

Executive Summary

This Fire Protective Services Operational Review (FPSOR) was initiated by the Council to assess the delivery of current fire protection services within the City of Yorkton. The objective of this review is to provide Council with an informed analysis of options for consideration in defining a cost effective and efficient level of fire protection services resulting in the best value for the community.

The City of Yorkton is facing similar challenges to most communities across the country in balancing the increasing costs of municipal services with the expected and/or required service levels of a growing community. Within a City operating a composite model fire department, similar to the YFPS that includes full-time, temporary and auxiliary firefighters, balancing the “cost to service level ratio” can be further complicated by the presence of a Collective Agreement with the local firefighters association representing all full-time firefighters.

Reviewing the services provided by Yorkton Fire Protective Services (YFPS) is not a new initiative of Council. There have been several previous reviews and reports that have led to positive change and improved the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the YFPS. However, reaching a decision with respect to the level of fire suppression services to be provided and sustained within the community remains a matter of ongoing concern for Council. This FPSOR contains three strategic priorities that have been identified to guide Council in the decision making process of determining the desired level of fire protection services to be provided within the City of Yorkton. These include:

- The utilization of a Community Risk Assessment to determine the fire safety risks within the City of Yorkton as the basis for developing clear goals and objectives for all fire protection services to be provided by the Yorkton Fire Protective Services;
- The optimization of the first two lines of defence including public education and fire prevention, and the utilization of fire safety standards and fire code enforcement to provide a comprehensive fire protection program within the City based on the results of the Community Risk Assessment; and
- An emphasis on strategies that support the sustainability of fire protection services and provide the most cost effective and efficient level of fire protection services resulting in the best value for the community.

The methodology to complete this FPSOR included an analysis of current legislation and regulations impacting the delivery of fire protection services. It also considered current fire service best practices including a review of relevant industry standards, guidelines, current practices of other provinces and a peer group of similar communities.

Consultation with internal stakeholders including Council, senior corporate staff, senior YFPS staff, the Association representing full-time firefighters and the Auxiliary firefighters was conducted as part of this review process. The results of this consultation process were used to inform the recommendations and operational model options presented within this review.

The findings of this FPSOR are presented in the form of specific recommendations and operational model options. Specific recommendations of this FPSOR include:

1. That Council adopt the proposed strategic priorities identified within this Fire Protective Services Operational Review to guide the decision making process of determining the desired level of fire protection services within the City of Yorkton.
2. That YFPS enhance the current pre-incident planning process to include all moderate and high risk occupancies identified within the Community Risk Assessment;
3. That YFPS develop Quick Action Plans for use by responding fire suppression staff to fire related incidents in all moderate and high risk occupancies identified within the Community Risk Assessment.
4. That the YFPS develop an enhanced public education program designed to promote fire safety education and training of residents and staff residing or working in the major building occupancies identified within the Community Risk Assessment.
5. That the YFPS develop an enhanced public education program designed to promote fire safety education and training within the various demographic groups, specifically seniors and children, present within the major building occupancies identified within the Community Risk Assessment.
6. That YFPS investigate and implement an enhanced alerting process for off duty and on-call firefighters.

The operational model options included within the PFSOR include the following:

Option 1 - Increased Use of Temporary & Auxiliary Firefighters

This option was prepared by the Fire Chief during the summer of 2015 in consultation with the Executive of Local 1527 and is referred to as the “***Temporary & Auxiliary Firefighter Program Expansion Model.***” The strategy of this model focuses primarily on increasing the use of temporary firefighters to replace full-time firefighters when they are absent due to vacation, sick leave, disability leave, training leave or other approved absence. This option increases the current practice from utilizing only one temporary firefighter on duty at any one time, to having multiple temporary firefighters on duty at any given time.

Option 2 – 2012 Strategy to Increase Complement of Full-time Firefighters

In 2012 the Fire Chief, Association and Auxiliary Firefighters collaborated in developing a deployment plan to respond to the recommendation of the 2006 Hewitt Report recommending that the “***Fire Protective Services bring forward to Council a deployment profile for their***

consideration.” The focus of this strategy was to incrementally increase the number of full-time firefighters on duty and include the auxiliary firefighters within the platoon system. At the time of this report the total number of full-time firefighters had been reduced through attrition to 15 full-time firefighters. The result was one of the four platoons was operating with only three full-time firefighters on duty. The remaining three platoons were operating at a minimum of four full-time firefighters on duty.

Incrementally this strategy would increase the number of full-time firefighters on duty to five full-time firefighters on all four platoons, with an increase in the total complement of certified firefighters from 20 (16 full-time & four temporary) to 24 full-time firefighters. This strategy would also eliminate the use of temporary firefighters. Auxiliary firefighters would be assigned to the four platoon system, however no change in their training or competencies was recommended.

Option 3 – Increase in Full-time Firefighters Revised Auxiliary Firefighter Model

This option seeks to increase the number of full-time firefighters on duty at all times to enhance the initial response capabilities of the YFPS, and revise the roles and responsibilities of the auxiliary firefighters to support the depth of response capabilities of the department.

Within this option the minimum number of full-time firefighters would be increased to six full-time firefighters on duty at all times requiring a total minimum complement of 24 full-time firefighters. There would be sufficient on duty full-time firefighters to staff the engine apparatus (with four firefighters) and the rescue apparatus (with two firefighters). It would require another officer level position to provide the supervisory role on the rescue apparatus, this role is proposed as a full-time Lieutenant.

This option would sustain the use and role of the temporary firefighters to provide coverage of the full-time firefighters in the event of an absence due to vacation, sick leave, disability leave, training leave or other approved absence. As such this option would also require an increase in the number of temporary firefighters from the current complement of four to six temporary firefighters.

Option 4 – Decrease in Full-time Firefighters Revised Temporary Firefighter Model

This option seeks to decrease the number of full-time firefighters on duty at all times and increase the utilization of temporary firefighters to strategically enhance the overall integration of the initial response and depth of response operational capabilities of the YFPS.

This option presents a strategy to reduce the total number of full-time firefighters from the current complement of 16 full-time to eight full-time. Reducing the number of full-time

firefighters would be accomplished through a process of attrition as the current full-time firefighters either retire, or alternatively leave the YFPS for personal other reasons.

Within this option there would be a minimum of two full-time firefighters on duty at all times (Captain and one firefighter). There would be sufficient on duty full-time firefighters to staff either the engine (two firefighters) or Rescue (two firefighters) depending on the type of emergency incident response.

This option would sustain the role of the temporary firefighters to provide coverage of the full-time firefighters in the event of an absence due to vacation, sick leave, disability leave, training leave or other approved absence. The total complement of temporary firefighters would increase from the current complement of four to 32 temporary firefighters and integrate temporary firefighters into the initial response and depth of response emergency response deployment of the YFPS.

Option 5 – Enhanced Temporary Firefighter Model

This option sustains the current complement of 16 full-time firefighters and the minimum number of full-time firefighters on duty of four full-time firefighters at all times.

This option would sustain the role of the temporary firefighters to provide coverage of the full-time firefighters in the event of an absence due to vacation, sick leave, disability leave, training leave or other approved absence. The total complement of temporary firefighters would increase from the current complement of four to 24 temporary firefighters and integrate temporary firefighters into the initial response and depth of response emergency response deployment of the YFPS.

The proposed complement of 24 temporary firefighters would be assigned in groups of six temporary firefighters to each of the four current platoons. One group of six temporary firefighters would be scheduled to be on-call at all times and be alerted through the enhanced alerting process proposed within this FPSOR.