



Fire & Rescue Service Enhancement

Description:

In 2023, Fire Services presented to Council a 5-year strategic plan during a Committee of the Whole. The presentation built on previous reports to Council in 2015, 2022 and 2023 which highlighted prioritized recommendations to enhance fire rescue services.

The 5-year plan recommendations were supported by previous report recommendations, and significant increases year over year in incident responses since 2015. At the time of writing this report, the incident responses to date are nearly double the same date range in 2015: 3991 in 2015 compared to 7372 in 2023 and 7972 in 2024.

2015 has been the benchmark year for comparing stats, as in 2015 it was identified that fire services staffing was not meeting the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, which recommends the number of firefighters required on scene for various incident types. Prince George Fire Services was identified as not reaching that standard for structure fires larger than a single-family dwelling.

The 5-year staffing plan recommended the addition of 7 firefighters in 2024 and 10 firefighters in 2025. While continually reassessing and supporting fiscal responsibility, **Fire Services is submitting a request for the addition of 5 Lieutenant level positions for 2025. This would result in 5 firefighters being hired in 2025, and once trained, 4 senior firefighters would be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant.**

With Councils support in 2024 of adding 5 firefighters, and Fire Services recommendation to reduce the 2025 enhancement from 10 firefighters to 5 firefighters as a measure to support the overall budget, the shortfall (7 positions) will be carried forward for review during future service enhancement requests.

The requested enhancement would allow Fire Services to cross staff our Platform ladder truck and medic unit (approved in 2024 Capital Plan), achieving two significant enhancements for Fire Service, the City and citizens of Prince George. Fire Services will be two firefighters per shift closer to achieving the recommendations of NFPA, and able to strategically deploy a light fleet medic unit to specified medical response incidents.

Financial Cost of Enhancement:

As described above, 5 recruit firefighters will be hired with additional wages and benefits of **\$132,354**. **\$20,000** per member is added to cover the training, gear and clothing. Total recruitment **\$152,354** per member. Once recruit training is complete, 4 senior firefighters will be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, providing the supervisory requirement for the ladder truck and the medic unit. For budget purposes, the difference between the senior firefighter wages and benefits and Lieutenant wages and benefits is added to the recruit firefighter wages and benefits - **\$17,588**. The total financial cost of the enhancement is **\$732,122**.

Measurement of Service Level Increase:

Increased completion rate of commercial property fire safety inspections, increased efficiencies in strategic medical aid response, and incremental steps to meeting the NFPA standards for structure fire response.