

Minutes - Special Meeting of Council



MEETING DATE: October 11, 2006 – 5:00 pm

LOCATION: The Blue Mountains Council Chamber

PREPARED BY: Stephen Keast, Clerk

A. Call to Order

- Deputy Mayor McKinlay called the meeting to order with all members in attendance save Mayor Anderson and Councillor Martin, both absent due to a previous commitment.
- Town CAO Paul Graham, Fire Chief Ron Doherty, Deputy Chief Rob Collins were also in attendance, Councillor Martin then attending the meeting.
- Duncan then noted the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Town Fire Master Plan recently prepared by Marshall Macklin Monaghan Consultants.
- Ron then distributed a summary of issues raised to date through previous review and consultant recommendations.
- Ron noted the consultants made recommendations that are considered affordable in terms of personnel, renovation and construction.
- Ron further noted the Plan recommends a 4 minute response standard in urban areas and 8 minutes in rural areas.
- Ron then noted the Plan recommended Hall 2 move toward fulltime personnel as recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters is increasingly difficult in the Craighleith area.
- Ron noted the Plan does not recommend any capital purchases not currently contained in the 5 year budget forecast.
- Ron concluded the review by noting the document was still in draft form and a public consultation process is proposed.
- Councillor Gamble questioned applicable response standards, Ron noting it was difficult to establish a benchmarking process to measure performance and response for risk management purposes.
- Mayor Anderson then attended the meeting.
- Ron noted as a tourist destination area, a broad range of services were required including rescue operations.
- Deputy Chief Rob Collins then spoke, noting response standards protect fire fighters as well as ratepayers in terms of demonstrating due diligence and providing adequate level of team response given that a fire gets hotter over time with chance of building collapse increasing correspondingly.
- Deputy Mayor McKinlay then questioned if the Ontario Building Code should take such matters into account, Ron noting fire walls between building sections are designed to withstand fire over certain amounts of time, certain construction methods showing various characteristics of deterioration during a fire.
- Ron then noted there were 3 response standards including the OFM of 10 persons in 10 minutes versus NFPA of 9 persons in 8 minutes.

- Duncan then questioned appropriate standards, Rob noting inclusion of a rescue component with firefighting services introduces the response standards.
- Councillor Martin then questioned how Council can reach an appropriate service standard and level, Rob noting a rescue component combines with one of the response standards.
- Duncan then questioned options for response standards, Rob noting an organization can designate urban and rural response standards in different areas, Duncan noting council would have to review and understand the various standards.
- Paul then noted the mix of volunteers responding can also affect the level of response.
- Michael then stated the service levels selected would determine response standards for protected areas with fire hydrants and unprotected areas without fire hydrants, Ron noting the municipality was mandated to increase fire prevention services in rural areas.
- Councillor McKean then noted most rural residents accept a lesser standard of fire service, Duncan noting a similarity for police and ambulance services.
- Duncan then noted the Plan acknowledges insurance premiums will increase with distance from the fire hall but would reduce with increased expenditures on fire services, John noting the rescue component would be invaluable if people were trapped in a building.
- Rob noted a Fire Underwriters Survey is based on a municipal wide survey and an increase in service would improve the rating and reduce general insurance rates, as would proximity to a firehall or hydrant.
- Paul then noted an information package could be prepared utilizing Fire Underwriter's survey information as well as engineering information on the adequacy of the Town water system.
- Councillor Gamble then noted concern with Plan projections for an increase in expected levels of service with all recommendations implemented, however, without any budget timelines or projections.
- Michael then proposed the Plan be taken to the Public with an organized presentation to ensure understanding of various service level options.
- Mayor Anderson then noted the biggest challenge for Council is to determine the adequate level of service to address present and future growth.
- Councillor McKean then acknowledged the changing demographics of the Town make it more difficult to staff volunteer firehalls.
- Mayor Anderson then noted a Finance Department analysis would be required for Council's consideration of Plan recommendations, Paul suggesting consideration of some Plan recommendations could be considered in the 2007 budget process, including public input.
- Ellen questioned if previous Committee considerations had been implemented into the Plan, Ron replying the consultant had made some revisions.
- Paul noted he would discuss outstanding issues with the consulting firm to determine revisions and final delivery of the Plan.
- Ron & Rob then thanked Council and retired from the Meeting, Council being adjourned.