

Town of Deep River

Fire Service

Challenges

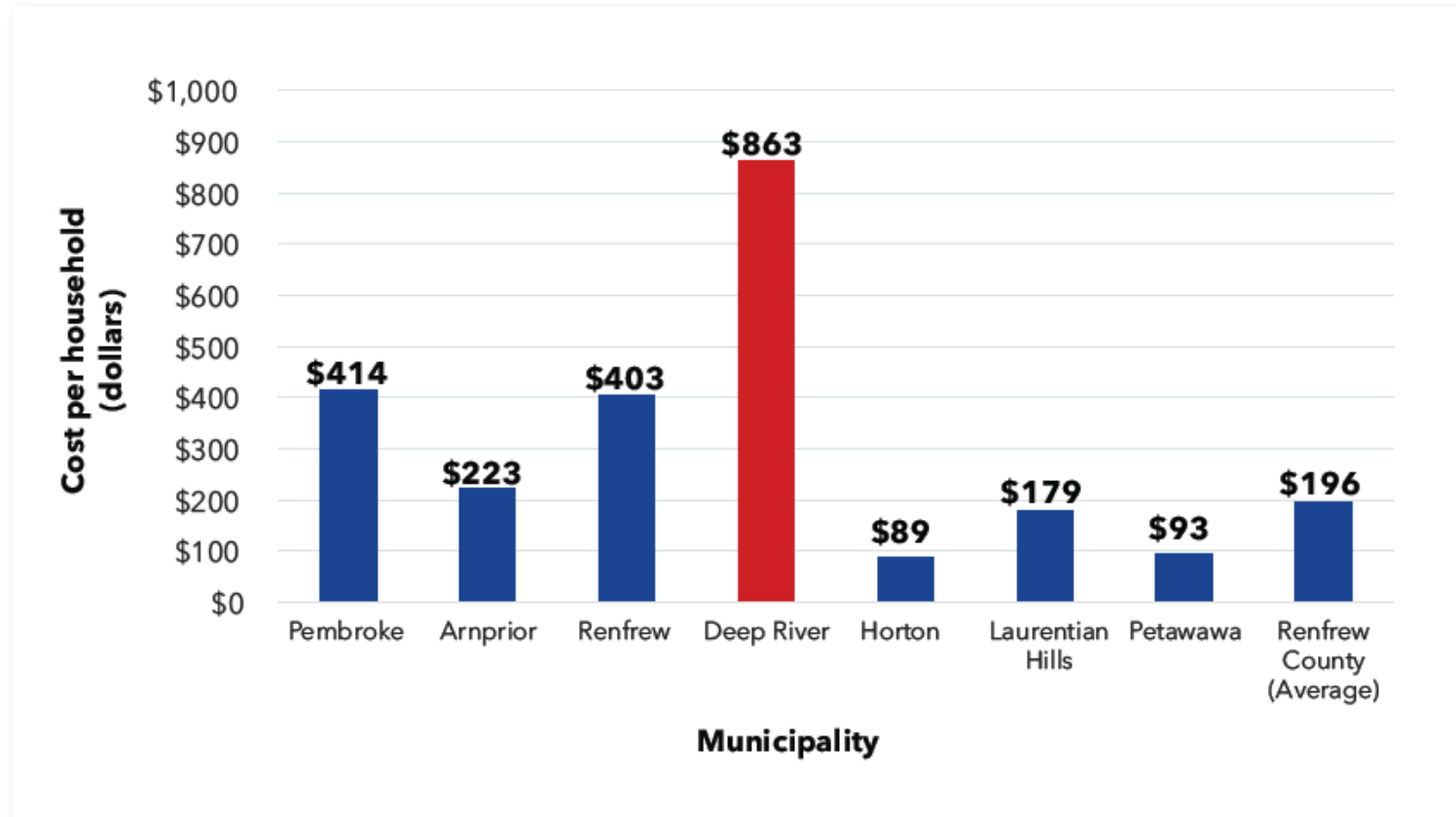
- ▶ The current Fire Suppression Service model does not provide the Town of Deep River or its residents with an effective fire suppression service.
- ▶ Existing Fire Suppression Service is not affordable or sustainable compared with similar lower-tier Renfrew County municipalities.
- ▶ Arbitrator ruling makes it financially difficult to transition to a viable volunteer-based service.
- ▶ Deep River cannot continue on the same path. A decision needs to be made.

The current Fire Suppression Service model does not provide the Town of Deep River with an effective service

- ▶ The current Deep River Fire Department complement is 9 full-time firefighters and one part-time Chief.
- ▶ An Ontario Fire Marshall Review (OFM) in 2011 concluded that the Town of Deep River was not meeting the requirements under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1997.
- ▶ The OFM report states the department does not have sufficient internal resources to ***effectively, efficiently and safely*** conduct fire suppression operations.
- ▶ To effectively conduct interior fire suppression at moderate-risk occupancy buildings (residential) the Town would need 16 firefighters.
- ▶ To effectively conduct interior fire suppression at high-risk occupancy buildings (schools, hospitals, nursing homes) the Town would need 24 firefighters.

Fire Suppression Costs per Household

Fire Department Costs Per Household in Renfrew County in 2014



**Source: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's 2014 Financial Information Returns*

Arbitrator Ruling

- ▶ In 2014 the Town presented an attrition-based composite Fire Suppression model at arbitration.
- ▶ The Town proposed reducing the number of full-time firefighters from 9 to 2 through attrition.
- ▶ The Town also proposed adding 24 volunteer firefighters to the department.
- ▶ The attrition model would allow our existing full-time firefighters to remain in their positions until they chose to retire or leave the Town's employment.
- ▶ The Town was not successful in achieving an arbitration award that would allow an affordable composite fire service.
- ▶ The Town *may* add volunteers but can only reduce full-time firefighters to 8 from the current 9 through attrition.

Cannot continue on the same path

A decision needs to be made

- ▶ Town of Deep River allocates approximately 20% of the entire municipal budget to the Fire Suppression Service.
- ▶ Municipal assets including buildings, roads, recreation facilities and other infrastructure continue to require substantial investment and renewal.
- ▶ The current Fire Suppression Service model does not meet the community's needs or minimum legislated requirements.
- ▶ Need to move forward with a Service the community both wants and can afford today and in the future.

Develop a Fire Suppression Service that meets community needs

- ▶ Council cannot continue to support a Fire Suppression Service model that does not have the capacity to respond to the needs of the community it serves.
- ▶ The Town can implement the December 2014 arbitration award, resulting in a reduction of 9 full-time firefighters to 8 through attrition with the addition of 24 volunteer firefighters at an increased cost to taxpayers.
- ▶ Costs would increase for taxpayers under the proposed model, however the model would provide an effective fire suppression service model that meets the short and long-term needs of the community and also meets legislated requirements.

Develop a Fire Service that the public can afford

- ▶ We can seek a ***strong*** mandate from the community to return to arbitration with one goal: Reduce full-time firefighters from 8 to 2 through attrition and add 24 volunteer firefighters OR consider steps to transition the current fire suppression service model to education and prevention only.
- ▶ Develop a local fire prevention and education initiative through a department of two: a Fire Chief and a Fire Prevention Officer.
- ▶ Education efforts would be focused on schools, seniors population, signage and enhanced visibility.

By The Numbers

- ▶ Between 2007 and 2011, the average response to a fire call was less than 5 full-time firefighters including the Fire Chief.
- ▶ In 2014, the fire department cost each household in Deep River \$863.00, the highest cost per household in Renfrew County by more than double.
- ▶ The current Fire Suppression Service in the Town of Deep River costs approximately \$1.68 million dollars annually.
- ▶ With the existing Fire Suppression Service of 9 full-time firefighters and one fire chief, firefighters cannot legally enter a burning building.
- ▶ 16 firefighters are required to enter moderate-risk occupancy buildings (residential) during a fire event.
- ▶ 24 firefighters are required to enter high-risk occupancy buildings (schools, hospitals, nursing homes) during a fire event.

Option 1

- ▶ **Option 1** - Maintain 8 full-time firefighters and hire 24 volunteer firefighters. Result will maintain the current complement of full-time firefighters and establish a functioning fire suppression service suitable for the local needs and circumstances of the Town. This option will increase costs year over year.

Option 2

- ▶ **Option 2** - Attempt to negotiate (including interest arbitration if necessary) a reduction in the number of full-time firefighters from 8 to 2 (through attrition) and add 24 volunteers. Result will establish a functioning fire suppression service suitable for the local needs and circumstances of the Town. This option will reduce costs year over year. If unsuccessful in reducing the number of full-time firefighters and associated costs, consider steps to transition the existing fire service model to education and prevention only. Result will be no fire suppression services and reduced costs year over year.

Next Steps

- ▶ **June 6 - June 13** - Surveys delivered to all residents.
- ▶ **June 13 @ 12 a.m.** - Survey polls open
- ▶ **June 20 @ 8 p.m.** - Survey polls close
- ▶ **June 20 @ 8 p.m.** - Council to share Survey Results during Special Council meeting.