



Corporate NO: R066

Report COUNCIL DATE: April 8, 2002

REGULAR

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: April 10, 2002

FROM: **Fire Chief** FILE: 0360-20

SUBJECT: **Fire Services Review / Briefing Up-Date**

RECOMMENDATION

Council receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND

Corporate Report R266 presented December 11, 2000, outlined recommendations to Council arising from the work of the Fire Services Review Task Force. The Fire Services Review Task Force has met from time to time and the following report provides a status on actions taken to implement those recommendations.

DISCUSSION

1 Volunteer Firefighter Issues

Volunteer hiring, retention, and movement into career firefighter positions have all been addressed, the last two selection process's achieved 100% hiring from the volunteer ranks. The election of the Volunteer Council in September 2001 has provided a clear organizational structure and an arena for the concerns of the volunteer contingent to be addressed. The Volunteer Council is currently reviewing proposed Operational Guidelines concerning mentorship of volunteer recruitment, training, and movement into career positions. These documents outline plans to have one shift Captain at each career hall designated as the Officer In Charge of Volunteers (OIC). This Captain will provide a central point for inquiries, mentorship, and direction on training and eligibility for career firefighter hiring's. Recent hiring's all had proven experience of volunteering in Surrey. This familiarity with department policies and procedures makes the probationary period much smoother for the entire fire crew.

A new computerized remuneration system was implemented in January 2002, and volunteers will now be remunerated quarterly instead of three times a year. In response to a desire for more operational input, volunteers joined the Operations Subcommittee on December 4, 2001. With the assistance of Local 1271, work continues on identifying suitable additional activities for volunteers. Programs such as volunteer appreciation will be reviewed later in 2002, once the impact of the new pay system on the volunteer budget has been fully assessed.

2.0 Four Person Staffing Levels

The staffing levels required to achieve four person staffing on pump trucks is now at 97% of the time for first two months of 2002, due to closer stewardship of attendance management, and the flexibility to cover long-term absences with temporary hiring. Approval for four new firefighters in April 2002 will solidify these gains. Recently a model was developed to predict the budgetary risks and how changes in various departmental rules would allow four-person staffing consistently, without overstaffing or exceeding budget. Options arising from the model are currently under discussion with Local 1271.

The computerized deployment analysis program (CAD/ADAM) has been used to model changes in deployment. New response areas will be implemented in April 2002, increasing the efficiency of the department by deploying appropriate resources to each call, and avoiding internal duplication of service. The quints are scheduled for delivery in April 2002 and will improve our response times to deliver the required resources and staff at structure fires and rescue incidents.

3.0 Revenue Sharing

The two areas identified in the Fire Services Review as a potential source of funds for increasingly complex and numerous fire department services are still being pursued. A resolution calling for reassignment of the Insurance Premium Tax to the City has been passed by City Council, LMMA, and UBCM. I have presented this resolution to the GVRD Fire Chiefs and the BC Fire Chiefs; both groups have offered support. Staff, along with the President of BC Fire Chiefs, will be seeking for Council a meeting with the Minister; we are committed to pursue this matter to a successful resolution.

A position paper is under development by staff on the potential for garnering of a provincial contribution to monetarily support our participation in the First Responder program, which provides vital support to BC Ambulance Service and greatly enhances the quality of emergency medical response to Surrey's citizens.

Conclusion

Fire Services Review has proven to be an effective process that has provided guidance for the future direction of the delivery of fire services in Surrey that focus's on above all the effective delivery of services to the citizens we serve. Systems and processes that have been historically monolithic or tradition bound have been or are in the process of realignment. As new staffing techniques and attendance management methods are implemented in conjunction with projected staffing increases in 2005, we are moving closer to confidently forecasting the implementation of career staff in hall twelve (Crescent Beach).

Len Garis

/ jc

Fire Chief