

FIRE SERVICES - STAFFING ENHANCEMENT

DESCRIPTION:

Firefighters in Prince George have experienced an increase in call volume over the last two years and are on target to meet last years call volume in 2023. A 66% increase between 2015 and 2022 is an important comparator, as it was in 2015 Council learned that, at that time, fire services staffing was not meeting the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. The NFPA recommends the number of firefighters required on scene for various incident types, and Prince George Fire Services was identified as not reaching that standard for structure fires larger than a single-family dwelling.

Reports to Council in 2015, 2022 and 2023 have highlighted prioritized recommendations to enhance the fire rescue services to the citizens of Prince George. Addressing a staffing shortage was identified in each of these reports and detailed in a 5-year plan during the 2023 Fire Services Committee of the Whole, where 37 firefighters were recommended. Utilizing the same staffing as 2015, with 4000 more incident responses has placed greater pressure on the work force today.

The 5-year plan introduced this spring was designed based on Fire Services maximum capacity to increase staffing in any one year. The 7 members for 2024 would be utilized to bolster Suppression (5 members), Training (1 member) and Fire Prevention staff (1 member). With typical recruit training classes containing at least 2 members, Fire Service Administration is open to consider alternative hiring patterns to achieve the required staffing levels: from 2 members up to the recommended 7 members.

FINANCIAL COST OF THE ENHANCEMENT:

Option A:

Addition of 2 firefighting members – 1- Fire Prevention Inspector with an estimated annual cost of \$141,773. 1 – Fire Training Captain with an estimated annual cost of \$171,320. A total request of **\$313,107.**

*estimate based on employees with 15 years of service

Option B:

Addition of firefighters, up to the requested 5 additional members. The estimated annual cost of a firefighter is \$118,844, for a total request of **\$594,220.**

*estimate based on new hire with six months' probation and second six months post-probation and clothing/gear and training (\$20,000) per firefighter

Option C:

Addition of 7 firefighting members – 1 – Fire Prevention Inspector, 1 – Training Branch Captain, and 5 firefighters, for a total request of **\$907,327.**

MEASUREMENT OF SERVICE LEVEL INCREASE:

Increased completion rate of commercial property fire safety inspections, increased fire training evolution efficiencies, and incremental steps to meeting the NFPA standards for structure fire response are a few of the metrics to measure the success of this enhancement.