

Frequently Asked Questions

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Q: On the 90% of calls where there is no fire, have the firefighters been able to assist people by being the first to arrive and to administer first aid or oxygen?

A. The County of Renfrew Emergency Medical Service (EMS - Paramedics) reports that they are not aware of any circumstances where the Fire Service has been requested for First Aid or Oxygen administration. The Renfrew County EMS is responsible for dispatch services in Renfrew County. Upon examination of the FirePro Call Tracking System reports, which illustrates all calls responded to by the Deep River Fire Department, there were a total of 246 calls responded to during the period from January 2012 to present. The calls fall into a number of categories including, but not limited to, Alarm System Equipment - Malfunction (25 Calls), Human - Accidental (alarm accidentally activated by person) (3 calls), Power Lines Down, Arcing (6 calls), Person Trapped in Elevator (3 calls), etc. Of the 246 total calls from May of 2012 to present, one was categorized as Oxygen Administered and one was categorized as CPR Administered.

Q: Did you consider amalgamating with the Laurentian Hills Fire Department?

A: Yes, consideration has been given to not only approaching Laurentian Hills, but also Canadian Nuclear Laboratories. The Town and Laurentian Hills have a Mutual Aid Agreement that permits each Fire Department to assist the other Fire Department when required. Taking that agreement to another level would still not address the high costs associated with full-time firefighter costs. In addition, Mutual Aid Agreements are typically used as reciprocal agreements to help neighbours in times of need, not provide assistance to a municipality that is not meeting the required minimum standards. With Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, a possible solution may exist; however, it may take years to refine that solution and again, the critical point in any solution is the reduction of full-time wages employed by the Deep River Fire Department.

Monday, June 13, 2016

Q: Can you provide a breakdown of the current costs of the Fire Department - salaries, training, equipment, fire station.

A: The following is taken directly from the 2014 Consolidated Statement of Operations.

Salaries, Wages & Employee Benefits
\$1,411,579

Materials
\$67,427

External Transfers
\$7,500

Amoratzation
\$72,770

Total Expenses Before Adjustments
\$1,559,276

Inter-Functional Adjustments
\$44,658

Total Expenses After Adjustments
\$1,682,313

Saturday, June 11, 2016

Q: If the OFM says Deep River does not meet its requirements under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act when residents pay \$863 per household how is it that the rest of Renfrew does comply with the Act at \$196 per household? Or does the rest of Renfrew simply ignore the Act?

A: Referring to the chart below, all other Fire Departments in Renfrew County

have a minimum number of 12 volunteer/part-time firefighters; Many have more than 20. Deep River has no volunteer firefighters. By contrast, you will see that most municipalities have no full-time firefighters. The high costs associated with Fire Services is directly attributable to full-time wages. Pembroke and Renfrew have approximately two to four times the number of residents to help pay for their full-time compliment but also utilize volunteer and/or part-time firefighters to provide an effective fire service while also managing their Fire Service costs. Deep River has almost the same number of full-time firefighters as Renfrew with no volunteer or part-time firefighters. This is why the current model does not work and must change.

Friday, June 10, 2016

A number of people have been asking for a comparison of the different fire models of neighbouring municipalities. Below is a chart outlining the number of full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters per municipality, as well as cost, and number of households. The figures are based on 2013 figures.

RENFREW COUNTY FIRE EXPENSES 2013

Municipality	Population	# of Households	Total Expenses	Cost per household	Cost per person	Perm. Firefighters	Volunteer Firefighters	# of Stations
Arnprior	8,114	3,640	\$ 599,831.00	\$ 164.79	\$ 73.93	3	34	1
Petawawa	16,173	6,659	\$ 588,784.00	\$ 88.42	\$ 36.41	0	37	2
Deep River	4,086	1,916	\$ 1,612,384.00	\$ 841.54	\$ 394.61	10	0	1
Pembroke	11,277	6,496	\$ 2,584,255.00	\$ 397.82	\$ 229.16	16	20	
Laurentian Hills	2,745	1,457	\$ 276,890.00	\$ 190.04	\$ 100.87	0	37	2
Head, Clara, Maria Tp	209	343	\$ 8,360.00	\$ 24.37	\$ 40.00	NO FIRE DEPT.		
Horton Tp	2,568	1,421	\$ 112,746.00	\$ 79.34	\$ 43.90	0	17	1
McNab, Braeside Tp.	7,619	3,144	\$ 281,546.00	\$ 89.55	\$ 36.95	0	40	3
Brudenell, Lyndoch, Raglan Tp.	1,460	1,161	\$ 147,641.00	\$ 127.17	\$ 101.12	0	33	4
North Algona, Wilberforce Tp.	2,636	1,765	\$ 367,030.00	\$ 207.95	\$ 139.24	0	43	3
Adamston, Bromley	2,640	1,326	\$ 213,550.00	\$ 161.05	\$ 80.89	0	22	1
Laurentian Valley Tp.	8,301	3,917	\$ 284,916.00	\$ 72.74	\$ 34.32	0	26	1
Killaloe, Hagarty, Richards Tp.	2,402	1,646	\$ 290,959.00	\$ 176.77	\$ 121.13	0	22	2 + fire bay
Madawaska Valley Tp.	3,916	3,144	\$ 210,077.00	\$ 66.82	\$ 53.65	0	35	2
Bonnechere Valley Tp.	2,968	2,415	\$ 314,831.00	\$ 130.36	\$ 106.08	1	34	2
Whitewater Region Tp.	5,886	3,472	\$ 526,156.00	\$ 151.54	\$ 89.39	Part time 2	75	5
Greater Madawaska Tp.	2,220	2,461	\$ 363,118.00	\$ 147.55	\$ 163.57	0	30-35	2
Renfrew	8,218	3,896	\$ 1,486,546.00	\$ 381.56	\$ 180.89	11	12	1
Non-Renfrew County								
Bancroft	3,880	1,968	\$ 461,896.00	\$ 234.70	\$ 119.05	Part time 2	68	3
Havelock-Belmont-Methuen	4,010	4,317	\$ 464,246.00	\$ 107.54	\$ 115.77			2
Leamington	28,403	10,638	\$ 2,129,046.00	\$ 200.14	\$ 74.96			
Saugeen Shores	12,661	7,687	\$ 747,111.00	\$ 97.19	\$ 59.01			
Hanover	7,490	3,409	\$ 618,766.00	\$ 181.51	\$ 82.61			
Kincardine	11,174	5,789	\$ 1,019,245.00	\$ 176.07	\$ 91.22			
Erin	12,327	4,077	\$ 769,446.00	\$ 188.73	\$ 62.42			
Mono	8,204	2,881	\$ 576,377.00	\$ 200.06	\$ 70.26			
Tay Tp.	9,736	5,284	\$ 804,859.00	\$ 152.32	\$ 82.67			
Shelburne	6,064	2,246	\$ 253,121.00	\$ 112.70	\$ 41.74			

Q. Why doesn't the Town just disband the current Deep River Fire

Service and pay Laurentian Hills to do this work?

A. The Town of Deep River is not allowed to disband the current Fire Department and hire Laurentian Hills or contract with any other Fire Service under the Labour Relations Act. The Collective Agreement between the Town of Deep River and the Deep River Professional Firefighters Association must be adhered to, even if it expires or the Town would be in violation of the Labour Relations Act.

Thursday, June 9, 2016

What is the projected effect of the two options on fire insurance rates in Deep River? If the insurance companies do not see the second option as providing satisfactory coverage, then the increased cost of insurance may offset any tax savings.

A: The Town believes the question really is, do insurance companies recognize the fact that Deep River does not have a Fire Department that meets the required standards right now?

These are questions that insurance companies must answer. The truth is, Fire Departments have used the insurance cost argument for years and that is how costs have risen to the levels they are now. In the case of Deep River, we still don't have a Fire Department that meets the required standards. This must change and every potential solution must be examined. For example, take a look at this new fire suppression technology in the video in the following link: <http://www.dutchmasters.on.ca/barnfiresafety.asp>. In addition, Deep River could look at the potential of Town insurance as a possible solution to fire insurance. Deep River was built upon innovation, ingenuity and incredible solution based outcomes. We are confident that through dialogue and thoughtful consideration, effective long term solutions will be achieved.

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Q: Since Question 16 states the Town is not required to provide fire suppression services but is required to provide education and prevention services does this mean it could shut down- ie terminate the present force, and replace it with 1-2 Fire Education and Prevention Officers in the very short term?

No where in the FAQ is it clear to me what happens under this option

to the existing firemen.

A: While realigning the existing fire service model is not a direct option under Option 2, if the Town is not successful in achieving an arbitration award that would allow the Town to reduce the current full-time firefighter compliment through attrition, exploring the option of an education and prevention only model is a possibility. If that were to happen, all changes and labour relations issues would be addressed in accordance with the requirements of the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* and the applicable collective agreement.

Monday, June 6, 2016

Q: I have just finished reading the information the Town has provided on the Deep River Fire Service and I am left with only one question; if we are paying more than \$1.5 million each year for a fire service that doesn't work, why has it taken Council(s) so long to do something about it?

A: Council and previous Councils have been working to address the Fire Service issue for some time. The Town has discussed the matter with the firefighters, as well as pursued arbitration as a possible solution. There is no question this is a difficult issue, but this Council felt that it could no longer sustain or continue along the same path. Deep River needs a solution to this issue. That is why Council has chosen to consult with the community to determine the direction residents would like the Town to pursue. Council is committed to finding an appropriate solution that is based on community consultation that will ultimately provide the Town with an effective and/or affordable solution.

Q: Under option 2 – If the reduction from 9 to 2 fire fighters is proposed to be done through attrition why are our current firefighter opposed? I don't see a down side to them as they have their jobs until they retire. If Council is trying to do what is best for our community, why are our firefighters not working with council to do what is best for our community?

A: The Town cannot speak on behalf of the professional firefighters as to why they are opposed to a plan that ensures they continue in their current positions until they retire or leave their employment with the Town.

The Town has tried to address the issue with the professional firefighters union and went through an interest arbitration process to try and achieve a suitable resolution. The Town feels that moving to a composite fire service through attrition is both fair to our current firefighters and guarantees Deep River will have a functional and affordable fire service that meets the needs of our community.

Monday, May 30, 2016

Q: Why did Council decide to distribute a survey to residents with regard to the future of the Town's fire suppression service model?

A: Council made a commitment at the beginning of this term that we would seek input and involvement from Deep River residents on key issues. The future of our fire suppression service model impacts all of us and we believe an issue of this scope requires and deserves input from the community.

Q: What is the goal of the survey?

A: The goal of the survey is to give Council a strong sense of how the community feels it should move forward with respect to the fire suppression service model.

Q: What will happen after the survey results are collected?

A: Survey results will be tabulated using Simply Voting, a third-party provider and the same company used during the 2014 municipal election. Council will then thoroughly review the results and decide on an approach moving forward. We will continue to keep residents informed and engaged throughout this entire process.

Q: Why are only two options being offered to residents if several others have been presented over the years?

A: Since the beginning of this term, Council has spent an extensive amount of time reviewing the options presented by the Ontario Fire Marshal and external consultants. We are confident that these two options are the ones that best balance the short and long-term needs for a functional and affordable fire suppression service model.

Q: Why is a composite fire department with 8 full-time firefighters and 24 volunteer firefighters included if it will continue to be a financial burden to the municipality?

A: Based on the arbitrator's ruling, the Town can reduce the current complement of full-time firefighters from 9 to 8 through attrition and add 24 volunteer firefighters. While this option may not address the significant costs associated with the fire suppression service model, it would provide the municipality with a functional suppression service that would help ensure the safety of residents, as well as meet the legislated requirements under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (1997).

Q: Why is the attrition-based composite force presented as an option if it would require the Town to go back to arbitration if it was unsuccessful the first time?

A: Ideally, we would like to work with the Deep River Professional Fire Fighters Association to achieve a solution that provides the residents of Deep River with both a functional and affordable fire suppression service model. At arbitration, we did achieve the ability to add volunteers to the force and to reduce the number of full-time positions from 9 to 8 through attrition, which was very positive. We are hopeful that if we go to arbitration with a strong mandate from residents that this is the model they prefer, this will be taken into account in order to get us closer to achieving the desired attrition-based composite force (2 full-time firefighters and 24 volunteer firefighters).

Q: What is Interest Arbitration?

A: Interest Arbitration is a process whereby disputes are submitted for arbitration that arise from disagreement over what terms or conditions should be included in an agreement.

Q: How much will arbitration cost the Town?

A: While we recognize that there will be legal costs incurred by the Town should we choose to move forward with arbitration, we cannot give a concrete estimate of such costs at this time as they are heavily dependent upon factors beyond our control (i.e. length of arbitration, etc.) The 2014

Arbitration Process expenses totaled \$56,078.90.

Q: What is the likelihood of getting a favourable ruling at arbitration if the Town wasn't successful in 2014? What has changed?

A: Although we cannot guarantee success at arbitration, we will be able to present a strong solution that is based on fact, research and, potentially, input from the community as a result of the survey.

Q: If residents support going back to arbitration to reduce full-time firefighters from 8 to 2 through attrition, will current firefighters lose their jobs?

A: Attrition is a reduction in the number of employees or participants that occurs when people leave because they resign, retire, etc., and are not replaced. **No current firefighters would lose their jobs.** They would remain full-time Town of Deep River firefighters until they decide to either retire or leave for another position elsewhere.

Q: Why would Council consider transitioning the fire suppression service model to an education and prevention only model (if not successful at arbitration) if it does not support fire suppression services?

A: Right now, Deep River residents have a false sense of security with the current fire service model given that our firefighters cannot legally enter a burning building. As a result, the current model potentially puts residents at risk. By transitioning the current fire suppression service model to education and prevention only, we would replace this inefficiency by focusing on efforts that will take the necessary steps to enhance fire prevention and safety as per the recommendations made by the Ontario Fire Marshal in 2006.

It is important to note that the existing fire suppression service model in Deep River does not provide effective fire suppression services or meet the minimum legislated requirements. As a Council, we would commit to reviewing an array of options to improve resident safety through education and prevention initiatives, as recommended by the Ontario Fire Marshal in 2006.

Note: In its 2006 Comprehensive Review of Fire Protection Services in the Town of Deep River, Ontario, the Ontario Fire Marshal concluded that, given the current capabilities of the fire suppression service in Deep River, the focus should be on public education, fire prevention and inspections.

Q: Would Council transition the fire suppression service model to an education and prevention model before having a robust plan to improve resident safety?

A: It is important to note that the existing fire suppression service model in Deep River does not provide effective fire suppression services or meet the minimum legislated requirements. As a Council, we would commit to reviewing an array of options to improve resident safety through education and prevention initiatives, as recommended by the Ontario Fire Marshal in 2006.

Q: Why is the current fire suppression model not presented as an option?

A: As a Council, we have a responsibility to provide sound fiscal management to the residents of Deep River. The current service model is not functional and it does not meet the legislated requirements for fire protection services under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, as shown in the Ontario Fire Marshal's report from 2011. Therefore, we would not be doing our jobs if we presented the current fire suppression model as a workable option moving forward.

Q: How quickly will Council implement the wishes of the community as determined by the survey responses?

A: Council is asking residents to complete a survey on the option they feel will best meet the short and long term needs of the community. The survey results will be used as a tool to assist Council with their decision making moving forward.

Q: What will happen to my municipal taxes if the recommended option includes significant cost savings to the municipality?

A: Our municipality is currently facing substantial financial pressures. As a

result, any cost savings will be reviewed and allocated based on the needs of the municipality using sound fiscal management.

Q: Are there legal obligations for municipalities to provide fire suppression services to its residents?

A: Ontario municipalities are NOT required by law to provide fire suppression services. Ontario municipalities are required by law to provide fire education and prevention services to residents.

Q: Based upon the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal, how many firefighters would the Town need to have an effective service?

A: The minimum number of firefighters required to conduct interior fire suppression effectively and efficiently at moderate-risk occupancy buildings (residential) is 16 while the minimum number of firefighters required to conduct interior fire suppression effectively and efficiently at high-risk occupancy buildings (schools, hospitals, nursing homes) is 24.

(Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Financial Information Returns)

Q: How much does the Town currently spend on the fire suppression Service?

A: Fire department costs were nearly \$1.7 million in 2014. Each household paid \$863 to cover fire department costs— more than double any other household in Renfrew County.

Q: Will my taxes go up with Option 1, and if so, how much?

A: Under Option 1 it is estimated that costs would be approximately \$968 per household in 2017, decreasing to \$811 by 2021 and increasing to \$912 per household by 2025 and \$1,027 per household by 2029.

Q: How many firefighters does the Town currently employ?

A: The Town currently has 9 full-time personnel (9 Suppression Division firefighters) + 1 Part-time Fire Chief).

Q: How do other communities in Renfrew County compare cost wise?

A: The average fire department cost per household in all of Renfrew County is \$196. This is \$667 less than the cost of the fire department in Deep River per household.

The second highest fire department cost per household in Renfrew County is Pembroke at \$414.00, which is \$449.00 less than Deep River.

(Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Financial Information Returns)

Q: How many firefighters, on average, respond to fires in the Town of Deep River?

A: Between 2007 and 2011, the average response to a fire call was less than 5 full-time firefighters including the Fire Chief.

Q: Who do I contact if I need help or have questions regarding the survey?

A: For survey-related questions please contact Jackie Mellon at 613-584-2000 Extension 128 or Jessy Pace at 613-584-2000 Extension 101.

Q: I don't have a printer. Is it possible to get hard copies of the information?

A: If you would like to receive a hard copy of the information please visit the Deep River Municipal Office and a hard copy will be provided to you.

NOTE: As residents may have additional questions that have not been addressed to this point, we will be adding Questions and Answers on an ongoing basis. Please check back often for an updated FAQ.

New Questions and Answers will be added by date at the top of the document.