

Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Fire & Emergency Services Committee

**Wednesday,
September 15, 2021
1:25 p.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
Mayor Amanda M. McDougall
Councillor Gordon MacDonald
Councillor Glenn Paruch
Councillor Lorne Green

Staff: Marie Walsh, Chief Administrative Officer
Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial 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
Sharon MacSween, Senior Administrative Assistant
Angela Ross, Recording Secretary

**Also
Attending:** Councillor Steve Gillespie

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 – June 29, 2021.**

Carried.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve the September 15, 2021, Fire & Emergency Services Agenda as presented. **Carried.**

**3. Sustainability of Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality
– Phase 1:**

Motion that a recommendation be made to Council to provide authority and approval to begin the process that includes the need for regulation for the fire services, revenue generation. **Carried.**

Motion that a recommendation be made to Council to provide authority and approval to begin the process that includes the identification of need to enhance fire prevention and training activities for the entire CBRM. **Carried.**

Motion that a recommendation be made to Council to provide direction for all volunteer departments to work under the direction of the Chief/Director as it pertains to this initiative. Also, to provide opportunity for a consultation process to obtain all data necessary. The Director/Chief will provide regular reports to Council on progress of data collection and participation. **Carried.**

Motion that a recommendation be made to Council for consideration in the 2021/22 budget deliberations for the updating of comprehensive records management systems (RMS) and business intelligence software suite that all departments within CBRM must, as a requirement of their registration, ensure information is maintained, available for access by Fire Administration. **Carried.**

4. REPORTS:

4.1 Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association Report:

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

Adjournment

Roll Call

The Chair noted there was a delay in the start time of this meeting due to technical difficulties.

1. Approval of Minutes:

Motion:

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

- Fire & Emergency Services Committee – June 29, 2021.

Motion Carried.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, seconded by Mayor McDougall, to approve the September 15, 2021 Fire & Emergency Services Committee Agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

**3. Sustainability of Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality
– Phase 1:**

Marie Walsh, Chief Administrative Officer, provided background information on the Fire Service highlighting the Manitou Report and Corporate Plan. She advised that the purpose of the meeting was to restart the conversation and begin to collect the data to revisit and examine the recommendations of the Manitou Report so that resources are available for a more efficient and sustainable Fire Service.

Fire Chief Michael Seth advised that the inability to sustain the current operations of the Fire Service needs to be evaluated as mentioned in previous studies and the Manitou Report. He advised that over the past couple of years high level evaluations were conducted to determine the needs of fire protection services going forward and explained that much more research and data is required.

He noted that the initial recommendations were made by using hypothetical methodology, and that much more data and research would be needed to either support or dispute the recommendations, and that they only reflect fire protection necessities and not the social components.

Fire Chief Seth noted that comprehensive fire protection is achieved through the process of utilizing three lines of defense: public education, code enforcement, and emergency response, which allows for a consistent impact of operations that will be measurable and accountable to the ratepayers within CBRM.

Continued...

Sustainability of Fire Services in Cape Breton Regional Municipality – Phase 1 (Cont'd):

Fire Chief Seth provided recommendations to the Committee, as set out in his Issue Paper dated September 9, 2021, and discussed a multi-year plan with the intent of keeping everyone involved and updated.

After the report, Committee discussion included the following:

- Clarification of, and changes to, some terminology in the proposed recommendations to Council
- Lack of data
- Service level delivery
- Data collection systems are not consistent throughout the fire service

Committee recessed at 1:53 p.m. and reconvened at 2:01 p.m.

Deputy Mayor MacMullin clarified the individual motions for Committee consideration.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Paruch, that a recommendation be made to Council to provide authority and approval to begin the process that includes the need for regulation for the fire services, revenue generation.

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Green, that a recommendation be made to Council to provide authority and approval to begin the process that includes the identification of need to enhance fire prevention and training activities for the entire CBRM.

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by Mayor McDougall, seconded by Councillor Gordon MacDonald, that a recommendation be made to Council to provide direction for all volunteer departments to work under the direction of the Chief/Director as it pertains to this initiative. Also, to provide opportunity for a consultation process to obtain all data necessary. The Director/Chief will provide regular reports to Council on progress of data collection and participation.

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Paruch, seconded by Councillor Green, that a recommendation be made to Council for consideration in the 2021/22 budget deliberations for the updating of comprehensive records management systems (RMS) and business intelligence software suite that all departments within CBRM must, as a requirement of their registration, ensure information is maintained, available for access by Fire Administration.

Motion Carried.

4. REPORTS:

4.1 Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association Report:

Volunteer Fire Chief Jim Prince provided a list of questions and concerns regarding Fire Chief Seth's Issue Paper (available at the Clerk's Office). Deputy Mayor MacMullin advised that this is just the first phase and that the answers will become available moving forward.

Fire Chief Michael Seth agreed that the answers are needed and will be considered in the plan going forward.

Volunteer Fire Chief Jim Prince provided an update from the Cape Breton Regional Fire Chiefs' Association as outlined in the report dated September 15, 2021, highlighting the following:

- Vision and Mission Statements of the Regional Fire Chiefs' Association
- The Fire Service Committee Regional Chiefs met with various volunteer Departments to discuss concerns after Cape Breton Regional Municipality Fire and Emergency Services called a meeting in July with chiefs of these departments to engage and consult with the chiefs and discuss the potential opportunities to evaluate fire protection service in the area
- The possible amalgamation of the four volunteer Fire Departments in Port Morien, Donkin, Tower Road, and Birch Grove
- Specialty service vehicles removed from fleet insurance policy

Following the report, Deputy Fire Chief Chris March provided background information and explanation in regard to the insurance for specialty service vehicles. The Committee had discussion on the issue and clarification on CBRM's insurance policy was provided by the Chief Financial Officer.

Adjournment at 2:38 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Earlene MacMullin

Deborah Campbell Ryan
Municipal Clerk