, Procurement, HR, etc.
- Municipal staff expressed some concerns regarding the workload associated with the Secretary-Treasurer role on the Fire Board.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Councils explore the dissolution of all or a subset of Fire Boards of Management that would end Fire Board Agreements and transfer Fire Department assets/function to a Municipality to operate as a municipal department. Given the technical complexity, regulatory requirements, and potentially large liabilities associated with delivering the service, board arrangements are a challenging governance structure with which to operate fire services. The recommendations below pertain to the following fire departments:

- Grand Valley and District Fire Department
- Mulmur-Melancthon Fire Department
- Rosemont District Fire Department
- Shelburne and District Fire Department

Establishing fire services as a municipal department allows the critical role of providing emergency services to residents to be brought into the municipal structure. The dissolution of fire boards would result in the development of a fee-for-service fire agreement between the municipalities that house the Fire Department, and those that are contracting services from them. The revised agreement would be for a period of 5 years, with options included to extend for another 5 years. This provides an opportunity to reassess the costs associated with delivery of this service. Closest hall response would continue to be provided, and the agreement will include language to that effect. Mutual aid agreements may also continue without a need to be changed.

For future consideration it is recommended that Fire Departments review the distribution of fire assets and departments to see if there are opportunities for consolidation recognizing that Orangeville has a largely urban population, Shelburne has a growing urban population, and the remaining Member Municipalities are largely rural. Through this review, consolidation if it occurs may allow for service levels to change to fit rural needs where possible. In addition, a review of assets would provide an opportunity to better understand where any investments

in any additional fire halls would be most appropriate to best provide fire services to Dufferin residents.

When discussed with key stakeholders, which included municipal leadership, Fire Chiefs and board chairs, there were varying levels of support to pursue a change in governance. The comments have been summarized below:

- **Grand Valley and District Fire Department:** Stakeholders were not in favour of dissolution, and noted concerns that dissolving the fire board would result in a lack of input into fire services for those municipalities that were contracting services, and were not in favour of dissolution.
- **Mulmur-Melancthon Fire Department:** Stakeholders were not in favour of dissolution and believed that bringing fire services into the municipality would overload the municipality. They also indicated that the board was able to manage costs effectively due to their understanding of fire services, and that operations were running without any concerns.
- **Rosemont District Fire Department:** Stakeholders were not in favour of dissolution, indicating that this board had multiple education sessions throughout the year in order to ensure that board members had insights into operational concerns. They also indicated that the Secretary/Treasurer role provides a link to municipal HR, Finance and other resources informally.
- **Shelburne and District Fire Department:** Board Chair and Fire chief consultations indicated support to explore dissolving the fire board with a desire to create a revised contractual agreement that has currently been in place since 1991. It was noted that there was a considerable scope to manage fire operations, which includes HR, IT, Procurement, and other corporate services in addition to fire suppression, enforcing the Fire Code and fire prevention activities. Stakeholders felt that having the Fire Department within the municipal structure would allow for efficiencies.

A representative from Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management was also engaged as part of this review. Key themes from that discussion include:

- Decisions on how fire services are provided are ultimately the discretion of Municipal Councils. The OFMEM emphasizes the importance of their 'three lines of defense': Fire Prevention (building codes and inspections); Education; and Suppression. Municipalities must provide public education on fire safety and components of fire prevention. Other service levels, including suppression, are to be provided in accordance with the "needs and circumstances" of the municipality.
- Municipalities should have establishing by-laws that clearly outline what services are provided across a municipality, and how they are to be provided. This should align to the three lines of defense referenced above.
- Municipalities will be required by 2024 to complete Community Risk Assessments. The work contained in completing these should inform council on the risks within a community and plans to address these.
- The OFMEM is not in a position to comment specifically on Fire Boards.

Across the fire boards, the determination of fire service levels was discussed as a key area of input. It was noted that the fire board arrangement allows all municipalities to have input into and vote on the level of service they deemed appropriate for the particular area – for example whether emergency medical response, automobile extrication or water/ice rescue were to be included as fire services. It was discussed with stakeholders that if fire boards were to be dissolved, that contracted fire services would involve a determination of fire service levels at the outset of discussions. These would then be included in a contract (similar to a fire board agreement), however, the recommended term for contracted services would be 5 years. It was also discussed that differentiated service levels for contracting municipalities may be possible, as dispatch could funnel the requests based on the level of service provided to the appropriate covering fire hall.

It was also discussed that currently any decisions of the fire board require ratification by the board and every municipality involved. With fire services being provided by a municipal department, the effort placed into administration and budget processes would be streamlined while providing the same level of services.

Concerns regarding policies and procedures that mitigate risks for fire services would remain with the current governance structures, as Fire Department staff are not expected to have expertise in managing human resources, policy development, financial and budgetary reporting or data collection for performance management. In addition, many of the Fire Chiefs are fulfilling this role as part-time staff with a mandate that is fitting a full-time role.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

There are resourcing impacts associated with a change in governance structure and establishing a municipal department, as it would require that there is a higher degree of involvement from the municipal CAO. They would be supported however by the Fire Chief, who would advise on operational requirements of taking on fire services. For municipal CAOs taking on this department, as well as for those municipalities that choose to maintain the current governance structure, it is strongly recommended that there is a concentrated effort by staff and elected officials to ensure that those responsible for oversight of fire services (staff or board members) are prepared for their roles appropriately. The Office of the Fire Marshall (OFM) also provides courses for education fire boards on key issues, and recommend that all members of Council, CAOs and the fire board members educate themselves on the responsibilities under the FPPA. The “OFM Essentials Course” is available and can be requested from staff throughout the year.

In particular for boards, it is recommended that the Secretary/Treasurer with the support of Fire Chiefs, do the following:

- Conduct a review of the competencies of Board Members based on skills and backgrounds (i.e., finance, HR, legal, emergency services)
- Establish Board onboarding / orientation material for Board Members and develop a Board Skills Matrix to document skills and expertise needs of the Board composition.

- Conduct a formal review of Fire Department policies and procedures (starting with Procurement and HR policies) to ensure compliance with all regulations. Share updated policies with participating Municipalities. Implement processes to ensure fire chiefs have access to this professional skills/expertise for ongoing operations.
- Establish clear bylaws that fully articulate the fire services activities offered by each Municipality and the method for delivery. This should include specific reference to fire prevention, education, and suppression activities.
- When completing the Community Risk Profile required under FPPA by 2024, Member Municipalities still participating in Fire Boards should use this opportunity to again re-evaluate this matter, to ensure that the fire services received continue to meet the

It should be noted that residents would see no change in services if fire boards were to be dissolved, as changing the fire board does not result in changes to operations or service levels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications related to changes in governance structure are anticipated to include one-time legal costs where boards have been dissolved and for new contractual arrangements.

There are no significant ongoing/long-term financial implications of this recommendation as it relates to how fire services are governed. At the time of dissolution, there would be costs associated with determining asset valuation for the fire halls and other physical assets.

It should be noted that capital costs for the fire hall would become the responsibility of the municipal department, and not that of the municipalities who were to contract services and would be factored into the fee for service cost structure. The fee-for-service agreement should also recognize that administrative costs will lessen over the span of the contract as the effort by the Secretary/Treasurer and other administrative costs is reduced and this effort would be disseminated to the appropriate corporate services departments.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

- Improve transparency and oversight of Fire Department operations for municipal leadership, as it relates to human resources, budget and compliance with procurement.
- Improved reporting relationship that promotes a higher level of understanding of board responsibilities under the FPPA and enhances professional insights into operations.
- Leverage procurement savings, and benefit from an economies of scale in the day to day operation and management of fire services from being embedded within the municipal organization.
- A well-negotiated fee-for-service agreement would result in better financial control of the fire department, as well as for contracting municipalities.

- Become aligned to good governance and operational practices by ensuring access to ensuring access to skills and expertise required to administer modern Municipal departments.

8.2 Recommendation 10: Establish a regional Fire Chiefs Association

Establish a formal mechanism for Fire Departments to share asset management plans, discuss upcoming procurement needs, and identify opportunities for group purchases (for potential cost savings, and to ensure ongoing compatibility of equipment across Fire Departments). In order to find efficiencies and opportunities for joint procurement of significant assets, it is recommended that Fire Chiefs across Dufferin develop an Association for collaboration.

CURRENT STATE CHALLENGES

- There does not appear to be any formal approach to a coordinated approach to procurement or asset planning across the Fire Departments.
- Municipal staff stakeholders do not have full confidence that procurement guidelines are always followed; procurement summaries do not appear to be developed/shared with municipal staff.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

Creating a formal mechanism that would allow the Fire Chiefs to collaborate with on another on important procurement, policy and investment related decisions allows Dufferin residents to receive efficient and standardized emergency services across the County. An association of the Fire Chiefs of each Fire department within Dufferin be established, to meet quarterly. This would include the Fire Chiefs for:

- Grand Valley and District Fire Department
- Mulmur-Melancthon Fire Department
- Orangeville Fire Division
- Rosemont District Fire Department
- Shelburne and District Fire Department

The Association would discuss opportunities for joint procurement, or standardization of services, as well as best practices related to:

- Training of voluntary fire fighters
- Procurement related decisions on fire trucks, radio equipment, and other significant assets
- Determine where investments are required with a holistic view of the Dufferin County

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to this recommendation, however this does require minimal time from staff or volunteer fire chiefs. This may however reduce the need for *ad hoc* discussions and meetings among fire chiefs if regularly scheduled meetings can be used to facilitate discussion.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

- Savings realized due to joint procurement.
- Sharing of best practices regarding policies and procedures.
- Efficacy of training and potential for increasing productivity of firefighters (scheduling, etc.) through sharing of resources.

8.3 Recommendation 11: Improve reporting and performance measurement

It is recommended that reporting of fire services related performance be recorded for all fire departments and reported to the appropriate governing body.

CURRENT STATE CHALLENGES

- Fire Boards do not appear to be reporting aggregate performance levels to Fire Boards, CAOs, or the Public. Reporting requirements are not included in Fire Board agreements, only Rosemont Fire Department's annual report appears to be available online.
- Performance targets / service levels are not clearly documented or included in Fire Board agreements.
- At this time, it is unknown how the service level (e.g. response times) may vary across the County.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

To improve operations through informed decision making and to increase transparency of the Fire Departments' operations, it is recommended that a formal process for annual reporting be established. This would depend on the governance structure of the Fire Department, whether it's a fire board or a municipal department, however fire department staff would be responsible for collecting the data, analyzing the information and presenting it in a consumable format.

In order to report performance, each fire department must establish and commit to service/performance targets for Fire Services so that variations in service delivery across the County can be identified, and improvement targets identified. The metrics must be linked to the overall goals of the department. For example, the goals could include:

- Providing a timely response for fire services through a trained, skilled and efficient team;

- Reducing injury, loss of life or property damage;
- Providing public education programs and other prevention services to ensure public safety; and,
- Confirm to government acts, regulations, and municipal by-laws and policies.

In order to develop the key metrics, it is recommended that fire departments do the following⁴:

- Develop an inventory of current key performance indicators (such as response times);
- Identify gaps in performance indicators and determine data sets required to evaluate those indicators;
- Determine which information is essential for management and oversight bodies to know to effectively manage the operation;
- Ensure that the performance indicators selected align to the goals of the fire department;
- Develop the performance indicators by compiling the appropriate data sets;
- Determine the frequency of collection for each performance indicator;
- Develop a worksheet to gather performance indicators and outcomes;
- Test the performance indicators for a period of 3-6 months;
- Update as necessary;
- Provide the report on a quarterly or annual basis to the oversight function for the fire department (fire board or municipal Council) and ensure that the documents are publicly available.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Several Fire Chiefs noted that the IT system in use for fire operations was a niche software and support was provided through the particular service provider. Consultation with the IT service provider to understand the data gathering capacities of the software as well as any built in reporting functionality would be beneficial. Where real-time performance monitoring is available that should be captured, possibly with the support of an IT professional or software support help desk.

It is suggested that the Fire Chiefs Association be leveraged for this exercise, as the Fire Chiefs could more efficiently work towards developing metrics and reporting collectively. Note that Rosemont department currently publishes some performance reporting on service levels already and understanding the process used here would be beneficial across fire departments.

⁴ 2017. Measuring what Matters: Performance Measurement in Local Governments. University of Fraser Valley.



TOWN OF MINTO

MEETING DATE: February 20, 2024
REPORT TO: Mayor and Council
SERVICE AREA: Fire
SUBJECT: FIRE 2024-001 - Shared Fire Services Management Team Agreement and Budget Amendment

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Council of the Town of Minto receive report FIRE 2024-001 regarding Shared Fire Services Management Agreement and Budget Amendment;

THAT Council of the Town of Minto approve the addition of three (3) full-time positions for Fire and Emergency Services;

THAT Council of the Town of Minto approve an amendment to the Fire and Emergency Services 2024 Operating Budget with expenditure increases of \$416,700 and revenue increases of (\$438,800) for a net impact of (\$22,100);

THAT Council of the Town of Minto approve an amendment to the Fire and Emergency Services 2024 Capital Budget in the amount of \$70,000 with funding provided from the Fire and Emergency Services Reserve (\$28,000) and a recovery from Wellington North and Mapleton (\$42,000); and

THAT Council of the Town of Minto authorize the Mayor and the Clerk to sign the Shared Fire Service Management Team agreement with Wellington North and Mapleton.

BACKGROUND:

For the past 4 years, the Minto Fire Department and the Wellington North Fire Services have been operating under a Shared Fire Chief agreement where both municipalities have been sharing the services of one Fire Chief. During this time, daily operations have evolved into sharing the entire management team consisting of the Fire Chief and two Deputy Chiefs between the Town of Minto and the Township of Wellington North.

During the recent renewal negotiation with Wellington North, both municipalities have agreed to change and formalize the agreement to a shared management team agreement where both municipalities share in the services of all 3 personnel. The new agreement would split the costs of all three positions and the related costs associated with their daily operations.

While in negotiations, the Township of Mapleton inquired about joining the partnership to provide management services to their municipality as well. The discussions took place, and it was determined to accomplish this, the full-time complement of Fire and Emergency

Services would need to be increased by two (2) full-time positions to ensure appropriate service delivery across the three (3) municipalities.

Mapleton Council and Wellington North Council are both in favour of the new agreement and have passed By-laws to that effect.

COMMENTS:

It is proposed that the new Fire Services Management Team consist of a Director of Fire Services, two (2) Deputy Directors of Fire Services, a Training Officer, an Administration / Public Educator, and a Fire Inspector / Plans Examiner.

As part of the new agreement, Minto would employ all six (6) personnel on the management team consisting of three (3) existing employees, one (1) employee from Wellington North, and two (2) new staff. Minto would 'contract' out the services of the team to both Wellington North and Mapleton based on the cost sharing reflected in the attached agreement.

A joint oversight committee would be struck consisting of the Chief Administrative Officers and Council representatives, one from each of the three (3) municipalities. The committee would review the budget and work plans of the Fire Service Management Team and assist in setting the direction of the team. The management team would still be responsible for reporting to all three Councils on a regular basis as well as preparing a budget for each Council to consider.

All three municipalities will pass By-laws appointing the Fire Service Management Team personnel as representatives of their municipality as well as their Fire Chief and Deputy Chiefs.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

The general agreement in principle between Mapleton, Wellington North and Minto is that Mapleton and Wellington North will compensate Minto for the costs incurred by Minto to properly provide the services under this Agreement, as represented by 30% for each municipality of the total cost to Minto of employing the entire Fire Service Management Team, including those costs incurred for the Team to carry out their roles.

A budget amendment to the 2024 Fire and Emergency Services Operating Budget is required in the amount of \$416,700 in expenditures and (\$438,800) in revenue to reflect the financial arrangements of the new partnership agreement as outlined below:

Expenditures

Salary and Benefits	383,700
Vehicle Repairs / Fuel	9,000
Memberships / Conferences / Training	7,200
Office Supplies / Technology / Clothing / Other	16,800
Total Expenditures	416,700

Revenue

Recovery From Wellington North & Mapleton	(438,800)
Total Revenue	(438,800)

Net	(22,100)
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A budget amendment to the 2024 Fire and Emergency Services Capital Budget of \$70,000 is also required for the purchase of one (1) additional vehicle to be shared by the entire Fire Services Management Team. Sixty percent (60%) of the cost of the new vehicle will be recovered from Wellington North and Mapleton.

STRATEGIC PLAN:**Goal 5: Responsible Government**

Deliver Services in an open, accountable, and transparent manner while providing an outstanding working environment for our employees and community.

PREPARED BY: Chris Harrow, Director of Fire Services

RECOMMENDED BY: Mark Potter, Interim Chief Administrative Officer