

Request for Decision

Emergency Services Department, Fire Services Division, Training Officers Staffing Proposal Pilot Project

Presented To:	Community Services Committee
Presented:	Monday, Feb 04, 2013
Report Date	Thursday, Jan 24, 2013
Type:	Referred & Deferred Matters

Recommendation

THAT the Community Services Committee endorse the Chief of Emergency Services – Pilot Project Proposal to Improve Effectiveness and Efficiency of Fire Services Training Section for the addition of two full time Training Officers for a two year period to be funded within the Department's existing budget allocation; and,

THAT the Chief Fire Training Officer will report annually to the Community Services Committee on the results of key performance factors designed to measure the impact of enhanced training resources that support all firefighters (volunteer/career); and,

THAT at the end of the two-year period, if the pilot project is deemed to be successful, a report will be brought to Committee/Council regarding the permanent funding of these Training Officer positions.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

Danny Stack
Fire Chief
Digitally Signed Jan 24, 13

Recommended by the Department

Tim Beadman
Chief of Emergency Services
Digitally Signed Jan 24, 13

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Jan 27, 13

Finance Implications

If approved, the two Training Officers for the pilot project will be funded from the allocation of the four mandatory training days for fire fighters over a two-year period.

At the end of the pilot project, if it is deemed to be successful, a report will be brought to Council outlining the permanent funding for these two Training Officers. If the pilot project does not prove to be successful, Fire Services will reduce its complement by two employees and continue with the mandatory training days.

Update:

At its Community Services Committee meeting of December 03, 2012, the Committee endorsed the Chief of Emergency Services' pilot project staffing proposal. The proposal called for the addition of two full-time Training Officers for the Fire Training Section for a two-year period to be funded within the Department's existing budget allocation. At its Council meeting of December 11, 2012, the Request for Decision report that authorized this pilot project proposal was withdrawn and deferred back to the Community Services

Committee for further clarification.

Background

At its Community Services meeting of February 27, 2012, the Chief of Emergency Services outlined the results of a strategic (high level) review of the City's emergency services needs and capabilities. As a result, an Information Report and document entitled 'Suggested Going Forward Work Plan' dated February 14, 2012 was submitted and presented to Committee/Council.

This strategic review contained 38 recommendations having the potential to improve delivery of the City's emergency services or to make service delivery more cost-effective.

Recommendation #2 which was recommended by the IBI Group (January 16, 2012) outlined the need for the Chief of Emergency Services and Fire Chief to jointly resolve current staffing shortages in Fire Fleet, Fire Training and Fire Prevention Sections.

This report outlines the strategy developed by Emergency Services Senior Administration which has the support of the Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Human Resources, and seeks the cooperation of IAFF Local 527 to support a Pilot Project proposal to resolve the current staffing shortages in the Fire Training Section.

Fire Training's mandate is to develop, coordinate and deliver programs aligned to firefighters (career and volunteer) with knowledge and skills necessary to safely operate fire services equipment, perform firefighting and respond to emergencies involving medical aid, rescue and hazardous materials operations.

It is noted that with all past firefighter deaths in Ontario, a lack of documented, coordinated and consistent training for both volunteer and career firefighters has been found to be a major contributor to these tragedies. In recent years, serious injuries and deaths of fire service personnel have occurred in the communities of Listowel, Meaford, Point Edward and Nipissing. In all cases, the training of the fire service overall is a matter of great concern to the Ministry of Labour and other regulators. It cannot be overlooked that in all cases, municipal council as the employer regardless of career or volunteer members, is responsible for ensuring an effective and efficient training program is provided to meet the needs of all fire service personnel commensurate with the levels of fire protection as determined by the municipality.

The Fire Training Section has undergone a high turnover rate of both leadership and training officer positions; ten individuals in the past ten years. One of the main reasons for this turnover rate can be attributed to the challenges of providing training to a large group of firefighters with limited staff resources. A review identified the current principal challenge is a need for at least two additional training staff, clerical support, and a Records Management System of which the latter two have been addressed.

The current staffing complement of a Chief Training Officer and two Training Officers cannot sustain the responsibilities of the Fire Services requisite training program as defined by the needs of 108 career firefighters and approximately 340 volunteer firefighters operating out of 24 stations over 3,627 square kilometers – even with the assistance of Fire Captains who participate in the delivery of in-service firefighter training.

Given the current fiscal economic realities, and rising costs of emergency services (Police, EMS, and Fire), administration took the view that seeking two additional Fire Training Officer positions on the municipal levy was a worst case scenario. Securing a partnership with the IAFF Local 527 was viewed as an important opportunity for exploring what efficiencies (within the existing language in the current collective agreement) could support a mutual goal of increasing fire training resources without increasing the cost to the taxpayer.

The current collective agreement with the IAFF Local 527 contains a provision at Article 21.01 which permits the Employer to schedule up to four, ten-hour mandatory training days on days off at straight time. In recent collective agreement negotiations, the IAFF wanted to remove the mandatory training days and CGS resisted. We are prepared to exchange the addition of two trainers for a two-year trial period using the monies set aside for these mandatory days. While both parties can see the benefits of added training officers, if the trial proves unsuccessful, we would return those resources to the training budget and CGS's mandatory training right remains in the CBA. This partnership will be accomplished through targeted flexibility in existing career stations deployment levels during periods of time associated with the mandatory career firefighters' training days outlined in the collective agreement.

Given the complexity of this strategy, there needs to be a clear understanding as to what can be accomplished, and how these additional training resources would improve the overall training requirements for the delivering of Fire Services to the community. Understanding that both parties (labour/management) were entering new territory; it was felt that a pilot project concept would be beneficial and provide an opportunity to measure the challenges, benefits, successes and accomplishments within a two-year time period.

If approved,

- Administration and IAFF Local 527 will establish the targeted flexibility in existing career stations deployment levels during periods of time associated with the mandatory career firefighters' training days outlined in the collective agreement.
- The training currently being performed by third parties to the Employment relationship between IAFF Local 527 and CGS will continue (e.g. OEM training, volunteer orientation and training etc., etc.). There is ample work for the two additional trainers and there is no intent to move training duties that, in the current practice are not performed by Training Officers.
- The Fire Training Section will develop key performance factors designed to measure the impact of enhance training resources that support all firefighters (volunteer/career), and report annually to Community Services Committee on its results.
- Prior to implementation, the Chief Fire Training Officer will target Fire stations hosting training sessions to communicate Fire Training Section's one to three year work plan (including elements of pilot project; its key performance factors) for all firefighters.
- Given that the 2013 fire training program is well underway; and the work required prior to; the implementation of the pilot project would begin in the third or fourth quarter of 2013.
- This opportunity will not only enhance career/volunteer firefighters' training experiences through measurable matrix throughout the pilot project; but, stay within the Emergency Services Department's operating budget.
- In the third quarter of the second year of the pilot project, Emergency Services will undertake a third party review of its Fire Training Section to determine if the pilot project is deemed to be successful. Further, this review will seek to determine that all relevant standard operating guidelines are linked with all facets of training to ensure all fire personnel have received training applicable to their roles and responsibilities. By ensuring that all personnel have received and are signed off as having received and performed training as required, success for a specific task is achieved.
- Upon the cessation of the pilot project, the Department's staffing level will be adjusted to reflect its approved full-time staffing complement, unless prior approval has been given by Council.