

Date: March 21, 2025

To: **Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs**

Name and title: Councillor Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

Subject: PG Fire Services Response Levels

Attachment(s): Report dated May 15, 2024, from the Acting Director of Administrative Services titled "PG Fire Services Response Levels"

Recommendation(s):

That the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled "PG Fire Services Response Levels" from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, dated March 21, 2025.

Purpose:

This report advances a work plan item as referred to the Committee by Council on May 27, 2024.

Background:

On May 27, 2024, Council referred the report dated May 15, 2024 from the Acting Director of Administrative Services titled "PG Fire Rescue Response Levels" to the Committee with the request to further establish the actual costs, including labour and supplies, associated with PG Fire Service medical-related calls. The report (attached) outlines the tiers of medical services and provides details on the call outcomes recorded in 2023. At this time, call outcomes and costs associated for 2024 are not available.

Discussion:

In 2023, Council advocated for the Provincial Government to develop a funding model to compensate local governments who provide emergency medical services through their fire and rescue services fulfilling the responsibility of the provincial government with consideration given to community population and the fire department's authorized level of emergency medical response at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Convention. The Ministry of Health's response detailed that establishing an agreement with BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) is voluntary and each participating municipality can determine the extent of the participation, providing the municipality the ability to manage all costs associated with pre-hospital care.

As outlined in the report dated May 15, 2024 from the Acting Director of Administrative Services titled “PG Fire Rescue Response Levels”, cost estimates are difficult to provide as extensive resources may be used on one call while few or no resources may be used on another call depending on the level of support needed by the BC Ambulance Service.

During the January budget deliberations, Prince George Fire and Rescue Service submitted a staffing enhancement to include the addition of an officer on each shift. This was approved in the budget in January of this year. This enhancement will support the strategic response of the PG Fire Rescue Service using a small, retro-fitted fleet vehicle to respond to medical aid incidents, relieving a fully staffed apparatus from responding. This is one example of efficiencies being sought within the service.

The challenge in accurately identifying the costs of medical calls remains unchanged from previous reporting. Staff suggest that if the goal of identifying this cost is to help inform future advocacy, rough projections using a formula determined in consultation between Finance and the Fire Service may be an efficient way to move forward in identifying a scale to assign this type of response.

If the committee would like to accurately establish the actual costs, including labour and supplies, associated with PG Fire Service medical-related calls staff believe this will be a significant undertaking and would need to investigate the software, record management and procedural changes needed to enable this detailed data collection from each call and then return for Council direction and to discuss funding.

Summary and conclusion:

This report is provided to advance a work plan item.

Respectfully submitted:

Councillor Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

Prepared by Catharine Sikobe, Senior Advisor, Intergovernmental Relations

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2025/04/01