

	Report Title	Budget Issue Paper: Strategic Plan Implementation & Costing Analysis
	Report No.	FRS 19-01
	Author	Jeff Smith, Fire Chief
	Meeting Type	Budget Meeting
	Council Date	February 19, 2019
	Attachments	

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report FRS 19-01 Budget Issue Paper: Strategic Plan Implementation & Costing Analysis is received as information;

AND THAT the Fire Chief is directed to implement the Recommendations as contained within the Fire Services Strategic Planning Committee Final Report dated November, 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the June 11, 2015 Council meeting the Terms of Reference of the Fire Services Strategic Planning Committee were approved by Council and subsequently directed the Fire Department to form this committee. The inaugural meeting of this Committee was held on May 31, 2016. The committee met on a regular basis, gathering and evaluating information on current fire department operations, community needs and expectations, community profile, and community fire & life safety risks. The attached Final Report was presented to Council by Committee Chairperson Shane Curtis at the November 26, 2018 regular Council meeting. During this meeting, Council directed that the recommendations and supporting materials be forwarded to the 2019 Business Plan & Budget deliberations for further discussion.

At the January 21, 2019 Council meeting, the Fire Chief was directed to evaluate the ten committee recommendations and provide Council with potential Target Dates for effecting the recommendations as well as implementation options and associated costing.

ANALYSIS

PFSG 03-02-13 (Master Planning Process for Fire Protection Services) outlines the process to develop a Master Fire Plan as the strategic blueprint for the delivery of fire protection services that address the *“local needs and circumstances”* as defined by the Fire Protection & Prevention Act, RSO. 1997, and in determining the level of fire protection services the community can afford.

An excerpt from PFSG 03-02-13 guiding principles indicates the following:

- *The residents of any community are entitled to the most effective, efficient and safe fire services possible;*
- *The content of existing collective agreements will be respected and the collective bargaining process will be recognized as the appropriate channel for resolving labour relations issues under collective agreements and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act;*
- *Collective bargaining issues affecting public safety will be identified; and*
- *Those responsible must work within these parameters in making recommendations for improving municipal fire services.*

The final report of the Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee contained ten (10) recommendations. Herein is the staff analysis of the ten (10) Committee recommendations. As noted in the Committee Chairperson's presentation to Council on November 26, 2018, the recommendations and outlook of the final report is for a two (2) year period, specifically 2019 – 2020, with a recommended review in 2021.

Recommendation #1

THAT Tillsonburg Fire and Rescue Services continue to operate as a composite Fire Department staffed with on-call paid firefighters for the immediate future.

Committee comments:

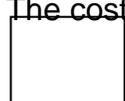
While difficulties currently exist with fully staffing vehicles during the work day, it is felt that changes in the scheduling, remuneration and acknowledgement of employers that follow in further recommendations, will address the issues for the near future. Changes in legislation will likely have impacts to this staffing model in the mid to long-term.

Staff comments:

TFD staff concurs with this analysis of the current and near-term staffing prognosis. While there are difficulties in obtaining sufficient members responding to weekday incidents, there is not currently sufficient concern to justify the addition of full-time suppression staff. In addition to a number of recommendations in the final report designed to prolong the effectiveness of the current staffing model, there are several capital projects in the 2019 Budget and forecasted in subsequent budgets.

Further, Recommendation #1 of the Fire Service Strategic Planning Committee should be read in conjunction with Recommendation #7 (additional FTE for the Fire Department). Recognizing that there is a service delivery gap in the Fire Service Delivery Model due to the response time of the paid on-call fire service versus a career department, it is prudent to increase another aspect of fire & life safety protection services. Recommendation #7 supports increasing the fire and life safety inspection and education capacity of the Tillsonburg Fire Department to counter the response delay of the paid on-call fire delivery model.

There are no additional costs associated directly with this recommendation. Continuing contract negotiations with the Tillsonburg Firefighters Association will determine future costs. The cost



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related to Recommendation #7 is contained within that section. As a comparison, a full time day crew of 6 firefighters (Monday to Friday, 08:00hrs to 17:00hrs) would cost \$700,000 - \$800,000 per annum, not including equipment and materials.

Recommendation #2

THAT the Town of Tillsonburg develop a fair and equitable remuneration structure that accounts for the varying hours worked by its firefighters during training and attending emergencies.

Committee Comments:

The current compensation system allows some firefighters to adjust their attendance to obtain the best compensation, rather than providing the most availability to the community. The remuneration structure should provide more compensation for those with greater activity, than those with less activity. No firefighter should be “out-of-pocket” for a response that takes them away from work.

Staff Comments:

The current paid on-call compensation model employs a mix of hourly work and an honorarium. Training, public education and other duties as approved are compensated at an hourly rate. The response to emergency incidents is covered under the honorarium.

The committee’s concern is that a paid on-call member with excellent attendance at emergency incidents is compensated the same dollar amount as a member with poor attendance. The recommendation’s intent is to reduce or eliminate the fiscal imbalance. The intent is to remove the honorarium and to compensate the firefighters hourly for emergency call-outs.

Town staff does support this recommendation and will work with to develop a remuneration structure for attending emergency incidents that is fair and equitable to both the residents and the firefighters while adequately compensating department members for their attendance.

Recommendation #3

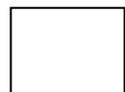
THAT the Fire Service modify their existing platoon system and incorporate a “Duty Crew” system where firefighters commit to responding during a specific time frame each month during business hours.

Committee Comments:

Under this arrangement, an employer would know in advance that his or her employee would only be responding during business hours a given week per month, rather than at any time. This could be further limited to structure fires or other major calls.

Staff Comments:

The current staffing model of the Tillsonburg Fire Department uses a Platoon System where half of the fire department members are “on-call” for 2 weeks of each month. Certain incidents, such as fires, alarms at high risk properties, etc., are an “All-call” response where all members are paged to attend.



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Historically, the Platoons were further subdivided into Companies. Each Company was on-call for 1 week of the month. Alpha and Bravo Companies comprise First Platoon, and Charlie and Delta Companies comprise Second Platoon. Company calls included Carbon Monoxide calls and lift assist calls. Due to poor attendance and response times, the aforementioned incidents were made Platoon calls.

The current staffing model using the Platoon system achieves the intent of the Committee's recommendation.

Expanding further, the Committee's recommendation takes in part a staffing model used in western Canada where paid on-call firefighters are "retained" to respond to emergency incidents during specific shifts. The level of retention can range from actual 8 – 12 hour shifts in the fire hall to a guarantee of availability for specific, scheduled hours.

Employing "retained" firefighters would incur increased labour costs for the Fire Department. Assuming that there would be sufficient interest from the current members to be "retained", the cost for a duty crew of four to be on-call during normal business hours would be in the \$40,000 to \$45,000 range per annum. This calculation assumes 4 firefighters on-call for 8 hours a day, 5 days a week at a "retained" premium of \$5.00/hour. The hourly "retained" rate would have to be negotiated with the Association and may only be a starting point. Regardless of the hourly "retained" rate, there would be 160 "retained" hours per week, or 8,320 per annum.

Consequentially, the act of regularly scheduling employees may have Ontario labour law implications that would need to be researched further.

Given the current Platoon system, there does not seem to be sufficient advantage to the enhancement of the fire department service level to justify an expense of this magnitude at this time. Staff does not recommend Council consider a "retained" firefighter program at this time.

Recommendation #4

THAT the Fire Service develop a documented recruitment and retention strategy by the end of 2019.

Committee Comments:

Attracting new firefighters is more and more challenging. The reasons vary, but include: an aging population; workplaces with less "flex" to accommodate missing workers; increasingly transient populations; residents who work out-of-town; families where both parents work and cannot leave children alone. In addition to the recommended remuneration update, the strategy should include working with employers in the area (including the Town itself) to encourage volunteers from amongst their employees and to permit those employees to respond to day-time calls.

Staff Comments:

There are no direct costs beyond staff time associated with this Recommendation. Without additional staff work capacity, the addition of this project to the 2019 Fire Department work plan will require an adjustment of the Department's business plan.



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Recommendation #5

THAT the Town of Tillsonburg develop a recognition system to acknowledge the efforts of firefighters, their families and employers.

Committee Comments:

Appropriate recognition of all the parties essential in the provision of an on-call fire service, is critical to any retention effort. The annual acknowledgement of firefighters and employers together in a newspaper ad, a recognition dinner, a simple plaque, or something more tangible such as a rebate on business licence fees will help to encourage participation from local businesses. Recognition events need the active support of elected officials to be fully effective.

Staff Comments:

Fire Department management agrees wholeheartedly with this recommendation. While no additional operational funds have been included in the 2019 Budget, a number of smaller initiatives have been considered and a date booked for a family event.

Larger events, such as the mentioned recognition dinner, would be a 2020 budget consideration for Council, as well as an ongoing recognition amount.

Since Tillsonburg does not charge businesses license renewal fees on business licenses, alternate recognition of employers will have to be determined.

Costs for this initiative will be contained within the 2019 Operating budget, and if successful, funds for an enhanced recognition program will be requested as part of the 2020 Operating budget deliberations.

Recommendation #6

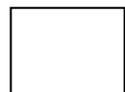
THAT the Fire Service develop and distribute information packages to existing firefighters and prospective recruits, their families and employers, describing how the Service operates and the expectations on its firefighters.

Committee Comments:

There should be no surprises as to the expectations placed on a firefighter. These packages should serve as a starting point for important discussions with families and employers.

Staff Comments:

There are no direct costs beyond staff time associated with this Recommendation. Without additional staff work capacity, the addition of this project to the 2019 Fire Department work plan will require an adjustment of the Department's business plan.



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Recommendation #7

THAT the Town of Tillsonburg add financial capacity in the 2019 Budget to hire a Full Time Equivalent position for the Fire Service, to assist with the implementation of the new regulations from the Province relating to Mandatory Certification, Mandatory Reporting Times, and Mandatory Comprehensive Risk Assessments. Once these tasks are completed, this position will also be responsible for enhancing the Fire Prevention practices of the Department.

Committee Comments:

This full-time position is necessary to complete the newly legislated requirements. The Comprehensive Risk Assessments are required next steps. The Committee would normally also have recommended a full-time position to fill the gaps long identified in the Town's Fire Prevention program. Understanding the limitations of available funding, it was determined that an acceptable compromise would have this position working on the legislated requirements with any remaining time spent on Fire Prevention, and then transitioning over time to a more fulsome Fire Prevention role. Since we developed this recommendation the provincial government has repealed the legislation set to commence in July 2019 and plans to release a revised version of the legislation but there is no definitive timeline as of now.

Staff Comments:

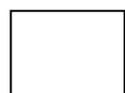
To achieve the pending legislative responsibilities, the fire department will see significantly reduced capacity to continue the current work load without a staffing level increase. The cost for a Fire Prevention Officer, assuming mid-year starting date, has been included in the 2019 Operational Budget as a new FTE employee. The annualized cost of this position is \$91,400.

This position is an important part of the work being done to ensure the near term viability of the paid on-call staffing model of the Tillsonburg Fire Department for the immediate future (see Recommendation #1).

Refer to Budget Discussion Paper in Tab 4 (Human Resources) for the Business Case: Fire Prevention Officer, and Pages 3 & 20 of Fire Department Business Plan in Tab 7.

Recommendation #8

THAT in addition to the existing Tiered Medical Responses that form part of Automatic Aid agreements, and the limited assistance the Fire Service provides locally to Oxford County Paramedics, e.g., lift assists and motor vehicle collisions, the Fire Service add Tiered Medical Response without delay for patients in the Town of Tillsonburg with Obvious Immediate Threat to life (OIT), i.e, unconscious, cardiac arrest, choking and drowning. The Committee further recommends that the delivery model to respond to these calls, do so with the minimum number of staff required, and within the current remuneration system.



Committee Comments:

This will standardize the level of service provided across the Department and throughout Oxford, and improve the level of service to Town of Tillsonburg residents. While the Oxford Paramedic Service has recently added hours of service in the Town, the OIT calls described are all labour intensive and would benefit from the “extra hands” provided by a limited number of Tillsonburg firefighters. This change was requested by the Oxford Paramedic Service and supported by the firefighters as enabling them to “make a difference” in the lives of Tillsonburg residents. The number of additional calls is estimated at approximately 65 per year.

Staff Comments:

Staff has reviewed three deployment models for this increased level of service with the Strategic Plan Committee and recommends that an internal team, similar to the Special Operations Team, be created for responding to medical assist incidents.

The costs associated with implementing this Recommendation include training costs and some nominal costs associated with training (consumables, reference materials, etc.). Core equipment costs are normally incurred by Oxford County Paramedic Services. Assuming a team size of 12 members, and allowing for 16 – 20 hours training per annum, the estimated increased training costs to the fire department would be around \$8,400.

Should an hourly incident response compensation system be implemented (see Recommendation #2) and, assuming an average attendance of 6 team members of the medical team to these incidents, the estimate of labour costs would be \$13,650 in addition to the above identified training costs.

Staff does support this recommendation. The additional training costs (\$8,400) are not currently included in the proposed 2019 Operating Budget.

Recommendation #9

THAT the Town of Tillsonburg adopt the following changes to Schedule A of By-Law No. 3910:

Under Emergency Response:

- 26. Change “confined space rescue” to “confined space and trench rescue” and show as “Approved”.**
- 27. Change “farm/silo rescue” to “machine rescue” and show as “Approved”.**

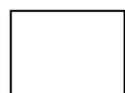
Under Fire Administration:

- 1. Show “projecting station locations and reallocations” as “Approved”**

Under Training & Education:

- 1. Change “developing trainer facilitators” to “developing instructors” and show as “Approved”.**

Under Maintenance:



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1. Show “acceptance testing and approval of new apparatus and equipment” as “Approved”.

Change “central supply facility” from “Not Approved” to “Not Applicable”.

3. Show “providing input re design and construction considerations for fire stations” to “Approved”.

Under Support Services:

1. Show “bulk purchasing through local and area organizations” and “developing standardized specifications for all apparatus and equipment” as “Approved”.

3. Show all risk management practices, including assessing changing risk; operationalizing risk management into every function; providing insurance; prevention planning; risk avoidance; loss control; loss reduction; separation and diversification of losses; and risk transfer to “Approved”.

Committee Comments:

These changes reflect the current practice of the Fire Service as having evolved through changes in Town industrial mix and building stock, legislation, additional training and equipment being acquired.

Staff Comments:

These recommended changes to the level of service contained within the Establishing & Regulating By-law are in the best interest of the citizens of Tillsonburg and reflect industry best practices. Updating the current Establishing & Regulating By-law is a 2019 Business Plan objective currently and has been slated for Q3 completion.

Recommendation #10

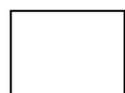
THAT a Fire Strategic Plan Review Committee be struck in 2021 to review the effects of this plan and recommend adjustments as necessary.

Committee Comments:

The changes to the legislated requirements for the Fire Service are significant, and the results of elements such as Mandatory Certification, Mandatory Reporting Times, and Mandatory Comprehensive Risk Assessments may result in significant service changes during the next Council term. The Committee was unable to determine the level of these impacts at this time.

Staff Comments:

Staff will report back to Council in 2020 with a recommendation on this process.

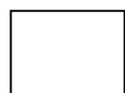


FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

A summary of the estimated implementation costs in the two budget years is provided below. Funding for six months of the Fire Prevention Officer position has been included in the 2019 Operating budget. No funding has been included in the 2019 Operating budget for tiered medical, as it is anticipated that the initial training will be conducted mid-year and can be funded from within the existing firefighter training budget. Further, the Retained Firefighter costs have not been included in the proposed 2019 Operating Budget. The identified funding source for all projects will be the municipal tax levy.

Recommendation		Annualized Budget Impact		
		Fiscal 2019	Fiscal 2020	Comments
1	THAT Tillsonburg Fire and Rescue Services continue to operate as a composite Fire Department staffed with on-call paid firefighters for the immediate future.	\$0	\$0	
2	THAT the Town of Tillsonburg develop a fair and equitable remuneration structure that accounts for the varying hours worked by its firefighters during training and attending emergencies.	NIL	Increase only as negotiated	<i>Current Agreement ends Dec. 31, 2019</i>
3	THAT the Fire Service modify their existing platoon system and incorporate a "Duty Crew" system where firefighters commit to responding during a specific time frame each month during business hours.	\$0 Using exiting Platoon System	\$0 Using existing Platoon System	
		\$45,000 paying Retained Fee	\$46,000 paying Retained Fee	
4	THAT the Fire Service develop a documented recruitment and retention strategy by the end of 2019.	Staff Time & Work Plan impact	--	
5	THAT the Town of Tillsonburg develop a recognition system to acknowledge the efforts of firefighters, their families and employers.	\$0	\$4,000	
6	THAT the Fire Service develop and distribute information packages to existing firefighters and prospective recruits, their families and employers, describing how the Service operates and the expectations on its firefighters.	Staff Time & Work Plan impact	--	
7	THAT the Town of Tillsonburg add financial capacity in the 2019 Budget to hire a Full Time Equivalent position for the Fire Service, to assist with the implementation of the new regulations from the Province relating to Mandatory Certification, Mandatory Reporting Times, and Mandatory Comprehensive Risk Assessments. Once these tasks are completed, this position will also be responsible for enhancing the Fire Prevention practices of the Department.	\$45,700	\$91,400	<i>Estimate excludes Cost of Living Allowance</i>
8	THAT in addition to the existing Tiered Medical Responses that form part of Automatic Aid agreements, and the limited assistance the Fire Service provides locally to Oxford County Paramedics, e.g., lift assists and motor vehicle collisions, the Fire Service add Tiered Medical Response without delay for patients in the Town of Tillsonburg with Obvious Immediate Threat to life (OIT), i.e, unconscious, cardiac arrest, choking and drowning. The Committee further recommends that the delivery model to respond to these calls, do so with the minimum number of staff required, and within the current remuneration system	\$8,400	\$8,400 + \$13,650* = \$22,050	<i>Estimate excludes Cost of Living Allowance</i>
9	THAT the Town of Tillsonburg adopt the following changes to Schedule A of By-Law No. 3910.	\$0 <i>Negligible impact to call volume</i>	\$0 <i>Negligible impact to call volume</i>	
10	THAT a Fire Strategic Plan Review Committee be struck in 2021 to review the effects of this plan and recommend adjustments as necessary.	--	--	

* - estimate assumes compensation system of hourly pay in lieu of honorarium



COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) IMPACT

- 1. Excellence in Local Government
 - Demonstrate strong leadership in Town initiatives
 - Streamline communication and effectively collaborate within local government
 - Demonstrate accountability



Report Approval Details

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dave Rushton - Feb 8, 2019 - 2:24 PM



David Calder - Feb 8, 2019 - 2:33 PM

Donna Wilson - Feb 8, 2019 - 3:18 PM

