

Town of Deep River Fire Suppression Service Model Backgrounder

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Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide the residents of Deep River with additional in-depth information regarding the future of the Town's fire suppression service model.

Definitions

Attrition: A reduction in the number of employees or participants that occurs when people leave because they resign, retire, etc., and are not replaced.

Composite Fire Department: An organizational model comprised of both full-time and volunteer firefighters.

Volunteer Firefighter: In contrast to full-time firefighters – who receive an annual salary as compensation for their services – volunteer firefighters are compensated per their individual agreements. In addition, it is important to note that municipalities do incur costs for training and outfitting volunteer firefighters.

Arbitration: A form of dispute resolution. It is the private, judicial determination of a dispute, by an independent third party. An arbitration hearing may involve the use of an individual arbitrator or a tribunal. Arbitration is an alternative to court action (litigation), and generally, just as final and binding (unlike mediation, negotiation and conciliation which are non-binding).

Interest Arbitration: 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.

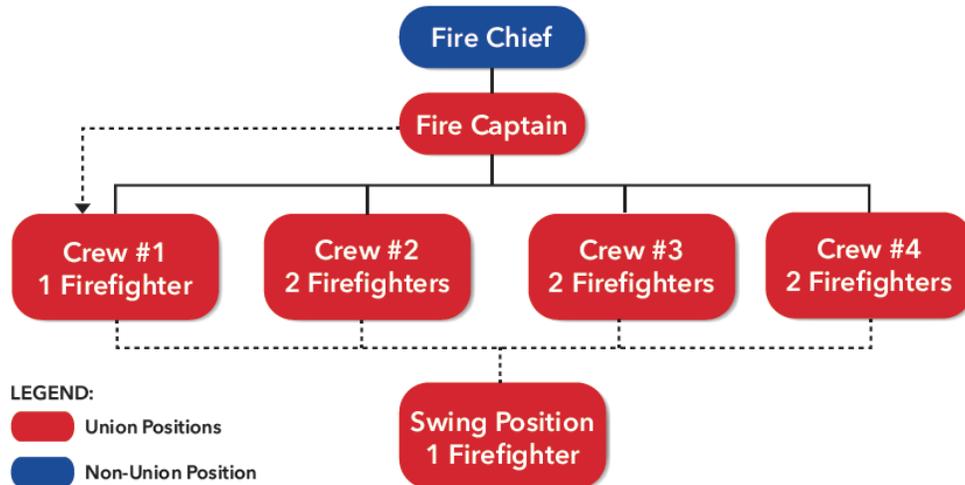
Community Background

The Town of Deep River was established 70 years ago by the Federal Government and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL). Today, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) carries on the commitment of ensuring Canadians and the world receive energy, health, and environmental benefits from nuclear science and technology.

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

Current Structure of the Deep River Fire Department

The Deep River Fire Department is a full-time fire department comprised of 9.6 staff. Full-time firefighters make up 9 of these positions with one part-time fire chief. The firefighters are assigned to 4 platoons (2 each with 1 “swing position”) and provide 24-hour coverage to the Town of Deep River.



The 2006 Ontario Fire Marshal Review

In 2006, the municipality underwent a review of its fire suppression service for the community, as per a recommendation from the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM).

The review also identified 17* high-risk occupancies in the Town of Deep River. These occupancies are classified as high-risk due to: age group, building stock, occupancy (seniors/children/time of day) and location. Among the identified high-risk occupancies are Deep River & District Hospital and Four Seasons Lodge, St. Mary’s Separate School and Mackenzie Community School.

(The 2006 Comprehensive Review of Fire Protection Services, The Office of the Fire Marshal)

To view the full report go to: <http://www.deepriver.ca/departments/fire-department/>

The 2011 Ontario Fire Marshal Review

As a result of an investigation of a fatal fire in the Town of Deep River on October 22, 2010, the OFM initiated a review of the fire suppression services provided by the Town’s fire department.

The OFM 2011 Review concluded that the Town of Deep River was not meeting its requirements in accordance with the responsibilities for the provision of fire protection services as stated at clauses 2.(1) (a) and 2.(1) (b) of the *Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1997*.

(OFM Review of Fire Protection Services in the Town of Deep River, 2011)

Specifically, the review indicated that the department does not have sufficient internal resources to effectively, efficiently and safely conduct fire suppression operations at single-family dwellings or any high-risk occupancy.

To view the full report go to: <http://www.deepriver.ca/departments/fire-department/>

OFM Requirements

To meet the requirements outlined by the OFM, the minimum number of firefighters required to effectively conduct interior fire suppression at a moderate-risk occupancy is 16. For high-risk occupancies, a minimum of 24 firefighters are needed.

In comparison to the actual number of firefighters, including the Fire Chief, currently available within the Town of Deep River (9.6), this represents a deficiency of 6.4 firefighters in order to achieve the lowest level of efficiency at moderate-risk occupancies.

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

In addition to this, for the period of 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. This indicates that for this period, the average response was less than 3 of the 7 available off-duty firefighters. This represents a deficiency of 11 firefighters in order to achieve the lowest level of efficiency at moderate-risk occupancies.

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

To view the full report go to: <http://www.deepriver.ca/departments/fire-department/>

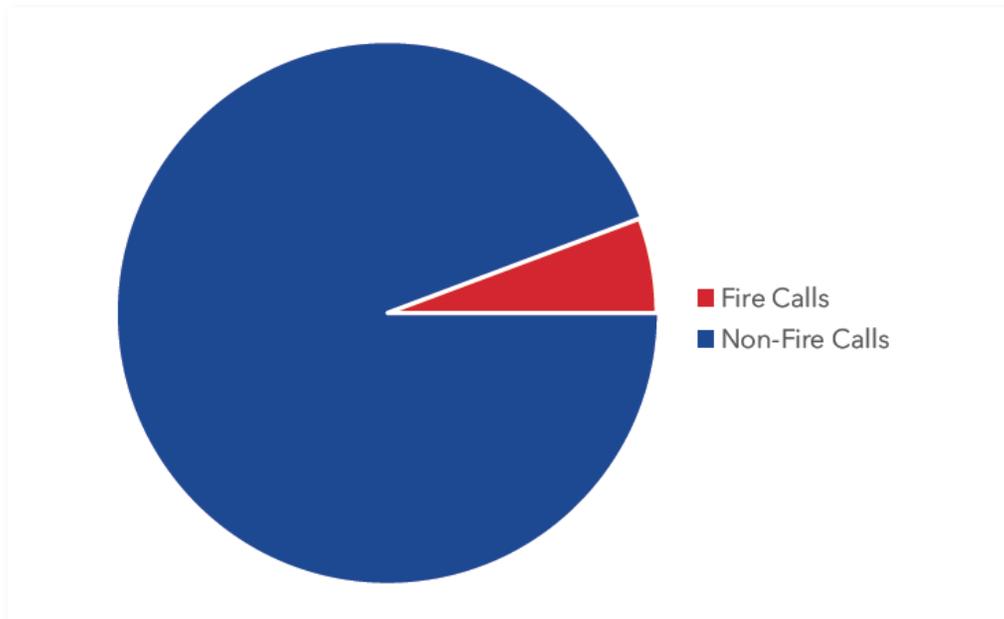
Average Firefighter Response in Deep River



This graphic depicts the average firefighter response in Deep River (5) versus the minimum number of firefighters required to safely conduct interior fire suppression in a single, two-storey home (16).

Emergency Call Volume

A summary of the volume of emergency calls in the Town of Deep River for the period of 2007 to 2011 is presented below. The average emergency call volume was 126 calls per year during this period. 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)

To view the full report go to: <http://www.deepriver.ca/departments/fire-department/>

Fire Department Costs

According to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Financial Information returns (FIRs), each household in Deep River paid more for its fire department in 2014 than any other household in Renfrew County by more than double.

Comparable Communities

In 2014, the Deep River fire department cost each household \$863.00. That same year, the average fire department cost per household in all of Renfrew County was \$196.00, \$667.00 less per household than the cost of the fire department in the Town of Deep River.

The municipality with the second highest fire department cost per household in Renfrew County in 2014 was Pembroke. It still cost Pembroke households \$449.00 less (\$414.00) than that of Deep River.

| Municipality | Population | # of households | Total Expenses | Cost per household |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Deep River | 4,286 | 1,949 | \$1,682,313 | \$863 |
| Pembroke | 11,227 | 6,496 | \$2,696,606 | \$414 |
| Renfrew | 6,158 | 3,924 | \$1,579,633 | \$403 |
| Arnprior | 8,114 | 3,640 | \$811,627 | \$223 |
| Laurentian Hills | 2,811 | 1,461 | \$260,931 | \$179 |
| North Algoma, Wilberforce Tp. | 2,840 | 1,668 | \$275,244 | \$165 |
| Adanston, Bromley | 2,643 | 1,366 | \$212,235 | \$155 |
| Whitewater Region Tp. | 5,869 | 3,128 | \$441,401 | \$141 |
| Greater Madawaska Tp. | 2,486 | 2,471 | \$348,535 | \$141 |
| Bonnechere Valley Tp. | 2,966 | 2,435 | \$323,008 | \$133 |
| Killaloe, Hagarty, Richards Tp. | 2,229 | 1,654 | \$217,386 | \$131 |
| McNab, Braeside Tp. | 7,649 | 3,161 | \$346,797 | \$110 |
| Brudenell, Lyndock, Raglan Tp. | 1,658 | 1,159 | \$127,685 | \$110 |
| Petawawa | 16,142 | 6,757 | \$626,012 | \$93 |
| Horton Tp. | 2,573 | 1,435 | \$128,181 | \$89 |
| Madawaska Valley Tp. | 3,896 | 3,153 | \$257,429 | \$82 |
| Laurentian Valley Tp. | 8,248 | 3,953 | \$282,621 | \$71 |
| Head, Clara, Maria Tp. | 204 | 343 | \$9,008 | \$26 |

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

Arbitration 2014

In 2014, the Town presented the solution of an attrition-based composite force at arbitration with the Deep River Professional Fire Fighters Association ('Association').

The proposed solution included:

- Reducing the number of full-time firefighters from 9 to 2 through attrition
- The inclusion of 24 volunteer firefighters to the department

While this was not granted, the arbitrator did allow for a composite fire department and the addition of volunteer firefighters, with a minimum-staffing clause. This meant that the Town had to keep 9 unionized full-time firefighter positions that could only be reduced to 8 through attrition.

The proposed attrition-based composite model is highlighted in the 2015 – 2020 Deep River Strategic Plan prepared by POMAX Consulting.

To view the full report go to: <http://www.deepriver.ca/departments/fire-department/>

Going Forward

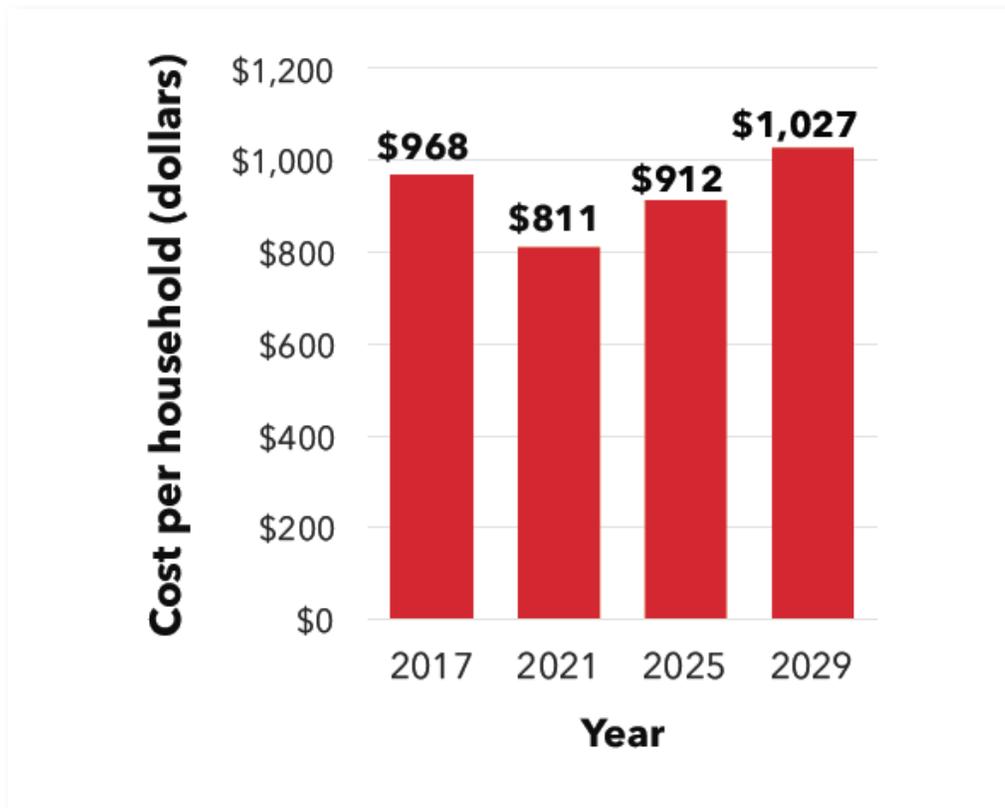
It is imperative that Council, through consultation with residents, determine the most effective and affordable path forward for our residents and businesses.

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

Option 1: Implement Arbitrator's Award

Overview

Option One - 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.



Options 2: Seek a Strong Mandate to Return to Arbitration

Overview

Option Two - 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.

If successful in achieving a favourable arbitrator's ruling, under **Option Two** costs will remain unchanged in the short term and begin significantly decreasing in 2021 and beyond. A favourable arbitrator's ruling would also provide the Town with an effective fire service model that would meet the long-term needs of the community.

If the Town transitioned to an education and prevention only fire service model, costs per household would be reduced over time. Although fire suppression would no longer be provided, Council would commit to enhancing education initiatives and to exploring opportunities for further fire prevention and safety measures.

Projected costs per household if the Town received an Arbitrator's award permitting reducing full-time firefighters from 9 to 2 through attrition and adding 24 volunteer firefighters.

