



Corporate NO: R125

Report COUNCIL DATE: May 29, 2000

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: May 25, 2000

FROM: City Manager
for Chair, Fire Services Review Task Force FILE: 4940-001

SUBJECT: Status of Fire Services Review

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1. Council receive this report as information
2. Council approve in-principle, the “Key Commitments” as outlined in Section 7.0 of this report.

2.0 BACKGROUND

During the Budget approval process for year 2000, the Finance Committee at their January 11, 2000 meeting, requested a review of the City's Fire Services with particular emphasis on the issue related to “four person pumper truck” and determining future staffing levels. In addition, the Fire Chief stated that an “Optimization Study” was scheduled to be undertaken to offer “policy choices” related to “staff and apparatus” deployment.

As well, the review of the Fire Services Department was discussed at the Public Safety Committee meeting of February 9, 2000.

3.0 FIRE SERVICES REVIEW TASK FORCE

It was concluded that various Suppression Staff representatives of the Fire Department be included on the Task Force to facilitate understanding of key issues as well as help develop “achievable” solutions. To this end, the Task Force members are as follows:

Chairperson, Councillor Watts

Councillor Tymoschuk

Councillor Steele

Kim Wimmer, Volunteer Firefighter Hall #17

Karen Reader, Volunteer Firefighter Hall #5

Ray Butchart, Volunteer Firefighter Hall #8

Larry Thomas, Career Firefighter

Michael Ward, Volunteer Firefighter Hall #1

Captain Lorne West, President, Surrey Firefighter Assoc. Local 1271

Jim Bale, Fire Chief

Umendra Mital, City Manager

4.0 ROLE OF THE TASK FORCE

- Identify and agree on the issues
- Address each issue: how can issues be resolved?
- Special focus on Volunteer firefighter's issues and safety issues
- Ensure adequate representation on the task force from all members of the Fire Department (Career, Volunteer, Composite and Exempt)

5.0 “KEY ISSUES” REQUIRING RESOLUTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Improvements related to deployment of Volunteer Firefighters
- Issue of “four persons on a pumper truck” related to firefighter entry to buildings and resulting staffing levels.
- Issue of Property loss levels in Surrey
- Deployment of “shared resources” for optimal resource effectiveness.
- Issue of “First Responders program” related to “interface/overlap/partnership arrangement” between B.C. Ambulance Service and the City's Fire Service

6.0 UNDERSTANDING KEY ISSUES

In order to better understand and define issues, discussions including presentations by WCB experts, B.C. Ambulance Representatives, Volunteer Firefighter reps and the Fire Department have been held. Attached are Appendix “A” and Appendix “B”, which describe in more detail the key issues, and the WCB draft resolution related to entry into buildings.

With respect to the “4 person pumper truck” requirement, the Fire Department has met this goal in 74% of situations during the first quarter of 2000. This is a significant improvement compared to 1999 and 1998 where it met 65% and 55% respectively. Discussions on this issue re-affirm the Fire Department's goal of “more fully” meeting this requirement. The “Optimization Study” and the work of this Task Force will enable us to recommend “policy options” for Council's consideration.

As well, detailed data and analysis was presented by the Fire Department related to:

- Structural Fire Calls, All Codes, Total Calls, Calls per Capita, Budgets and its relationship to Population
- Comparison of Surrey's Fire Department budget to other cities in the Lower Mainland, as well as other selected cities across Canada
- Apparatus deployment in Surrey
- Analysis of calls and response times including response times by Fire Hall
- Fire losses, fire loss history and Surrey's property losses in the context of the GVRD property losses

It should be noted that the above discussions, presentations and data analysis contributed to an improved understand of key issues on the part of the Task Force members.

7.0 KEY COMMITMENTS

Clearly, more work is required in order to develop balanced and practical solutions and choices. However, it is important to outline “key commitments” required to guide the development of solutions to deal with “key issues” of this review.

1. Approval to advance the hiring of Council approved firefighters to July 1, 2000, if needed.
2. Commitment for expedient consideration of the recommendations of the “Sub Committee of Volunteers” established to improve deployment of Volunteer Firefighters.
3. Support to assist “First Responders Sub-Committee” for its review of efficiency of service delivery and choices for new partnership arrangements.
4. Support for review, including external participants, to achieve deployment of “Shared Resources” for optimal effectiveness.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

This report briefly summarizes the discussions and key observations of the Fire Services Review Task Force. Although a lot of work remains to be done, Council acceptance of the “Key Commitments” is requested.

Councillor Dianne Watts

Chair, Fire Services Review Task Force

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