

Re: Committee Member Letter - PGFRS Inquiry - Public Safety Committee -
December 2025.

Mayor Simon Yu, Chair Standing Committee on Public Safety,

An item of correspondence has been received from a committee member requesting to revisit a topic discussed at the committee table in March of 2025, regarding P.G. Fire Rescue Service (PGFRS) plans to utilize a medical response vehicle for some medical calls for service.

Several questions are included in the letter, below are updates on the various items raised:

1. **What protocols need to be investigated to allow for a specialized two-person response unit within the framework of the Union and Municipality?**

I confirm a medical response unit is now in operation. Protocols around its usage are being refined now to support the ongoing implementation. The service vehicle/ladder truck went into service on December 9, 2025. Staff intend to strike a committee (senior Assistant Chiefs, IAFF Executive and Administration) in the new year to evaluate and review the available data. Members have been encouraged to document pros and cons in preparation of the review.

2. **How will making a change to this response protocol allow us to see cost savings over time and call volume?**

Cost savings will likely be negligible. The value saved is likely to be limited to the difference in responding to a call with the large apparatus or the smaller medical vehicle – this would include things like better fuel milage and perhaps some wear and tear on a vehicle that is less expensive to maintain. Other costs, such as labor, are generally sunk regardless of response model.

The goal is to move towards staffing additional resources out of Hall 1 as highlighted in the 2022 Standards of Coverage report. Overall, additional staff will assist with elevated call volume and move the service closer to the NFPA standard of having sufficient firefighters on scene within the prescribed response times, making it safer for firefighters as well as all members of the community.

**** Standards of Coverage report was published in 2015 and refreshed in 2022.**

- 3. What work, if any, has been done to flush out possible savings and efficiencies by changing the current policies?**

On this question Staff are seeking clarity. Staff are not sure what policies this question may be referring to.

The addition of this resource has required PGFRS to modify the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to ensure that the recommended apparatus is dispatched in the proper run order. Actions like this are being taken to operationalize the change.

- 4. Where are we at with discussions between E.H.S. and the Province to reimburse the City for the support services we are currently providing within our jurisdiction?**

When this topic has been broached, the Province has previously stated that the City can lower its level of service, through the local Fire Bylaw, if the cost is a concern. The municipality finds this answer unacceptable and continues dialogue with the Province to find opportunities to share costs or receive other funding for the assistance the PGFRS provides to the emergency medical care system (EHS/BCAS).

Department leadership continues to support the limited percentage of the PGFRS annual budget that is spent on medical supplies, as this incremental cost is assessed as being far outweighed by the benefit to the City and partnership/relationship with BCAS.

- 5. Has the Emergency Services division of the City done any work on apparatus configuration that would best serve in this multiple response roll moving forward?**

Emergency Services is a separate work group under the PGFRS. The PGFRS has configured a medical vehicle separate from a fire apparatus to provide a more efficient response when circumstances are appropriate for its deployment. This is being trialed now.

- 6. Has a cost analysis been carried out to flush out the possible economic savings of having a specialized response unit over the current model being used?**

A specialized response unit is now in use. As mentioned, we anticipate cost savings will be minimal. Staff will be monitoring the continued deployment of this asset to see what the benefits are.

The long-term goal is to staff this apparatus with 4 members on a full-time basis. Once this has been achieved, the service/medic unit would be the primary responding apparatus out of Hall 1 for medical related incidents. This is predicted

to reduce turnout times as well as reduce on general maintenance of heavy fire apparatus. The January 2026 PGFRS budget enhancement would move the service to this goal. At this time, two more fire fighters need to be assigned to this resource to be fully staffed.

7. What would the costs and benefits be of having a specialized Fire/Rescue ME unit be to the Municipality?

This asset is now in use.

The main drivers are the cost of the vehicle and the labor to staff it. The labor is needed regardless to help meet NFPA coverage standards and the vehicle was part of the existing fleet renewal.

The PGFRS used an existing apparatus that was supported through a recent capital enhancement to outfit the vehicle to support medical incident response. This truck was originally intended to support wildland incidents, as well as training and general duties. This need will be reevaluated in future budget cycles.

8. What would this change do for recruiting and staffing levels for our Fire/Rescue teams, the opportunity to allow for progressive career training enhancements, continued education, and career development?

The PGFRS has a 5-year staffing plan in place. Utilizing this asset can be completed within the staffing plan, even if only partially supported via future Council enhancements.

Staff are currently supported to maintain various credentials including Emergency Medical Responder certification and this will continue with or without the medical response unit being utilized.

The progression to bring this asset online has resulted in 4 senior fire fighters being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Once the vehicle is staffed with 4 members full-time, this would result in a Lieutenant being promoted to the rank of Captain.

9. What would our rolling stock maintenance look like by reducing the need to roll more expensive equipment to medical emergency calls over rolling a full complement pumper?

We could see a reduction in the kms driven and routine wear and tear of the larger apparatus. It is important to note that the volume of calls that the PGFRS responds to on any given day will likely mean that both the medical unit and a larger apparatus will still be on the road at the same time for significant periods of time.

*PGFRS currently responds with the Service/Medic truck as the second apparatus out of Hall 1 for medically related incidents. This is a decision based around firefighter safety. It is assessed as safer to respond with a fully staffed vehicle (4 personnel) than it is with the current unit (2 personnel - based on where the PGFRS is in the staffing plan and how involved managing a medical scene can become). In the future (when the medical unit is staffed with 4) the medical unit will be the primary unit for these calls which will save the fire engine for other fire related incidents, reducing the demand and to some degree maintenance costs.