



Town of Deep River Fire Suppression Service Model Newsletter

Residents of Deep River,

When you elected this Council 18 months ago we were given a responsibility to represent you and a mandate to make difficult decisions in the best financial interests of our community.

As many of you are aware, our community and Council has struggled with the question of how to move forward with our existing fire service model in a manner that is both responsible to our community's safety and respectful of our residents' ability to pay for the service.

At the time of Deep River's inception some 70 years ago, a full-time fire department was integral to its community model. As Deep River continues to change, the model of a full-time fire department no longer provides our community with an affordable or effective service model.

Given this, Council has dedicated extensive time and effort in exploring a wide range of options to provide residents with an affordable and functional fire service model.

To help our community move forward in a positive and collaborative way we are asking for your input and feedback.

To fully capture the wishes of Deep River residents, the following pages outline the current fire service model in our community as well as two options for consideration.

Similar to the last municipal election, we are working with Simply Voting to conduct a survey and present us with the results.

Included with the newsletter you will receive in the mail is your personal access to the survey with the options noted. We are asking each of you to take a few moments to complete the survey, which will help us make qualified and informed decisions on the future of the fire service model.

We look forward to receiving your valued feedback and working together as a community to identify a solution that will address both resident safety and sound fiscal management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan Loughheed".

Mayor Joan Loughheed
The Town of Deep River

Where are we today?

The Town of Deep River has struggled with the costs and effectiveness of the Fire Suppression Service model for some time.

Quite simply, the Deep River Fire Department does not have the capacity to respond to the fire suppression needs of the community.

Comprised of 9.6 full-time personnel, the Deep River Fire Department is made up of nine full-time firefighters and one part-time Fire Chief at a historical cost of more than \$1.5 million annually – or roughly 20% of the entire Town budget.

An Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) Review in 2011 concluded that the Town of Deep River was not meeting its 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.

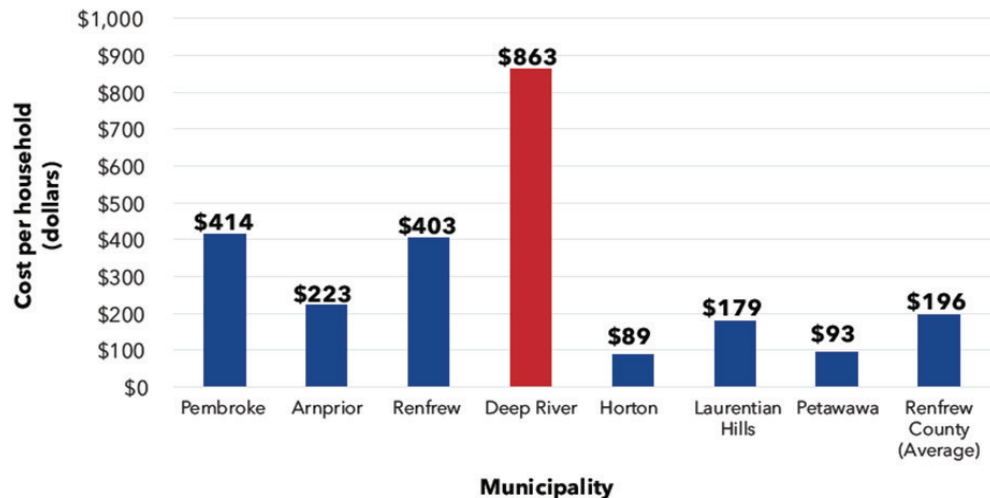
To effectively conduct interior fire suppression at high-risk occupancy buildings (schools, hospitals, nursing homes) the Town would need 24 firefighters.

For the period from 2007 to 2011, the average response to a fire call by the Town's fire suppression service was less than 5 full-time firefighters including the Fire Chief.

The current Fire Suppression Service model does not meet the community's needs or minimum legislated requirements.

Current Fire Suppression Service Model Costs

Fire Department Costs Per Household in Renfrew County in 2014



The cost for the existing fire suppression service model is significantly higher than that of neighbouring municipalities throughout Renfrew County.

In 2014, \$863 of each property owners' municipal taxes went to pay for the Deep River fire department. During that same year, the average fire department cost per household in all of Renfrew County was \$196.

Call Volumes

The average emergency call volume for the 5-year period from 2007 to 2011 in Deep River was 126 calls per year. Fire-related calls represented a total of 5.7% of the average overall emergency call volume during this period, with non-fire related emergency calls making up the remaining 94.3% of calls.

(Town of Deep River Fire Master Plan Final Report, Dillon Consulting 2013)

Arbitration (2014)

In 2014 the Town presented an attrition-based composite Fire Suppression Force at arbitration, meaning the Town's current full-time firefighters would continue in their jobs until such time as they chose to retire or leave the fire service.

The Town proposed reducing the number of

full-time firefighters from 9 to 2 through attrition, while adding 24 volunteer firefighters to the department.

Unfortunately, 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.

A Way Forward

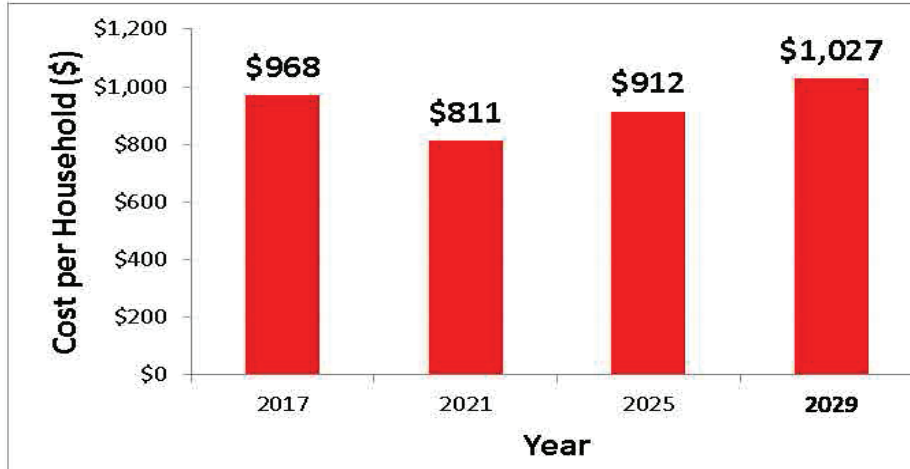
It is imperative that Council, through consultation with residents, determine the most effective and affordable path forward for our residents and businesses.

After considerable deliberation and discussion, Council is conducting a survey of municipal residents with two options.

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 including increased costs year over year.

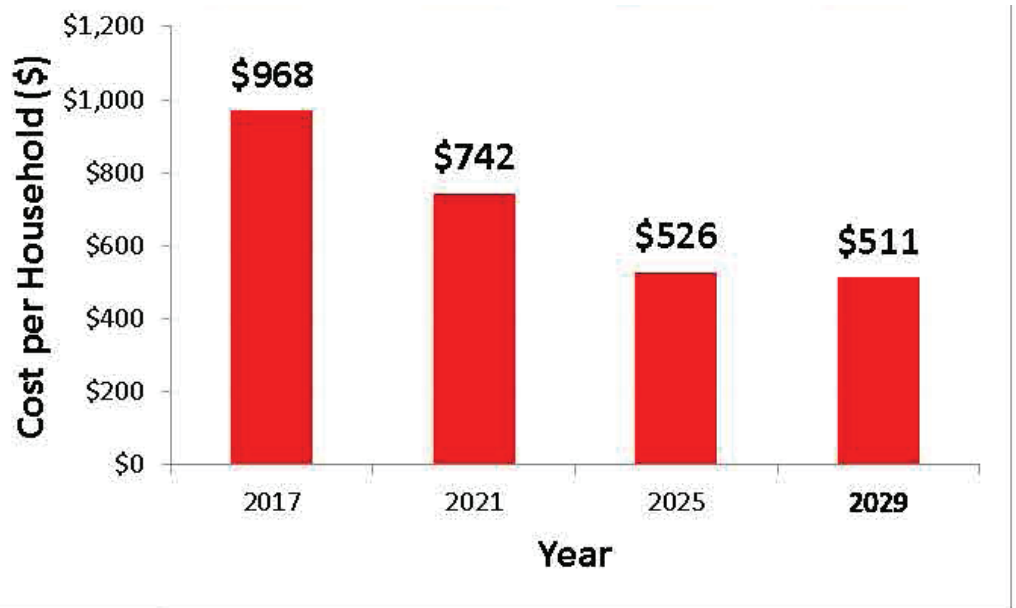
Option 1 Costs



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.

Projected costs per household if the Town receives an Arbitrator's award permitting reducing full-time firefighters from 8 to 2 through attrition and adding 24 volunteer firefighters.



Summary

We value our firefighters for the work they have done and continue to do for the residents and businesses of Deep River, however we need to develop a fire service model that is affordable, meets the needs of the community and the requirements of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

This decision is not about the ability of the Deep River professional firefighters. This decision is about the current structure and affordability of the Deep River Fire Service model.

The Town of Deep River is our community and this needs to be a decision that includes input from all residents.

Council is seeking a strong mandate from residents on the path forward for our fire suppression model. We respectfully ask you to take a few moments to look at the proposed options and complete the survey, selecting your

preferred option.

Similar to the last municipal election, we will be working with Simply Voting to conduct the survey and present us with the results.

Should you require any assistance completing your survey, the Town of Deep River is there to help you at (613) 584-2000.

Following the closing of the consultation period at 8 p.m. on June 20, the survey results will be received publicly in Council chambers.

For additional, in-depth information with regard to this process, please download The Future of the Fire Suppression Service Backgrounder, located on the Town of Deep River website at www.deepriver.ca.

Council appreciates and values your time and input on this very important issue for our municipality.

Questions & Comments

For more information regarding the Town of Deep River Fire Service, reports, background information and Frequently Asked Questions, please visit us Online at:

www.DeepRiver.ca

If you have questions or comments regarding the Town of Deep River Fire Suppression Survey please email:

FireSurvey@DeepRiver.ca

or contact Mayor Joan Lougheed at (613) 584-2000 Extension 130

email: jlougheed@deepriver.ca

or contact your member of Council.

Mayor Lougheed
jlougheed@deepriver.ca

Reeve Doncaster
gdoncaster@deepriver.ca

Councilor Aikens
maikens@deepriver.ca

Councilor Desrochers
rdesrochers@deepriver.ca

Councilor McAuley
jmcauley@deepriver.ca

Councilor Myers
tmyers@deepriver.ca

Due to a previously declared Pecuniary Interest in this matter, Councilor McLaren has not been included as part of the Questions and Comments contacts.

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