



RPT 20-457

TITLE: Fire Facility Fund, Land Acquisition for Fire Stations, and Additional Staffing

DATE: November 24, 2020

TO: Budget Committee

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the following items be included for consideration in the 2021 Budget Deliberations:

1. Creation of a Fire Facility Fund for future fire stations to be funded annually at \$500,000.
2. Identify and secure suitable land for fire stations utilizing National Fire Protection Association 1710 recommendations and locations identified in the Morrison and Hershfield report commissioned by City Council in 2008.
3. Staff each of the four platoons with twelve (12) firefighters with **a minimum safe staffing of nine (9) per platoon.**

TOPIC & PURPOSE:

To provide Council with IAFF, Local 510's report, and Administration's recommendations regarding additional fire stations and staffing for the 2021 budget deliberations.

BACKGROUND:

On September 28, 2020 Prince Albert Firefighters Union, IAFF 510 submitted a report and gave a verbal presentation to Council asking for additional fire stations and increased staffing. After hearing the presentation Council referred the Union's presentation and correspondence to the 2021 Budget deliberations.

PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:

The City of Prince Albert currently has no reserve funding earmarked for future fire stations. The creation of a Fire Facility Fund is a financially sound way for the City to accumulate funds for future fire facilities while offsetting the amount requiring financing in the foreseeable future.

There have been numerous fire station and staffing reports prepared for the City of Prince Albert over the past thirty five years. The station and staffing reports are:

1. 1985 – Fire Underwriters Survey which recommends three (3) fire stations for Prince Albert.
2. 1989 – Council commissioned report provided by Ken McAllister. Recommends building three (3) fire station.
3. 2007 – IAFF G.I.S. Station Study. Recommend increased staffing in three (3) stations.
4. 2008 – Council commissioned report by Morrison & Hirschfield. Reached the same conclusion identifying the need for three (3) staffed stations.

All the aforementioned studies and reports utilize industry standards and/or NFPA 1710 in determining appropriate locations for future fire stations. NFPA 1710 is used to determine safe staffing and travel distance for an assembled fire crew so that they can arrive at an emergency in a timely manner. NFPA 1710 requires that departments respond with a minimum of four firefighters on each apparatus. NFPA stipulates that fire fighters should arrive at the emergency scene within five minutes and twenty seconds 90% of the time. Currently the City of Prince Albert meets the travel requirement approximately 40% of the time.

Because of the City's geographical layout which predominantly follows the river, the two additional locations for fire stations are to the East and West of the current station. Strategic fire station locations are paramount to effective response times.

In consideration of establishing a twelve (12) firefighter Platoon, one must also address the minimum staffing practice of allowing a Platoon to be reduced to eight (8) firefighters. This long standing practice is no longer practical or safe. When staffing is reduced to eight (8) firefighters, it causes the second apparatus to be reduced to three (3) firefighters. In a Landmark study, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) found that four-person firefighting crews were able to complete 22 essential firefighting and rescue tasks in a typical residential structure fire 25 percent faster than three-person crews. "The results from this rigorous scientific study on the most common and deadly fires in the country—those in single-family residences—provide quantitative data to fire chiefs and public officials responsible for determining safe staffing levels, station locations and appropriate funding for community and firefighter safety," says NIST's Jason Averill, one of the study's principal investigators. The four-person crews were able to deliver water to a similar-sized fire 6 percent faster than three-person crews, steps that help to reduce property damage and lower danger to the firefighters. The four-person crews were able to complete search and rescue 5 percent faster than three-person crews.

Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 1996:

489. Where fire fighters are required or permitted to engage in interior structural firefighting, an employer shall ensure that: (a) the fire fighters work in teams; and (b) a suitably equipped rescue team is readily available outside the structure to rescue an endangered fire fighter if the fire fighter's SCBA fails or the fire fighter becomes incapacitated for any other reason. 4 Oct 96 cO-1.1 Reg 1 s489.

As best practice and following OH&S Regulation 489, Fire crews conducting interior operations in Saskatchewan must not enter alone. When two or more firefighters engage in interior structural firefighting they must also have a rescue team (2 of more) assembled and at the ready. This is commonly referred to, and known, as the "**Two in – Two out**" rule.

In a risk-versus-benefit analysis, the risk to firefighters is weighed against the benefit of saving lives and property. The probability of occupancy is compared to the risk to firefighters, along with other factors, to determine if an offensive attack is warranted. The risk is greater when fewer than four firefighters are at the scene, so the degree of confidence regarding savable victims must also be higher.

Based on OH&S regulations, firefighter safety and best practice a twelve (12) firefighter Platoon with a minimum staffing of nine (9) is not only recommended but essential to the health and safety of our firefighters and the Citizens they protect.

CONSULTATIONS:

Consultation was held with the Director of Financial Services, Director of Planning and Development Services, and the City Manager's Office.

COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:

No communication plan is required at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The following recommendations are currently unfunded:

If Council approves the creation of a Fire Facility Fund, Administration recommends funding the reserve at \$500,000 annually. This amount could be partially funded by the R.M. of Prince Albert Fire Service Agreement with the City of Prince Albert. The current fire service agreement provides \$214,000.00 of which \$105,000.00 currently funds the Fire Department's Fleet Reserve. The remaining \$109,000.00 is allocated to Fire Department Revenue.

Suitable Land Identified

The Morrison and Hershfield Study identified the following land suitable for effective fire protection services:

- 1700 Block of 15th Avenue East (across Messiah Lutheran Church)
- City owned Land across the Alfred Jenkins Field House

Administration is confident that the above City owned land is available and meets the needs for effective emergency response as identified in the Morrison and Hershfield report commissioned by City Council in 2008.

To achieve 12 firefighters per platoon, Administration would hire three additional firefighters and increase the minimum staffing level to nine (9) firefighters. Please note that with the exception of the minimum staffing request of nine (9) firefighters (per platoon), the request for additional firefighters has been submitted by Ken Leclair, Director of Corporate Services in his 2021 Staffing Report. The total annual financial impact which includes fifteen percent (15%) for benefits would be approximately two hundred and forty five thousand, and six dollars (\$245,006.00).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

There are no policy, privacy, official community plan implications or other considerations

OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION:

If Council approves the creation of the Fire Facility Fund, Council may direct a reduced annual funding of \$250,000 or other to the Fire Facility Fund.

Council could approve an increase to the Fire Departments minimum staffing from eight (8) firefighters to nine (9) firefighters **without** hiring the recommended three (3) additional Staff. This option would ensure safe staffing at all times, but would reduce the buffer between full staffing and minimum staffing by one (1).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Prince Albert Firefighters submission to Council on September 28 Executive Committee.

Written by: Kris Olson, Fire Chief

Approved by: City Manager