

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL
BUDGET MEETING**

January 30, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Warden Nickerson at 7:00 p.m., in the Committee Room, in the Administrative Centre, Barrington, N.S.

All Councillors were present:

- Warden Eddie Nickerson
- Deputy Warden Jody Crook
- Murray Atkinson
- George El-Jakl
- Shaun Hatfield

- Rob Frost, CAO

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this CotW Meeting was to discuss Fire Services and the Fire Services Coordinator position.

There was general discussion regarding the fire service in the Municipality, the position of Fire Services Coordinator, and other topics related to the provision of fire service.

Fire Services Study

Reference was made by a number of councillors to the Fire Study that was completed in the Municipality in 2010. In general, the Council believes that good steps have been taken towards the recommendations that were contained within the Fire Study, but that not everything has been achieved. The Executive Summary with recommendations is attached.

Council believes that we currently have a very good fire service on average, with just a few areas that need an improvement. Council believes that the training levels have improved in all departments, with some seeing better results than others. They also spoke to the need to continue to find new volunteers to join and become trained within the fire departments.

Fire Services Coordinator Position

It was discussed as to what to do with the Fire Services Coordinator Position. Options were discussed that ranged from no position to the addition of duties to the current position. Everyone seems to be in agreement that there is the need for a position to assist fire departments with various administrative aspects, schedule training, and to act as a liaison for the Municipality.

One area that was discussed that needed to be changed was the billing system. The CAO expressed that this had been discussed with the FD Treasurers and that options were being considered to create a more expedient process. Online systems will be further investigated to increase turn around time and avoid late charges.

The discussion of Emergency Management in general was also discussed with the question as to whether or not to combine position descriptions.

The Port Clyde Fire Department was discussed in detail as they have asked Council to consider the development of a new fire department building in Port Clyde. There was much discussion as to what the service in that area of the Municipality should look like in the future. It has been suggested to Port Clyde, by Council, that they need to look at current deficiencies and the possibility of combining with another Fire Department.

It was agreed to develop a list of concerns and recommendations to be approved by Council to send to the Port Clyde Department.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was Adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Chair

Secretary for the Meeting

On website February 6, 2017.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of the District of Barrington is served by volunteers in six fire stations: Barrington, Island Barrington Passage, Port Clyde, Port Latour, Shag Harbour-Bear Point and Wood's Harbour. Although the municipality has a low population the area covered by those stations exceeds 630 square kilometres. For most stations, it appears that the majority of emergency responses are medical assist or public assistance. Every station has a core of dedicated volunteers with varying equipment that provide the response to their community. The region is accessed along Highways 3, 103, 303 and 309 with side roads extending from these main roads. Many areas have limited access that do provide a wildland fire risk. The primary risks are: medical, vehicle incidents and fires in single family residences. The industrial risk is linked directly to fishing, including: boats, wharves, boat building and processing plants. Most stations average less than one response per week.

Stations range in age from 2008 to older buildings converted to fire stations in the 1950s. The garages can accommodate from three to ten vehicles depending on the station. The size and age of fire station fleets vary but the minimum is one pumper, one tanker and one rescue/utility vehicle for response. Ancillary equipment varies depending on the response risk and the budgets. Staffing in the fire stations range from 18 to 54 volunteers for a total of 171 active members. The qualifications of the volunteers range from paramedics to first aid training for the medical assist. On the fire fighting side some have significant qualifications based on their primary employment that includes officer training, while others have no formal training although many have many years of experience.

Based on the risks and resources summarized above a gap analysis was completed to develop the following recommendations (full explanations can be found in Section 5):

1. Formalize a Fire Service Committee (FSC) with proper terms of reference to define scope and goals. The committee should be formed to allow Municipal contracts to be developed for services to the fire department. The FSC would be responsible for coordination, long-range planning and budget submissions. Given the volume of items to be addressed, working groups with at least two members from the FSC could be formed to develop various documents for Committee approval. Good representation from all levels of interested volunteers will assist in meeting objectives for all.
2. Council should approve one budget based on priorities and schedule presented by the FSC through the Clerk-Treasurer to cover all essential equipment and operations.
3. Greater cooperation under the FSC can produce some economy of effort and closer ties between stations for all phases from operations to administration.
4. Set a minimum service standard for all citizens to expect and provide every station with the necessary resources. Once the minimum is identified additional resources based on location, risk and roles can be identified for individual stations.
5. Develop a regional set of Standard Operating Procedures.
6. Equalize service levels by setting minimum resources levels for each fire station.
7. Determine a budget criteria that is fair based on the expected minimum standard.
8. Specialty response must be based on the evaluated need versus the cost of the service. A regional resource may be the most cost-effective solution.





9. Response distance is a main criteria for determining the number and location of fire stations in any organization. The Island Barrington Passage Fire Station amalgamation has set a precedent for an acceptable response distance. The coverage to the outer reaches of Island Barrington Passage takes approximately fifteen minutes. This service level should be confirmed as acceptable and then applied to other stations.
10. Statistics should be collected on the time needed to assemble a suitable response team and depart the fire stations. Arrival times could also validate the accuracy of the response maps.
11. Every station should have a water management plan to ensure a continuous water supply at the fire scene.
12. Each station should have a reliable pump apparatus to apply water, water tanker capacity to deliver water and rescue service commensurate with the area's level of risk.
13. Given its central location and current storage capabilities the Island Barrington Passage Station could maintain a second line set of vehicles for deployment.
14. Maintenance programs and records must be developed for ancillary equipment to meet Occupational Health and Safety standards.
15. Provide service agreements through the FSC such as dispatch, vehicle maintenance and training programs.
16. Improve recordkeeping and data collection. Standardized forms and definitions would improve the records and make it easier to set priorities. Each fire station must have the hardware and expertise necessary to operate software such as Fire King.
17. Develop training records for all of the stations based on a standard identification such as the Nova Scotia Firefighters School Courses. The actual titles or training establishment can vary but should have common acceptance between stations.
18. Meeting evenings should include upgrading qualifications by providing a training module on each night aimed at a specific qualification.
19. Training of recruits should be a coordinated effort and distributed among all the stations to introduce new recruits to the regional concept. A recruit class of sufficient size is cost-effective and ensures a minimum qualification within the probationary period.
20. Increase meetings to twice per month to include a regional training night. Selected fire fighters would attend the specific training prepared at regional level.
21. Formalize training levels.
 - a. Recruits must have a formal minimum standard of training before responding as a member of the team.
 - b. Adopt a regional tag system with a formal standard description of the acceptable qualification.
 - c. Election of officers must require a minimum qualification level to be the On Scene Commander.
22. Regional response by members would be possible with greater training cooperation.

These recommendations offer short-term goals in policy and organization to provide a more consistent level of protection across the Municipality of the District of Barrington. Once the