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STAFF REPORT: Chief Administrative Officer



REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: September 8, 2014
REPORT NO.: CAO.14.10
SUBJECT: Fire Master Plan
PREPARED BY: Troy Speck, CAO

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CAO.14.10, entitled “Fire Master Plan”;

THAT Council immediately suspend the Town’s existing Fire Master Plan, pending further review by Staff and report back to Council;

AND THAT Staff be directed to review the suspended Fire Master Plan (the “Plan”) and make recommendations to Council for reviving the Plan and amending it as deemed appropriate at the time.

B. Background

In 2009, Council endorsed a Fire Master Plan (FMP) for the Town of The Blue Mountains. A Fire Master Plan is used as a long-range planning tool to guide annual department priorities and objectives. The FMP provides a review of the department’s current operations to assist Council in establishing key objectives for the department. The FMP includes recommendations to address both short-term and long-term strategies for the municipality.

As stated above, the FMP is a planning tool, a guide, is not policy and should not be confused with the Town’s By-Law to Establish and Regulate a Fire Department, By-Law 2012-65 (the “E & R By-Law”), which formally establishes the department, how it will be composed and operated, and what core services the department will provide.

C. Analysis

In the time since Council endorsed the Fire Master Plan in 2009, there have been a number of changes impacting the Fire Service, including:

- 3 new full-time fire fighters were hired by the Town;
- The Town has recently lost seven of its trained, “2-hatter” volunteer firefighters, and continues to face challenges attracting and retaining volunteers for Station # 2 in Craighleith;
- The existing Fire Master Plan (FMP) anticipated future growth in the Town would be similar to the growth that had occurred in the years immediately preceding the development of the FMP (ie: approx. 250 units occupied annually between 2003 –

2009); the reality has been that growth in the Town since 2009 has been far less than that (approx. 80 units annually – 455 occupancy permits issued for new units between 2009 and 2014 YTD);

- While the FMP speaks to being a “living document”, and to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, because growth has not matched what was anticipated, no formal systemic review of the Plan has been completed since the Plan was endorsed in 2009, although a review and revision of the Town’s Fire Department E & R By-Law was completed in 2012.

These factors all speak to a changing dynamic for the Town’s Fire Service since the FMP was first endorsed by Council in 2009. As well, 5 years have passed since the Plan was first endorsed, and it should be reviewed. As such, it is recommended that Council suspend the current Fire Master Plan, direct Staff to review the suspended plan, and make recommendations to Council for any changes warranted to the Plan.

D. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

“Providing a strong, well-managed Municipal Government.”

E. Environmental Impacts

N/A

F. Financial Impact

Undetermined at this time.

G. In Consultation With

AJ Lake, Acting Fire Chief

H. Attached

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Troy Speck
Chief Administrative Officer