

# STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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**DATE:** February 13, 2024

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Eric Depenau, Acting Director Administrative Services

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Fire Services Operating Budget Enhancement Implementation

**ATTACHMENT(S):** 2024 Service Enhancement Fire Services Staffing (highlights for emphasis).

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report dated February 6, 2024, titled “2024 Fire Services Operating Budget Enhancement,” from the Acting Director Administrative Services.

**PURPOSE:**

The following report is to provide clarification to Mayor, Council and Senior Leadership relating to Fire Services 2024 staffing service enhancement as presented and debated during 2024 budget deliberations and its implementation.

**BACKGROUND:**

Mayor and Council were presented a staffing service enhancement request from Fire Services (attached). The enhancement contained three (3) options. Upon further review the language used in the report and subsequent motion has prompted staff to return to offer clarification and confirm the intended allocation of approved funds.

To be clear, we understand the direction given was option 2, which is to incrementally hire up to five (5) firefighters, staying within the enhanced budget for a total of no more than five (5) new positions.

During the presentation, Chief Warner advised on the desire to focus efforts on support staff, who will be put in place to assist with the long-term staffing plan. Fire Services’ goal was to increase the Prevention and Training branch by one member each for a total of two staff (option 1), and then incrementally add firefighters, up to five (5), for a total of seven (7) additional members (option 1 and option 2). We believe that the language used in the report could have made this clearer and will adjust in future.

For transparency the operational plan to implement this enhancement is to hire five (5) firefighters this year (in line with the language of option 2 and the approval received). One of those new hires will cover the transfer of a senior firefighter into the Prevention Branch to become a Fire Prevention Inspector. Together these actions satisfy the Fire Services 2024 enhancement ask within the approved budget and in line with Council direction.

The member moving from Suppression to Prevention is a lateral move maintaining the same salary. The budget enhancement comes at the recruit firefighter level, as approved, meaning there are no additional costs beyond those considered during budget deliberations. While these are internal, operational decisions, we felt sharing the implementation plan would be appropriate for awareness.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Proper staffing allocations within the fire service supports council's strategic pillars of social health and Wellbeing as well as city government and infrastructure priorities. These enhancements also help to better meet regulatory requirements and industry standards specific to the fire service such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as example.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

No financial considerations, beyond those considered during budget deliberations, are present in this report. Approval of this report does not reflect a financial change.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, this report is for Council information to ensure transparent staffing within the parameters approved during budget deliberations. The implementation plan outlined above satisfies fire services goals within the budget approved by Council. Due to operational nuance around suppression, training and prevention staff wanted to ensure that both Council and staff have clarity on the intended path forward.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Eric Depenau, Acting Director Administrative Services

Prepared by:

Cliff Warner, Fire Chief, Fire Services

**APPROVED:**

Andy Beesley, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 26 February 2024