

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Fire & Emergency Services Committee

**Wednesday,
November 10, 2021
10:00 a.m.
Council Chambers
2nd Floor, City Hall
320 Esplanade Sydney, NS**

Deputy Mayor Earlene MacMullin called the meeting to order.

Present: Deputy Mayor Earlene MacMullin, Chair
Councillor Gordon MacDonald
Councillor Glenn Paruch
Councillor Lorne Green

Staff: Marie Walsh, Chief Administrative Officer
John MacKinnon, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Chief Michael Seth, Director of Fire & Emergency Services
Deborah Campbell Ryan, Municipal Clerk
Deputy Fire Chief Gilbert MacIntyre, Operations
Deputy Fire Chief Chris March, Volunteer Coordinator, Training & Prevention
Bruce MacDonald, Manager of Emergency Management Operations
Volunteer Fire Chief Jim Prince, Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association
Angela Ross, Recording Secretary

Absent: Councillor Darren Bruckschwaiger, Vice-Chair (Leave of Absence)

Summary of Decisions

Roll Call

1. Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve Minutes from:

- **Fire & Emergency Services Committee – September 15, 2021.**

Carried.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve the November 10, 2021, Fire & Emergency Services Agenda as presented. **Carried.**

3. REPORTS:

3.1 Phase 1 – Sustainability of the Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality Action Plan Phase 1:

An update on Phase 1 of the Sustainability of the Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality Action Plan was presented.

For Information Only.

3.2 Manager of Emergency Management:

The Manager of Emergency Management Report was presented.

For Information Only.

3.3 Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association Report:

Volunteer Fire Chief Jim Prince provided an update on behalf of the Fire Chief's Association.

For Information Only.

4. Mobile Burn Unit (MBU):

Deputy Fire Chief Chris March provided information on the inquiries by Councillor Gordon MacDonald regarding the Mobile Burn Unit (MBU).

For Information Only.

5. Volunteer Fire Fighter Recruitment:

Motion that staff be directed to provide an Issue Paper for the next Committee meeting concerning what is being done on a regional level to assist volunteer fire departments with recruiting members and retaining the existing volunteers; and has the CBRM fire administration considered any programs or incentives to attract new firefighters. **Carried.**

Adjournment

Roll Call

1. Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Paruch, approval of the Minutes from:

- Fire & Emergency Services Committee – September 15, 2021.

Motion Carried.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Paruch, to approve the November 10, 2021 Fire & Emergency Services Committee Agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

3. REPORTS:

3.1 Phase 1 – Sustainability of the Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality Action Plan:

Fire Chief Michael Seth reviewed the Action Plan and provided an update on each motion of Council. The following was highlighted:

- The need to regulate the fire service and revenue generation
- Identify need to enhance fire prevention and training activities in CBRM
- All volunteer departments work under the direction of the Chief/Director
- A consultation process taking place to obtain all data
- In the 2021/22 budget deliberations, a request will be made to give consideration to update comprehensive records management systems and business intelligence software suites for all departments within CBRM to ensure information is collected, maintained and available.

Continued...

**REPORTS: Phase 1 – Sustainability of the fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Action Plan (Cont'd):**

After the update, some of the Committee discussion included the following:

- Fees for service
- Local certification
- Town Hall style meetings with all departments for open dialogue
- Level of service and training for career vs. volunteer firefighters
- Record Management System

The Deputy Mayor thanked Fire Chief Seth for his presentation.

For Information Only.

3.2 Manager of Emergency Management:

Bruce MacDonald, Manager of Emergency Management, provided his report highlighting the following items:

- Progress on short-term objectives from June 29th report:
 - Facilitate Mayor and Elected Officials (MEO) training session and an overview of Comfort Centres (now scheduled for December 13, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.)
 - Finalize the development of a Comfort Centre Standard Operating Guideline (SOG)
 - Finalize an Emergency Management Training Plan for CBRM
- Liaison with External Partners
- Training/Exercises/Presentations
 - CBRM EMO facilitated presentations/information sessions
 - Exercise participation
- Mobile Command Post (MCP)
- CBRM EMO Program Development Activities
- COVID Related Activities
- COVID-19 3rd/4th Wave internal communication/coordination statistics between June 19th, 2021 and November 4th, 2021
- Next Steps – On-going activities
- Mid Term Objectives
- Long Term Objectives

After the Report, discussion included the following:

- Comfort Centres
- Liaison with External Partners
- Propane Facilities
- CBRM liability related to Comfort Centres

For Information Only.

Continued...

REPORTS (Cont'd):

3.3 Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association Report:

Volunteer Fire Chief Jim Prince provided an update from the Cape Breton Regional Chiefs' Association as outlined in the Report dated November 3, 2021.

After the report, discussion included the following:

- Concerns with Dispatch
- Switching to using numbered stations
- Human Resources requesting a meeting with the Fire Chiefs' Association
- 5-year Fleet Plan for volunteer service

For Information Only.

4. Mobile Burn Unit (MBU):

Deputy Fire Chief Chris March provided information in response to the inquiries put forward by Councillor Gordon MacDonald regarding the Mobile Burn Unit (MBU), as follows:

- **Is this unit "mobile"?**
Yes and no. The MBU was transported here from Ontario 10 years ago. The MBU is mobile but has several challenges due to its large size and requires a tractor trailer to move it which has to be contracted out to a third party which is expensive. Therefore it is not practical to move it.
- **Who gets to utilize this unit?**
The MBU is available for all 35 departments, however is not available in the winter due to slip hazards.
- **How is this training unit being used currently?**
It is currently used for courses and level 1 training when an instructor is available.
- **Is the training unit available for all departments to use?**
Yes
- **What are the issues with moving the unit to make it truly mobile?**
It takes 3 hours to dismantle and 3 hours to set it up, with 3-4 people trained to do it.
- **If it's not mobile, how can departments outside of the city utilize such an important unit?**
The MBU can be accessed by all departments at the Grand Lake Road Fire Station site and they bring their own bunker gear.

In response to additional questions, Deputy Fire Chief Chris March also discussed the process in place to book the MBU for use and reasons for the purchase and the MBU.

For Information Only.

5. Volunteer Fire Fighter Recruitment:

Councillor Gordon MacDonald advised that it is his understanding that most volunteer fire departments are having trouble retaining members and recruiting new firefighters. He asked that something be put in place to attract volunteer firefighters and retain the current members.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Green, that staff be directed to provide an Issue Paper for the next Committee meeting concerning what is being done on a regional level to assist volunteer fire departments with recruiting members and retaining the existing volunteers; and has the CBRM fire administration considered any programs or incentives to attract new firefighters.

Discussion:

In response to a question, Director Seth confirmed that that incentives from local merchants for volunteer firefighters will be explored and included in the Issue Paper.

Motion Carried.

Adjournment at 11:20 a.m.

Deputy Mayor Earlene MacMullin
Chair

Deborah Campbell Ryan
Municipal Clerk
/acr