

STAFF REPORT: Office of The Chief Administrative Officer

REPORT TO: Council
MEETING DATE: July 13, 2009
REPORT NO.: CAO.09.06
SUBJECT: Fire Master Plan
PREPARED BY: Paul Graham,
Chief Administrative Officer

A. Recommendation

THAT Council receive CAO Report 09.06 entitled “Fire Master Plan” dated July 13, 2009 and that Council endorse said Fire Master Plan and;

THAT Council approve the hiring of three new Fire Service staff as outlined in the Fire Master Plan and;

THAT Council authorize the creation of a position entitled Chief Fire Prevention Officer and;

THAT Council authorize the creation of a position entitled Craigeith Station Captain and;

FURTHER THAT Council authorize an increase in the Volunteer Firefighter complement at each Fire Station to 24 from the current approved 20.

B. Background

The Blue Mountains retained the services of MMM Group who prepared a draft Fire Master Plan dated February of 2007. After some discussion among internal Staff and Council, it became apparent that the recommendations in that draft Plan were not affordable. We then entered a process of Peer Review where both the Ontario Fire Marshall’s Office and Peter Corfield & Associates carried out Peer Reviews of the proposed Plan.

During a Council Meeting on October 15, 2008, Chief Doherty and then Deputy Chief Collins introduced Council to a “Fire Service Master Plan Executive Summary” drafted by the Steering Committee. The following Resolution was passed at that Meeting.

“That the Fire Service Master Plan Executive Summary as amended this date move forward in the public process.”

A Public Information Meeting was held on November 24th, 2008 which no one from the general public attended. Staff then invited two Community Groups to Dialogue Sessions on December 10th and 17th, 2008 in order to receive some public feedback.

Since that time, and after consultation with a number of other experts in Fire Services, we are now proposing the adoption of a Fire Master Plan dated July 2009 which has been attached to this report. The Option recommended in this Plan, along with associated recommendations, provide a logical, evidence-based means of proceeding. We believe that this provides the best opportunity for the Town to realize ongoing improvement in Fire Services.

Rather than provide a lengthy summary of the document through the Background of the Report, Staff will make a presentation at the Council Meeting as a platform for discussion and a question and answer period during the Council meeting.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

Goal 2 in the Strategic Plan addresses the Town's Municipal Infrastructure Needs. Action 2.7 anticipates the development of a long range Plan for emergency facilities and services. The current Fire Master Plan provides a road map to ensure continuous improvement in the area of Fire Services.

D. Environmental Impact

Not applicable

E. Budget Impact

The cost implications of implementing the Fire Master Plan for the next several years are outlined in the Report as indicated below.

The Fire Master Plan recommends in 2009, the following:

- (1) Hiring 2 new part-time firefighters/part-time Fire Prevention Officers
- (2) Hiring new Training Officer/Fire Captain
- (3) Creating a position of Chief Fire Prevention Officer
- (4) Creating a position of District Chief at the Craigleith Station
- (5) Increasing the Volunteer Complement at each Fire Hall to 24 from 20

This cost analysis also includes equipment and training requirements. Further, for the purpose of projecting future costs, we have assumed that it will be necessary to hire additional Fire Service Staff in each of the years from 2010 to and including 2012.

In 2007, Council began to build a Reserve to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of the Fire Master Plan. In 2009, an additional \$100,000 was added to the Reserve and the balance now stands at \$352,100. It is recommended that this Reserve be used in 2009 through 2012 at which time it would be totally depleted.

The following table indicates the cost implications:

Fire Master Plan Cost Impacts						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Estimated Total Expenses – New Complement	\$117,500	\$363,300	\$411,600	\$490,000	\$495,000	\$504,000
Previous Years Level of Funding	-	100,000	233,300	341,600	455,400	495,800
Contributions from Reserve	117,500	130,000	70,000	34,600	-	-
Annual Budget Increase	-	133,300	108,300	113,800	39,600	9,200
Percentage Taxation Increase	-	1.4%	1.1%	1.2%	0.4%	0.1%

The future Medium Term costs are far less clear and will depend directly upon the success of the Comprehensive Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program. This will be reviewed annually as part of the Town's Budget process. Should a trend develop where it is necessary to hire a firefighter annually, the cost projections, particularly for 2013 and 2014 will increase.

F. Attached

1. Fire Master Plan

Respectfully submitted,

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Chief Administrative Officer

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Fire Master Plan

July 2009



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Fire Master Plan Steering Committee

The Fire Master Plan is a living document which maps the strategic direction of the Town of The Blue Mountains Fire Services for the next several years. A Steering Committee helped finalize the Plan and will review the Fire Master Plan annually and recommend any amendment deemed necessary to enable administrative staff to create, implement and manage programs to ensure the safety and security of our community.

The Fire Chief will monitor progress in the implementation of the Plan on an ongoing basis, and will report quarterly to the Steering Committee and the Town's Finance and Administration Committee.

Steering Committee Membership

- Fire Chief
- Chief Administrative Officer
- Director of Financial and Information Services
- Deputy Fire Chief

The Steering Committee acknowledges the assistance and advice received during the preparation of this Fire Master Plan. The current active members of the Fire Master Plan Steering Committee support this Plan.

Ron Doherty
Fire Chief

Paul Graham
CAO

Robert Cummings
Director of Financial and
Information Services



Executive Summary

This Report proposes a Fire Master Plan for the Town of The Blue Mountains. It is a living document encompassing the years 2009 to 2020. The Town has been growing rapidly, and this is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. To meet the sizeable challenges associated with that growth, in terms of fire protection, continuous upgrades to the Town's fire services capabilities are needed. These must be started immediately, to address current deficiencies, and staged on a manageable basis over the Master Plan timeline. This Report provides the implementation strategy needed.

The Fire Master Plan Steering Committee evaluated the current service delivery model and proposed changes to ensure that Fire Services is positioned with adequate resources to provide a safe, quality service to our community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The path chosen by the committee was selected from the firm belief that it best meets the needs of the community based on the resources available and anticipated planning and growth models.

A key component of the Plan is public education and prevention measures. While responding to incidents that threaten our community members is a critical role of Fire Services, no amount of money or expenditure of resources can eliminate all injuries, fatalities or loss of property. In fact, a safe community is created and maintained by its citizens. Through public education, application of safety codes and enforcement of regulations, The Blue Mountains Fire Services will implement programs and enforcement tactics that provide our citizens with the tools to make our community safe from fire and other life threatening incidents.

The Blue Mountains continues to be primarily a volunteer fire department. The Fire Master Plan recognizes the tremendous value of the commitment and service provided by volunteer firefighters. These individuals are recognized as the backbone of the service, allowing the community to benefit from professional service delivered in a cost-effective manner. Measure to control the demands placed upon these individuals and the resulting impact on their families (and their employer), is a key consideration of the Plan.

The recommendations consider the Draft Master Plan prepared by the MMM Group, two Peer Reviews, and comments by Fire Services staff and by the Project Steering Committee. Input was also received through a Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Workshop, two Community Dialogue Sessions and a Public Information Centre. Council's comments during their meeting October 15, 2008 helped finalize this Plan.



The Town is growing at a relatively constant rate. While there are approximately 6,600 residential units either in the planning process or designate, which represents an increase of 182% over the number present in 2003, historically, approximately 250 new units have been occupied annually.

Resort developments also continue to grow. The Intrawest/Blue Mountain Resort development alone is expected to attract 2,000,000 day visitors per year. There is also substantial development remaining to be implemented in the Blue Mountain Resort Village. The Town's resort and residential developments bring special challenges to the delivery of municipal fire services, especially in the areas of response requirements, staffing, fire prevention, and education and training. While these modern buildings may be less likely to be involved in a fire, the limitations of modern lightweight construction coupled with the complexities of a significant occupant load present a higher potential for loss of life and property loss.

The Town needs to be prepared for these potential situations. This need compounds the challenges currently facing The Blue Mountains; specifically the ability to accommodate the influx of 'dual citizen' residents and visitors attracted to the area each year, and the Town's difficulty in retaining a sufficient supply of volunteer fire-fighters. The trend over the past years has been a decreasing number of well-trained volunteer fire-fighters, and decreased attendance by volunteers.

A number of continuous improvements to the Town's Fire Service are essential. The proposed Plan recommends that The Blue Mountains Fire Services continue to use "Paid for Service Volunteer Firefighters" who continue to service The Blue Mountains very well. That is not to suggest that there are no challenges. Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment is currently not the problem. Retention is, as many new recruits have an ambition to become permanent career firefighters. And so, to a large extent, the Fire Services success in building the number of well trained Volunteer Firefighters will guide the future.

The Plan does recommend the immediate hiring of 3 new Fire Services employees who will report to the Craighleith Fire Hall. These positions will assist with corporate-wide training, fire prevention, public education and enhance our fire response team.



Guiding Principles

The Fire Services Departments goal is to provide a team of highly trained, caring professionals who lead a collaborative effort to provide the community with efficient service dedicated to protecting and strengthening our community through education, prevention, and rapid intervention at emergencies.

In conjunction with the core values currently being set by the Town, Fire Services is committed to leadership in the delivery of public fire protection through the values of:

- service to the community
- firefighter involvement
- accountability and integrity

In support of this goal and these values, Fire Services will be guided by the following principles:

- Provide for the safety of the public and firefighters
- Provide an effective fire prevention and public education program that is consistent with the requirements of the Fire Protection & Prevention Act and the community
- Conduct an ongoing risk-assessment of the municipality to ensure appropriate delivery of public fire protection services
- Provide an administration process consistent with the needs of the fire service and the community
- Ensure adequate resources are available to provide appropriate response within 10 minutes of an emergency incident being reported except in rural areas further from the Fire Stations.
- Provide training to all ranks within the organization in accordance with the Ontario Fire Service Standards, industry standards and best practices
- Provide a high quality maintenance program to ensure the safety and efficiency of all fire service equipment
- Monitor the core activities and ensure resources are allocated to deliver prompt, effective, efficient, safe and professional fire protection services
- Focus on Fire Prevention, Public Education, Risk Management and Injury Prevention as the most effective vehicles for community protection
- Utilize technology and aggressive staff development strategies to maximize the potential of Fire Services
- Report quarterly to the Fire Master Plan Steering Committee and the Town's Finance and Administration Committee.



Overview of Plan Components

This section contains a range of information and facts that support the recommendations outline in this Fire Master Plan drawn from all the work done to date.

The MMM Report indicates a need for improvements to the Town's existing Fire Service in terms of the number of stations, equipment, apparatus and requirements for staffing. Key indicators of these needs are:

- The Town's growth projections support the need for a future additional station in the Castle Glen area. This is likely several years in the future and should be coordinated with development activity.
- The Blue Mountain Resort Village and the districts of Craigleith and Lora Bay are projected to house a significant amount of development. Lora Bay is asking for additional servicing ahead of the original timeframe.
- Under existing conditions, the Craigleith Fire Station is unable to service some of the more remote parts of the Craigleith district within a 4.0 minute response travel timeframe. At times Fire Services are challenged to have significant well trained firefighters to provide adequate coverage to high intensity, high activity uses such as Blue Mountain Village, which is understood to have a total property value of \$1 billion at build-out.

While there may be ups and downs in the Ontario economy, it is understood that growth in the Village has always exceeded forecasts. Building permit activity peaked in the range of \$110M annually. New Town-wide development is expected to continue at a rate of 250 residential units annually.

An investment in a new fire station also requires an investment in new personnel and new equipment. A review of the Town's existing personnel and apparatus has been documented to determine the necessary resources required to equip the new Fire Station at Castle Glen and to improve the fire service provided by the Town from its existing stations.

The Blue Mountains Fire Master Plan is built on the premise that the Town will continue to maximize the opportunity to use "Paid for Service" Volunteer Firefighters, to augment the Volunteers with Career Firefighters as necessary and to continue to support and be supported by our neighbouring municipalities through Mutual Aid Agreements.



Mutual Aid is a reciprocal program to provide/receive assistance at no cost to the requesting municipality in the case of a major fire emergency in a member community. The Blue Mountains is an active participant in Mutual Aid Plans with Collingwood, Grey Highlands and Meaford. A request for mutual aid is made at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

The following summaries provide a foundation for the recommendations:

Volunteer Firefighters

Volunteer firefighters respond to emergencies from their daily family or business routine when paged. They perform manual work of a hazardous nature involving the fighting of fires, salvage, rescue work and help at accident scenes. Regular training and minor maintenance work on the fire station and fire apparatus is required. Firefighters may be required to make decisions and work without supervision until a fire officer arrives at the scene.

The number of qualified residents willing to act as Volunteer Firefighters continues to decrease. Those that are continuing to volunteer are able to commit limited amounts of time to the required training and emergency response.

Career Firefighters

Career firefighters respond immediately to emergencies as assigned when dispatched. They perform manual work of a hazardous nature involving the fighting of fires, salvage, rescue work and often deliver emergency medical care. Regular training and routine maintenance work on the fire station, equipment and vehicles are required. Firefighters work under the direction of a fire officer at emergency scenes. Career staff can be assigned to complete fire inspections, public education programs, pre-emergency surveys and more detailed training than volunteer staff. Career staff routinely provides training to the volunteer staff.

Composite Service

A Composite Fire Service maintains an efficient complement of volunteer and full-time staff to provide an effective level of emergency incident services to our community. Current call volumes, volunteer firefighter availability and fire response times and the projected increases associated with community growth all suggest that the Town will have to move to a Composite Service during the term of this Fire Master Plan.



Basic Definitions of Response Time Components

It is important to understand the time components that constitute response by a Fire Services vehicle to an emergency. For a volunteer or composite (i.e. combined volunteer and full-time firefighter) service, the key components are:

- Assembly time: this is the time during which volunteers travel to the station in response to an alarm. It varies widely in many municipalities. The goal is to have firefighters living/working within less than a 1 or 2-minute drive, which is frequently not achievable with Volunteer Fire Service;
- Deployment time: the time for the firefighters to put on their uniforms, mount the vehicle and leave the station;
- Travel time: the time from leaving the station to arriving at the emergency scene. A four minute travel time for first response is widely accepted as a best practice; and
- Response time: this encompasses all of the time components noted above.

Basis in Best Practices

This Plan has been developed on the basis of accepted practices and standards in the industry, and it is designed to maintain, or if possible, enhance the Town's Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) rating. The FUS rating affects insurance rates for the Town, its businesses and institutions based on a comprehensive review of the services and programs offered by the Fire Service. The Blue Mountains believes in continuous improvement and that the Fire Service, like every other Department will continue a movement to best practices where practiceable.

A Master Plan must be based on the most detailed and reliable standards or guidelines available for its subject, but also recognize local conditions. The standards of the Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) are appropriate for single-family dwellings. In more developed areas, the standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are appropriate. The NFPA is a professional association of fire service officials and others in emergency service industry, and they represent the most informed body on the subject. The NFPA standards represent best practices in the industry, and are similar to accepted levels of service in the transportation field.

Like roads and their intersections, one must plan to provide the capacity needed to accommodate the traffic and so one must plan the fire service to minimize risks in a community.



Level of Service

The Master Plan recommends the “level of service” to be provided by the Fire Service. Upon its approval, Council will then need to pass a new by-law as required to replace the existing By-law No.98-7, being a by-law to establish and regulate the Town’s Fire Service Department.

Level of service can be defined primarily in terms of the range of programs offered and the time benchmarks for response to incidents. The Town offers first response fire suppression now, as well as various specialty rescue services. The preferred level of service should include building search and rescue as well as interior firefighting operations as a core service because of the type of development occurring in the Town. Fire Service is currently challenged at times to deliver this level of service when fewer than optimal numbers of trained and experienced firefighters attend the scene.

Building search and rescue as a core service is critical for any community. Also, with the increasing urbanization of the Town, response time guidelines appropriate to that form of development are recommended. Therefore, it is critical that The Blue Mountains continue to build a Fire Service of well trained firefighters who are capable of effectively delivering their mandated emergency responses.

For the safety of responding firefighters, these operations should be carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the applicable OFM and NFPA standards. These standards outline acceptable response times for both urban and rural areas, as well as acceptable staffing levels and other operational requirements. Adhering to these and other standards identified in this Report is essential in ensuring that the Town’s future communities are properly serviced by an effective fire service offering safety to the Town and the fire-fighters.



Call Volume Statistics

The statistics documented in the following table indicate some clear trends including:

- Total number of calls are increasing in the Craigleith Service area
- The total number of actual fire events have declined over this period of record
- The property loss dollars has remained remarkably stable.

Call Volume Statistics							
Year	Thornbury	Craigleith	Total Calls	Number of Fires		Total Fires	Total Dollar Loss
				Thornbury	Craigleith		
2003	73	69	142	21	16	37	\$ 1,204,00
2004	94	71	165	24	9	33	576,000
2005	105	93	198	24	11	35	997,500
2006	77	127	204	18	15	33	527,000
2007	82	168	250	18	5	23	371,000
2008	97	142	239	13	12	25	822,000

The 2008 Total Dollar Loss at \$822,000 includes \$340,000 of Loss in neighbouring municipalities to which the Blue Mountains Fire Services responded. The Loss in the Town is \$482,000.

While there is no direct evidence to confirm this, it may be reasonable to speculate that the trends in “Total Fires” and “Total Dollar Loss” are related to the significant effort made in the area of Fire Prevention and public education over the past few years.



Future Strategic Direction

Provide Training and Development Opportunities to all Staff and Volunteers

The key to effective, proactive service delivery is having a team of well-trained, empowered and competent staff. A comprehensive training regime has been developed to equip and train staff with the skills they will need to meet the challenges as emergency responders.

The core components of the training program have been specifically designed for the needs of our community, with a view to developing fire responders who possess a very high degree of competency across a broad spectrum of services and skill sets (i.e. fire suppression, vehicle extrication, specialized rescue services and support of Emergency Medical Services).

The Deputy Fire Chief and Training Officer(s) will manage all aspects of staff training including the foundational Recruit Training Program. A comprehensive training manual has been developed as a reference tool that is tied closely to IFSTA (International Fire Service Training Association) and OFM (Office of the Fire Marshal) curriculum materials and standards.

Successful recruits follow a number of training steps until they achieve Firefighter status.

Step 1: Recruit Training:

- Recruit training is 12 weeks long and consists primarily of orientation, health & safety, professionalism and very basic firefighter skills. While doing this training, recruits get an understanding of what the job entails and the commitment required, along with the fire department getting a better idea of each individual's skills, ability and commitment.

Step 2: Probationary Firefighter:

- The successful recruits from the recruit training are then integrated into the weekly training of the firefighters and they are referred to as Probationary Firefighters. The Probationary Firefighters will start into Component #1 training following the Ontario Fire Marshall curriculum. Component #1 is fire suppression based training. Once these skills have been developed the firefighters move to Component #2 of the curriculum which is specialized rescue. These two components of the curriculum take 12 to 14 months to complete. Training is held once a week and weekend training sessions are held for selected components that require more intensive practical demonstration and instruction.



Step 3: Firefighter Status:

- When each individual Probationary Firefighter has completed these two core components of the Ontario Fire Marshall Curriculum, it is then up to the Captains to assess their skills and capabilities before they are granted Firefighter Status. If the skills are not fully developed they can be kept on as probationary until their skills improve. They also require a DZ license in order to obtain Firefighter Status.

Probationary Firefighters are gradually integrated into fire service operational activities (emergency responses) as they develop the necessary skill sets to perform in these environments. The goal is to ensure that response crews are properly balanced in terms of their “experience” levels during this process. The knowledge, skills and abilities garnered by our recruits during the training program enable them to perform as part of a proficient team that serve our community on a daily basis. The training emphasizes teamwork and adherence to established practices, while at the same time providing staff with the confidence to be innovative problem solvers. Above all, safety is promoted in all activities.

The current minimum competencies required prior to attending emergency incidents include:

- basic patient care
- automated external defibrillation
- personal protective equipment
- fire streams
- interior fire attack

Our Volunteer firefighters normally attend training on a weekly basis.

Public Education Program

This Plan anticipates a focus on proactive public education and the implementation of safety programs as the most effective means to achieve community protection (i.e. reduce personal injury, deaths and property loss). The actions are:

- Continue safety education programs in day care centres, nursery schools and the elementary school in The Blue Mountains.
- Enhance the Smoke Alarm Program for residents and ensure that missing or faulty smoke alarms are replaced promptly.
- Continue to deliver appropriate provincial safety programs (i.e. “Older and Wiser”, “Senior Fire Safety”, “Home Safe Home”) to specific target groups



- Continue with effective media relations and provide timely media releases to maintain a high profile for fire safety education
- Identify resources and new initiatives needed to meet education objectives
- Monitor and assess fire and emergency response trends in order to develop and deliver appropriate education programs
- Assess public fire safety awareness on an ongoing basis

Fire Prevention, Inspection & Investigation Program

The employment of proactive prevention, inspection and investigation services as the second-most effective vehicle for community protection is recommended. The actions are:

a) Prevention & Inspection:

- Work with Building and By-law Enforcement on matters related to Fire Codes, Life Safety, Special Events, Fireworks, Open Air Burning and others.
- Work with the community to ensure compliance with Ontario Fire Code and other applicable codes, regulations, standards and municipal by-laws
- Monitor emergency response trends to assess effectiveness of service delivery and adjust Prevention and Inspection programs to meet community needs
- Monitor information and statistics for trends to assess effectiveness and adjust response and prevention programs to meet community needs
- Act as an information source and advisor to the community and Council
- Maintain an effective, cooperative relationship with the community, clients, colleagues, peers and other safety agencies
- Work with the community to encourage the installation and use of modern technology in early detection and warning systems (i.e. smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, gas/fire detection and alarm systems)
- Work with the community to encourage the installation and use of automatic suppression systems including residential sprinkler systems

b) Investigation:

- Effectively determine the origin and cause of fires
- Develop an effective, cooperative relationship with investigating agencies
- Update staff with the most current skills and knowledge required for effective investigation
- Conduct enforcement as appropriate, assist the Provincial Prosecutor and attend court



Options to Consider

Once the Draft Fire Master Plan was completed by the MMM Group, the Town has undertaken two peer reviews of the study. The key issue is whether Fire Service should remain primarily staffed by volunteers. Based on these peer reviews the Project Steering Committee, in conjunction with some Fire Services Staff, developed two options for the Town's strategic direction in moving forward. These options and the pros and cons are as follows:

Option 1

Immediately hire 3 new Fire Services employees who will report to the Craigleith Fire Hall. These positions will assist with corporate-wide training, fire prevention, public education and enhance our fire response team.

And further, implement a new Comprehensive Volunteer Recruitment and Retention program in an effort to create a stable well trained volunteer firefighter complement. Annually review the complement and decide if the Town should move to a Composite Service or remain primarily a Volunteer Service considering the following:

- a. If the annual strategic review shows a high likelihood of attracting and retaining sufficient well trained volunteers, maintain the "Comprehensive Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy" as an interim step in the Fire Master Plan course of action, with the long-term plan of moving to a Composite Service with full-time staff as required to support the volunteer complement, if necessary.
- b. If the experience shows a low likelihood of attracting sufficient volunteers, commence hiring permanent full-time firefighters with numbers to be reviewed annually.

Option 2

As recommended in the Draft Fire Master Plan by the MMM Group, immediately move toward a composite system, with a volunteer complement supporting up to twenty full-time firefighters.



Pros and Cons of the Options

Option	Pros	Cons
1. Hiring 3 new Fire Service employees and implement a new comprehensive Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- least costly option- comprehensive approach will explore all options for creating a sustainable volunteer service- success or failure of the program will demonstrate what, if any, level of full-time fire department staffing is required- new hires will provide immediate resources to all fire services areas of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- will delay the process of reaching staffing levels needed to achieve some best practices- may expose the Town to some risk, as some best practices may not be attained in the short term
2. Move to a Composite Fire Force of 20 permanent firefighters and 40 volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- will provide a faster solution to on-going Fire Department volunteer retention challenges- provide a more stable complement of firefighters- should reduce response times and facilitate best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- significantly more expensive- time-frame for significant service improvements will depend on the Town's ability to afford full-time staffing



Staff Complement

Maintaining the Volunteer nature of Fire Services will be the most daunting task faced by Fire Services administration and the Fire Master Plan Steering Committee. A number of factors impact the time it takes Volunteers to reach the station and therefore affects the ability of the Fire Service to achieve the goal of 10 firefighters reaching the fire site in 10 minutes for structural fires. Those factors include but are not limited to the following:

Urban Area Growth	Preparatory Activities	Weather
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Traffic conditions – congestion resulting from increased traffic volume▪ Growing numbers of controlled intersections▪ Distance from residential neighbourhoods to the fire stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parenting – ensuring someone is available to watch over their children▪ Current task involvement – completing or safely terminating what he/she is doing at home/work▪ Many recreation and social activities take place away from the settlement areas, increasing the time needed to arrive at the fire station	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Removing frost/snow from vehicle▪ Road conditions▪ Increased call volume during poor weather▪ Slower flow of traffic during inclement weather.

There is never any assurance that any volunteer staff will be available to respond at any given time. And then, of course, there is the more recent challenge of retaining new recruits.

It is critical to monitor trends in staff response. Fire administration staff must continually assess and implement measures aimed at maintaining adequate numbers of available staff for emergency response. Taking into account vacation time and other events it is advisable to immediately increase the volunteer complement at each of the two Fire Halls to 24 from the current 20.

Career Firefighters that are available more hours each week will reduce the demands placed on volunteer staff. Trends indicate the greatest increase in incidents each year occurs in low-risk incidents such as CO detector activations and burn complaints. Career and appropriate management staff except the Fire Chief would respond to these incidents whenever possible in order to limit the impact on volunteer staff. When not responding to emergency incidents, career crews are assigned to inspection, fire code enforcement, defibrillator training, public education duties, pre-emergency planning, and maintenance responsibilities.

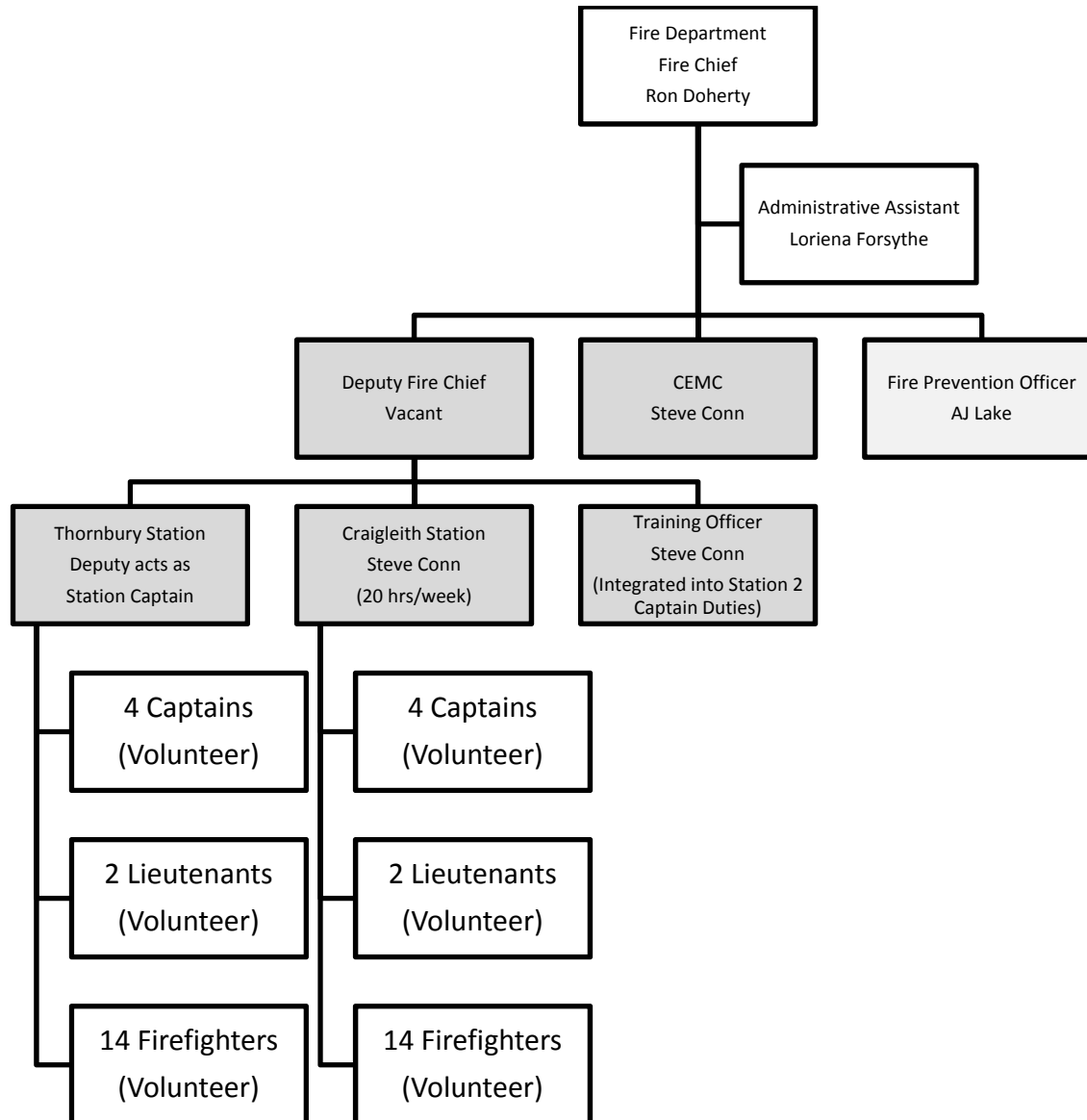


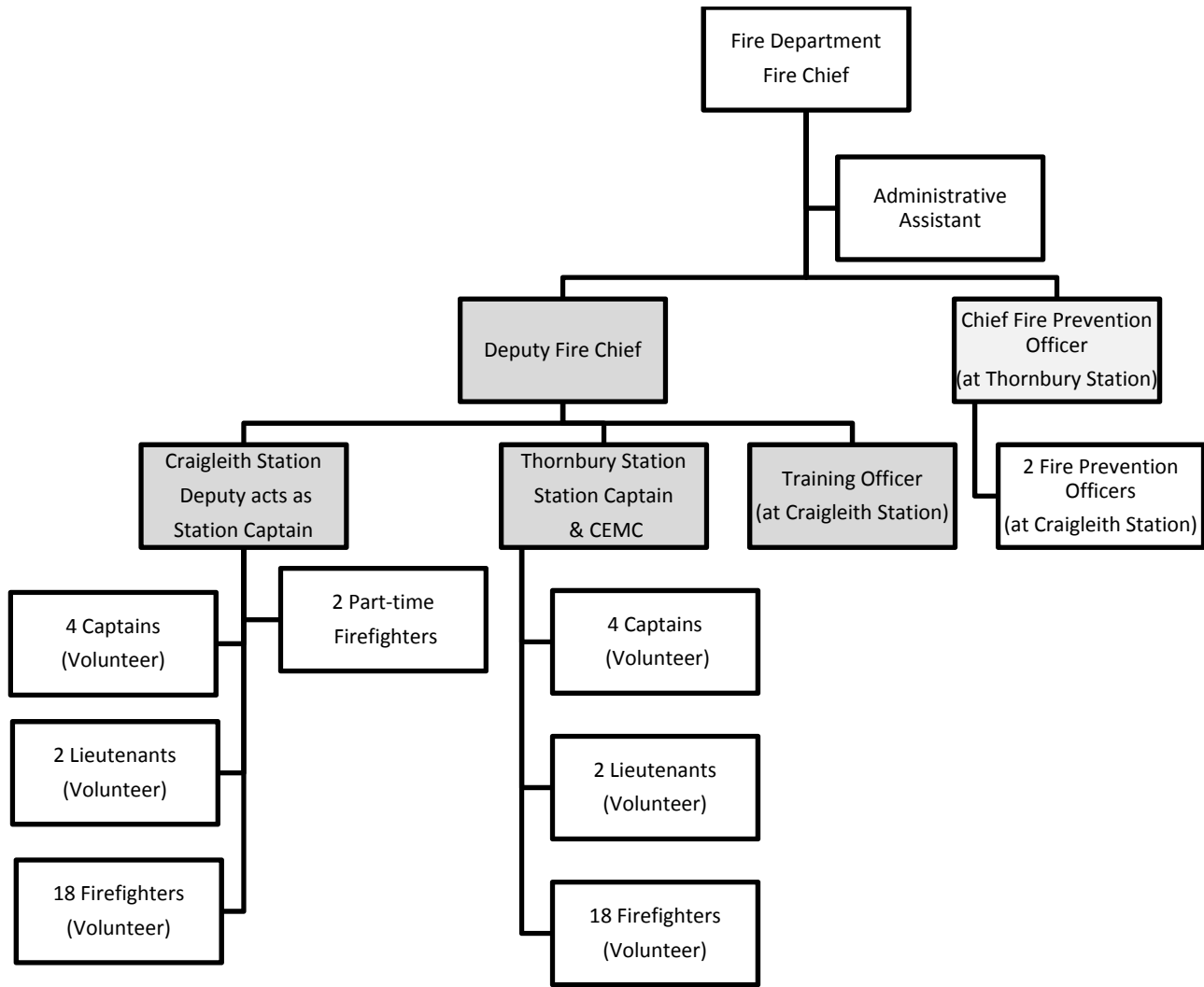
In accordance with the Fire Master Plan, staffing levels and response time will be scrutinized on an ongoing basis to determine where existing and additional staff can be best utilized. While current trends indicate supporting volunteer staff with career staff, it is difficult to justify moving to a Composite Fire Service at the present time because of call volumes. It is very likely that The Blue Mountains will have to begin hiring career Firefighters in the near future.

Option Recommendation

The recommended option is Option 1, because it provides a logical, evidence-based means of proceeding. It therefore appears to provide the best opportunity to realize improvements in the Fire Service. There have been discussions with Collingwood about Fire Services and this dialogue should continue.

Existing and Proposed Fire Services Organization Charts are attached as the next two pages of this Report to assist in understanding the impacts of this Recommendation.







Final Recommendations

(a) Level of Service

The Town should define the level of service for fire protection as being first response fire suppression, including offensive (interior) firefighting as well as interior search and rescue, in order to ensure the safety of its residents and visitors. Specifically:

- For low-density development (i.e. areas largely made up of single-family dwellings), the OFM “10 in 10” guideline should be applied. This expects ten firefighters on-scene within ten minutes, 90 percent of the time;
- The small section of the municipality including and surrounding the Blue Mountain Resort Village is more urban in its makeup, from an emergency response standpoint. We recommend an enhanced response in terms of both manpower and response time for emergency responses in this zone. If Council should direct the Fire Department to continue to provide interior fire attack and search and rescue in the more complex structures within the municipality, we recommend the application of a staffing standard which exceeds the OFM “10-in-10” guideline.

Many of the buildings, while they may not be “high-rises” by definition, present the same challenges that a high-rise would. The population density is more typical of an urban area, and there is the additional challenge of a population made up mainly of transient residents. These factors make the task of evacuating, accounting for and possibly rescuing these residents extremely difficult and labor-intensive.

These operations should be carried out in accordance with the appropriate NFPA guidelines for the organization and deployment of fire services. Compliance with these standards will help to ensure responder safety, maximize the efficiency of fire protection services, and minimize the Town’s potential exposure to liability. The Town should base its fire service planning on appropriate sections of NFPA Guideline 1710 for the highly urbanized area. Guideline 1710 addresses the organization and deployment of fire departments in urbanized areas.

It has been a widely accepted practice in the Ontario Fire Service to draw on this standard when developing Standard Operating Guidelines, even if the standard is not adopted in its entirety. The suggested response would include a pumper with an initial response crew of four, on scene within four minutes of alarm, followed by an additional ten responders on scene within 10 minutes; this guideline would be expected to be met 90% of the time, per the NFPA Standard.



- The Project Steering Committee recommends that the Firefighter complement be reviewed annually. A more detailed review of the Fire Master Plan should be undertaken every 5 years.
- The Fire Services component of the Development Charge Bylaw is currently under review, in order to maximize the amount of capital available for the recommended improvements. The only two major sources of revenue for the plan are DCs and taxes; a small amount of revenue could be obtained through user fees for services such as inspections. The basis for level of service in the DC bylaw should be reviewed, in order to determine if an adjustment is possible to the historic 10-year level of service, so that the Town can obtain additional capital for these necessary improvements.

(b) Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy recommendations have been grouped as follows:

- Immediate/short-term recommendations - These are expected to be needed within the 0-5 year timeframe. Where these have an immediate priority, consideration has been given to how these relate to the Town's budget process;
- Medium-term recommendations - These are expected to be needed in the 5-10 year timeframe;
- Non-time sensitive recommendations – These are program or policy changes which the Fire Service should make as soon as practically possible, in terms of the Service being able to manage their development and integration. They do not relate to a particular timeline or development, but are needed to address current deficiencies or to cope with growth on a general level.

It should be noted that the timing of some improvements is based to some extent on current trends in development. If these accelerate or decelerate, the timing may need to be reviewed. The years cited below have been based on these current development trends, and should be seen in that context. It is important to maintain the timings presented below, to retain or improve the FUS rating and adhere to the response guidelines discussed in this Report.

(c) Immediate/Short-term Actions

These actions are recommended for the 0 to 5 year timeframe. Development “triggers” for action are cited in cases where the timing of new development is uncertain; the actions proposed are reflective of general expectations for increases in call demand, but are left open for further study by the Fire Service as development continues.



Recommendation	Specific Year (if applicable)
<p>1. Implement an improved volunteer retention strategy (as described above under Option 1), to attempt to bring the number of volunteers up to the prescribed roster levels. The strategy would involve increased compensation based on level of training, so that the time a volunteer is trained to the level required of a full-time fire-fighter, compensation should be approximately at that level as well. The Town should also consider providing some level of employment benefits to the volunteers, and encourage career growth and development in the Blue Mountains. This is not expected to entirely replace the need for hiring full-time staff.</p>	2009
<p>2. Develop a program to continuously network with employers in The Blue Mountains to encourage them to accommodate their employees who wish to be volunteer firefighters.</p>	
<p>3. The continued use of the OFM’s Recruitment and Retention Guide as a minimum standard in developing new strategies for volunteer recruitment is recommended. These guidelines, along with Town-specific enhancements, should form the basis of the Comprehensive Recruitment and Retention program.</p>	2009
<p>4. Increase the Volunteer Complement at each Fire Station to 24 from 20.</p>	
<p>5. Create 2 new positions, “part-time firefighter / part-time Fire Prevention Officer”, as a key component of the Comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Program.</p>	2009
<p>6. Restructure the current role of Fire Prevention Officer to that of Chief Fire Prevention Officer, in order to better reflect the responsibilities of the position, including the supervision of a number of part-time FPO positions.</p>	2009
<p>7. Create the position of Station Captain at the Craigleith Station. This new position would encompass the positions of Station Captain and supervisor of operations in the eastern half of the Fire Department’s response area.</p>	2009
<p>8. Create the position of Training Officer/Fire Captain with the responsibility for the oversight of the Department’s overall training program and supervision of the existing Trainer Facilitators at both stations. The successful candidate would also be expected to fulfil the role of Fire Captain and would respond to emergencies as such. This position will also provide first aid and CPR training to Staff in other Departments.</p>	2009



Recommendation	Specific Year (if applicable)
9. Implement the expanded Public Education Program and the Fire Prevention, Inspection & Investigation Program as outlined in the Plan.	2010
10. Undertake a public education initiative via the resort operators, to make visitors more aware of the need to provide a clear path for emergency vehicles. Work with the operators to define the form of that program, and participate in its implementation. This is conceived as (at minimum) including notices in hotel rooms, and on informational materials distributed by the resorts.	2009
11. Conclude an agreement Grey County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) for the construction of a new EMS station at the Craigleith Fire Station site. Ensure that the site planning and design also allows for the expansion of the existing Fire Station	2009
12. Meet with the development community to review the issue of sprinklering low-density housing, focusing on the benefits of sprinklers for fire suppression in isolated pockets of development. This would be a voluntary program given the current lack of provincial legislation. Assuming that consensus on this benefit is obtained, proceed to make this a condition of approval for low-density housing approvals in areas outside the 4-minute travel time contour for the existing fire stations.	2010
13. Complete the construction of the new EMS station and the expansion of Fire Station # 2.	2010-11
14. Based on the results of an annual review of the Comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Program, begin the hiring of full-time firefighters for the Craigleith Station. The action plan should be revised as appropriate, based on continuing annual reviews of the program and an on-going needs assessment of Fire Department staffing.	2010 or beyond (depending on program results / funding availability)
15. It is recommended that the dispatch service acquire the capability of electronically sending data to each Fire Station, so that running route information (running cards) can be printed at each Fire Station, at the time of dispatching. This will assist in providing faster response.	2010



(d) Medium Term Actions

These actions are recommended for the 5 to 10 year timeframe.

Recommendation	Specific Year (if applicable)
1. Reserve property for Station 3 in the Castle Glen development area.	2014
2. It is recommended that fire-fighters at the Craigleith Fire Station be trained and utilized to conduct fire inspections, assist with pre-planning and perform public education tasks, to assist the CFPO.	2014
3. Review staffing needs for the Thornbury Station when 500 residential units are developed in Lora Bay, based on call volume and response time adequacy	2014 – beyond (based on development and economic indicators)
4. Design and tender the construction of Station 3 in Castle Glen, then proceed to construction when the development reaches approximately 500 occupied units (or if total call volume accelerates the need). It is expected that three bays will be required. Construction of this station is expected to take place beyond 2015 (in the period 2015 to 2018). This new station will also require a new Pumper Truck and Tanker Truck.	Beyond 2018(estimated, based on development expectations – when 500 units are developed in Castle Glen)



(e) Non-Time Sensitive Recommendations

Some recommended actions are not time-sensitive, in relation to development. The Fire Service should undertake these changes as soon as is practical, based on funding and ability to manage the changes. These include:

1. Areas with low fire flows from hydrants should be modified to increase flow rates, via introduction of larger water mains, looping of mains, adjustments to pressure relief valves, and installation of booster pumps. This would be an ongoing program of improvements, to be coordinated with the Engineering and Public Works Department.
2. All hydrants should be tested, maintained and colour coded in accordance with NFPA Standard 291. This is a standard intended to assist in the efficiency of fire suppression.
3. It is recommended that the FUS publication, "Water Supply for Public Fire Protection" be consulted and used as a guide when developing and/or expanding the water distribution system.
4. It is recommended that the municipality maintain its existing formal Vehicle Replacement Program for Fire Service vehicles.
5. It is recommended that there be an annual review of the operating budget for the Training Division, as the municipality grows, to cover the increased requirement of courses, training materials and equipment.
6. It is recommended that consideration be given to the use of a written examination for Officer Positions.
7. It is recommended that any new facilities or facility expansions be designed to house modern fire fighting apparatus and equipment, administration offices, training room and full-time staffing requirements.
8. There are a number of recommendations specific to fire prevention. These are as follows:
 - a) Firefighters should be recruited such that their duties include fire prevention duties during the times they are not actively responding to emergencies. It is a common practice within the Fire Service to assign routine inspections to on-duty firefighters. The thinking is that having these firefighters out in the community inspecting properties only serves to make them more familiar with these buildings, something which could become very valuable in the case of an emergency;



- b) Maintaining the current requirement for annual inspections of commercial properties within the municipality, in order to maintain our high standards of compliance with the Fire Code and other legislation;
- c) Continue the existing pre-planning program. This program defines the “plan of attack” for specific properties of concern, and the pre-plans enhance firefighter safety and the effectiveness of the response.



Costing Implications

The Fire Master Plan recommends in 2009, the following:

- (1) Hiring 2 new part-time firefighters/part-time Fire Prevention Officers
- (2) Hiring new Training Officer/Fire Captain
- (3) Creating a position of Chief Fire Prevention Officer
- (4) Creating a position of District Chief at the Craighleith Station
- (5) Increasing the Volunteer Complement at each Fire Hall to 24 from 20

This cost analysis also includes equipment and training requirements. Further, for the purpose of projecting future costs, we have assumed that it will be necessary to hire additional Fire Service Staff in each of the years from 2010 to and including 2012.

In 2007, Council began to build a Reserve to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of the Fire Master Plan. In 2009, an additional \$100,000 was added to the Reserve and the balance now stands at \$352,100. It is recommended that this Reserve be used in 2009 through 2012 at which time it would be totally depleted.

The following table indicates the cost implications:

Fire Master Plan Cost Impacts						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Estimated Total Expenses – New Complement	\$117,500	\$363,300	\$411,600	\$490,000	\$495,000	\$504,000
Previous Years Level of Funding	-	100,000	233,300	341,600	455,400	495,800
Contributions from Reserve	117,500	130,000	70,000	34,600	-	-
Annual Budget Increase	-	133,300	108,300	113,800	39,600	9,200
Percentage Taxation Increase	-	1.4%	1.1%	1.2%	0.4%	0.1%

The future Medium Term costs are far less clear and will depend directly upon the success of the Comprehensive Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program. This will be reviewed annually as part of the Town’s Budget process. Should a trend develop where it is necessary to hire a firefighter annually, the cost projections, particularly for 2013 and 2014, will increase.



Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Workshop - Town of The Blue Mountains

Summary of Discussion

June 16, 2008
Beaver Valley Community Centre

Welcome and Introductions

Discussion Framework

- Focus on recruitment and retention
- Purpose is to discuss ideas and create a portfolio of ideas
- No one initiative in itself will lead to success
- Outcome(s) of this workshop will be presented at a future meeting of Council and is a critical component of the greater Fire Master Plan
- Come up with a menu of ideas which are practicable

Overview of Discussion

Introduction

- James Zimmerman, Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, provided an overview of the Ontario Fire Marshal's recommended recruitment and retention practices.
- Participants then moved into a workshop style discussion to identify several methods of Recruiting Paid Volunteer Firefighters, and concerns and/or questions regarding the methods and ideas, as noted in the brackets below.

Employee-based Ideas

- Participants suggested that a variety of benefits could attract Volunteer Firefighters to the Town's Fire Service. Ideas included:
 - Provide a housing allowance (Could this be construed as discrimination of non-Firefighters?)
 - Provide benefits, including pension (Would this mean that Volunteer Firefighters would now be considered having part-time status, rather than volunteer status?)
 - Provide professional development plans and/or professional development opportunities
 - Arrange for a family doctor for the Volunteer Firefighter and his/her family
 - Provide priority membership and/or privileges for the Thornbury Harbour



- Provide summer job opportunities for Volunteer Firefighters' children
- Provide internship opportunities for Volunteer Firefighters' children
- Provide car dealership discounts and other comparable community business discounts
- Offer complimentary ski passes
- Offer spousal employment to the Volunteer Firefighters' Spouses
- Provide local annual memberships, i.e. fitness, arts, culture
- Create a gym or workout facility at the Fire Hall
- Guarantee a certain number of hours and level of compensation through scheduling or an on-call process whereby Volunteer Firefighters commit to serving on a set number of weekends, days and nights, with on-call compensation
- Ensure financial rewards for training and merit-based accomplishments
- Create a tiered compensation structure
- Provide retention compensation
- Create a signing bonus
- Provide affordable housing for Volunteer Firefighters within proximity to fire halls, which may include:
 - Town-owned Volunteer Firefighter condominiums
 - Developing incentives to local landowners to rent to Volunteer Firefighters, which may include a reduced water and/or wastewater rate, cash in lieu or a property tax credit (Would this be permissible according to the Ontario Municipal Act?)
- Develop a program to educate and recruit employers to actively promote the Town's recruitment and retention efforts.

Employer-based Ideas

- Participants suggested the following ideas to increase Employer support for Volunteer Firefighter Staff members. Ideas included:
 - Build awareness of recruitment challenges (There may be some jobs 'where you just can't leave for a fire call'.)
 - Strengthen the overall communication between Town (Staff and Elected Officials), Employers, Employees and Fire Services
 - Town to subsidize Employee's WSIB
 - Town to offer Employee health and dental benefits through Employer to Employee
 - Town to provide property tax credit to Employer
 - Town to waive tipping fees for Employer
 - Encourage Farmers with accommodation space to provide accommodation for Volunteer Firefighters and employment opportunities on the farm
 - Provide severances to Farmers to build new housing, geared to Volunteer Firefighters
- It was also noted that it would be beneficial to do a survey of the Labour Market and Employment Sectors to identify Employers that may be more likely to have Volunteer Firefighters on Staff. This would inform an overall strategy relating to Employer-based incentives.

Ideas to Attract Town Staff/Potential Town Staff to Become Volunteer Firefighters

- Participants indicated that the Town could recruit and retain Volunteer Firefighters through new Hiring and Human Resources Policies. Ideas included:
 - Provide career opportunities for Volunteer Firefighters
 - Encourage outside Town Staff to become Volunteer Firefighters and ensure the work they do is in close proximity to the Fire Hall
 - Develop plans to ensure coverage of duties at Town when those Volunteer Firefighters on Town Staff are called



Target Populations and Messaging

- Participants also noted that in the future, it might be beneficial to discuss different target populations for recruitment. These included:
 - Youth
 - Tradespersons
 - Farmers
 - Military Personnel
 - Retirees
 - Women
- It was suggested that messaging of the need for Volunteer Firefighters and the benefits of Volunteer Firefighting be tailored for each target population.
- With respect to recruiting women:
 - It was suggested that the Town provide community daycare or emergency daycare provision for fire calls, training sessions. It was noted that this might be a benefit for any Volunteer, male or female, with a young family.
- With respect to recruitment of youth:
 - It was suggested that through the Cadet organizations and Co-op programs, the Town could build interest in Youth to become Volunteer Firefighters (There was concern noted about how we would enable Youth to do the 'fun stuff' to keep them engaged).
 - It was suggested to invite Youth to a Training Night at the Fire Hall.
 - It was suggested to work with journeypersons and the apprenticeship branch of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities to develop a plan to build a bridge between local apprenticeship opportunities and Volunteer Firefighting.

Overall Challenges

- At the end of the workshop, the following were noted as overall challenges to any recruitment initiative:
 - Existing inflexible frameworks
 - Cost
 - Big effort to develop co-op programs
 - Big effort to develop any programs

Next Steps and Closing Remarks

- At the conclusion of the session, it was stated that a report to Council outlining the workshop discussion will be prepared and will include recommendations to Council on practicable recruitment and retention ideas for release at a Public Meeting on the Fire Master Plan.



Fire Master Plan Public Information Centre - Town of The Blue Mountains

November 24, 2008

Only two Volunteer Firefighters dropped in. No comments were received from the Public.



Fire Services Master Plan: Community Dialogue Session Summary

1.0 Introduction

As part of the Town's Fire Services Master Plan Consultation Process, the Town, in conjunction with Facilitator Rob Potter, moved forward with the next step in the Fire Services Master Plan Review by hosting two Community Dialogue Sessions. The Dialogue Sessions took place on December 10, 2008 and December 17, 2008 and were integral to a review of the Fire Services Master Plan. The Community Dialogue Sessions were expected to meet the following objectives:

- Garner a clearer understanding of the public's knowledge of current Fire Services;
- Identify participants' expectations with respect to The Blue Mountains Fire Services; and
- Identify the opinions of Participants with respect to the Fire Services Master Plan.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 *Recruitment*

Community Dialogue Participants were selected by direct invite to garner a broad representation of residents, business and industry leaders, services club affiliates and members of the agricultural community.

2.2 *Discussion Guide*

In conjunction with Rob Potter, Facilitator, the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains developed the following discussion guide for each of the two dialogue sessions:

- Provide overview of purpose of the meeting;
- Garner opinions regarding the Fire Services Document; and
- Garner opinions regarding the expected level of Fire Services for The Blue Mountains.



3.0 Session 1: December 10, 2008

3.1 Participants

The following individuals participated in the December 10, 2008 Community Dialogue Session:

Cathy Innes	Resident and Volunteer with The Blue Mountains Library and Beaver Valley Outreach
Brad Forrest	Resident and Director of Human Resources, Breaker Technology, Incorporated
Don Braden	Resident and Executive Director, Blue Mountain Village Association
Jim Dobson	Resident
Peggy Slama	Resident and Volunteer with Beaver Valley Agricultural Society
Alvin Weatherall	Representative of Blue Mountain Resorts, Ltd.
Rob Potter	Facilitator
Ron Doherty	Fire Chief, The Blue Mountains Fire Department
Rob Collins	Deputy Fire Chief, The Blue Mountains Fire Department
Lorien Forsythe	Administrative Assistant, The Blue Mountains Fire Department

3.2 Discussion

Recruitment and Retention

“How successful has recruitment been?”

Response: “Since the recruitment a month or so ago, we now have a full compliment, remembering that the new recruits require a significant amount of training before they can be considered Firefighters who could enter a burning building. There is discussion, which came from the Recruitment and Retention workshop in June that we could, with Council’s approval, increase the Volunteer compliment from 20 at each hall to 24. The biggest problem we face is the fact that the recruitment and retention comes in waves. We could have a full compliment now and a few months down the road be down several again because of Firefighters moving on to full-time Firefighter positions in the city, Firefighters deciding that it takes up to much of their own free time, family issues etc.”

“Have you considered any retention initiatives?”

Response: “During a Recruitment and Retention workshop in June there were several initiatives noted that might help keep Volunteers, which are being looked at. However, we are finding that a good 50% are leaving for many reasons as previously



stated including those hired from College Pre-Fire Service courses. They come on as Volunteers, get their practical training and move on to full-time positions in the city.”

Response: “One of the biggest problems is retaining the Volunteers long enough that they are experienced and trained to the standard of a full-time Firefighter. The Ontario Fire Marshal’s Office requires 10 Firefighters in 10 minutes to a call. Those 10 Firefighters are to be fully trained and that is the problem we have now here; we have a full complement of Volunteer Firefighters but only a small number of them have been on the department for over five years. It takes a good five years to get these Volunteers trained to a point that you would let them go into a burning building.”

“You may need to look at a part-time service where Volunteers are brought on and paid and then given part-time jobs elsewhere, such as Blue Mountain Resorts, to supplement their wages.”

“Retention seems to be a big issue and I wonder if the department has looked at younger co-op students as they do at BTI with apprenticeships. Perhaps conducting exit interviews to see why staff are leaving would be helpful.”

Response: “We have taken on Co-op Students in the past, but they either decide that this work isn’t for them or if they do they go off to College to do the Pre-Fire Service programs and then look for full-time work in the larger departments. Exit interviews are being done.”

“Could Firefighters from the city who work 24 hours shifts and have several days off come on as Volunteers?”

Response: “With unions, there is a problem known as ‘double hatters’ and Firefighters are not allowed to be Volunteers on their off time. However, with that being said, there have been some areas where that is questionable.”

“Volunteers are being paid, but how much and should they be compensated more?”

Response: “If Volunteers make it to every call and every practice they can make a maximum amount of \$10,000 with no benefits. They are eligible for WSIB if an injury occurs while firefighting. Full-time Firefighters would make a wage of \$45,000 - \$65,000, before benefits.”

“What types of jobs do our Volunteer Firefighters have?”



Response: "Most at Hall 2 are working at ski clubs or are self employed in snow plowing and grass cutting, for example. At Hall 1, it varies between industry (BTI), Town employees, self-employment and ski clubs."

"Have employers been asked to help out with retention initiatives?"

Response: "That can be a problem as employers do not want their staff leaving their jobs to respond to calls. For example, Blue Mountain Resort Ski Patrols only allow one Firefighter to leave at any given time."

Full-time Firefighter Complement

"I think that the ideal number would be 8 full-time Firefighters and the rest Volunteers. Twenty full-time Firefighters is too many at this time."

"I would like to see staffing increased so there would be enough people to go into a burning building."

Community Partnership

"Blue Mountain Resorts is looking into trying to come up with a Fire Department at the Resort that would have staff that would be considered first responders to alarms and could let the Fire Department know it is just burnt toast etc. so they wouldn't have to respond."

"The idea of having a Fire Department at the Resort really wouldn't help much if the alarms are required to go to the Fire Department because the Volunteers would more than likely have already responded to the hall and that could cause problems especially at night. It could make Firefighters annoyed and cause more problems."

"We need to look at the uniqueness of the community. Blue Mountain Resorts is establishing an OPP Community Office in the village. We would like to see a Fire Department in the village as well. Firefighters are always either going to or coming from the village. When all four hotels have to be cleared because of a call, visitors want compensation and it costs \$400,000 a year to Blue Mountain Resorts. If we had the Fire Department there it would save on evacuating hotels for just burnt toast."



Future Development

“There is a serious problem with retention and we need to find a way to solve this. Although, there is not going to be aggressive growth in the community over the next several years, we need to consider this.”

Dispatching

“How does dispatch work?”

Response: “The 911 system directs the call to the correct agency, in our case a company in Collingwood, who then pages out the appropriate fire hall. All Firefighters carry radios and/or pagers.

“Do all Volunteers respond to Dispatch?”

Response: “At the moment, due to staffing issues of enough trained Volunteers, if a call comes in as a structure fire both halls are dispatched, in the hopes that we will get enough trained Volunteers to do the job. If there is a structure fire in the Village Core area the Collingwood Fire Department would also be dispatched.”

4.0 Session 2: December 17, 2008

4.1 Participants

The second dialogue session was held on December 17, 2008 and took place as part of a previously scheduled Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting. The purpose of this was to ensure that members of the Agricultural Community were also consulted during The Fire Services Master Plan Community Consultation Process. Participants included:

Ross Arthur	Agricultural community resident and member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
Jeff Wilson	Agricultural community resident and member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
Syd Dykstra	Agricultural community resident and member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
John Ardiel	Agricultural community resident and member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
Jacquie Hendry	Agricultural community resident and member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee



Rob Potter	Facilitator
Ron Doherty	Fire Chief, The Blue Mountains Fire Department
Rob Collins	Deputy Fire Chief, The Blue Mountains Fire Department
Lorien Forsythe	Administrative Assistant, The Blue Mountains Fire Department
Peter Tollefsen	Director of Planning, The Blue Mountains
Lori Carscadden	Administrative Assistant to the Department of Planning, The Blue Mountains
Cindy Welsh	Senior Policy Planner, The Blue Mountains

5.2 Discussion

Current Level of Service

“What are the minimum standards and do we meet or exceed them at present? Everyone would like the ultimate in fire protection but can we afford it? The agricultural community is happy with the fire service.”

“I had a couple of calls to my farm with electrical fires in the barn and I was very impressed at how fast the response was.”

Recruitment and Retention

“I have heard that it is too expensive to live in The Blue Mountains and Volunteers are moving away.”

Response: “That is true. The fact that there are no jobs available that pay enough to pay the rent is a problem.”

Response: “Affordable housing is being looked into for Volunteers”.

“There must be a time issue so Volunteers need to be close by to respond.”

“Can people from Collingwood be Volunteers?”

Response: “It has been tried, but you need to be close enough to respond to the hall within 4 – 6 minutes otherwise the trucks have left.”

Future Development

“I am concerned about the future. There is more emphasis placed on visitors in the Craigleith area rather than the farm areas. Instead of building a fire hall in Castle Glen, the focus should be put on the farm areas.”



Response: "The provincial standard is 10 – 10 – 90% which means ten trained Firefighters, in ten minutes to the scene 90 per cent of the time. This is mandated by the province. As far as the rural area is concerned, there are some areas far enough out that that standard cannot be met."

"(The Fire Services Master) Plan seems to be basing everything on development, but who knows with the down turn in the economy if the development is going to continue?"

"The Fire Department is no different from any other department in the municipality. If the municipality is growing, the Fire Department needs to grow with it and must have good equipment."

"Do we have to step everything up because of expensive growth on farmland, for example, farmland being used for subdivisions?"

"Hiring 20 full-time Firefighters should be held off until we see what the growth in the municipality would be. I don't expect we would need more coverage."

Rural Service

"Agriculture will continue to be around. The rural (area) should have the same service as Craighleith."

"We need to be realistic; you cannot put a Fire Hall on every corner."

"Rural farms are turning into rural estates. I have many "city" friends who are here on weekends and they do not expect the same service as they get in the city."

"The farm community and Fire Department should sit down and talk with each other to understand the rural issues."

Fire Prevention

"More time and effort need to be put into Fire Prevention."

"Georgian College has a course for the Fire Service. I would support an increase in Fire Prevention."

"Education is the best investment which may save lives and prevent fires. It would be a very wise investment. The Fire Department will have to decide how many (Firefighters) they need, knowing their numbers and situation."

"Whose job it is to maintain smoke alarms?"

Response: "It is the responsibility of the home owner and Fire Prevention Officer."



“Pesticide and storage of chemicals is very important. I am willing to work with the Fire Department to make them aware of what is stored.”

“Education is a big part of Fire Prevention but I don’t know how much is taking place?”

“There are public service announcements being done by A.J. Lake on the radio dealing with that.”

“Education needs to be ongoing to keep all the young children coming up through the schools informed as well as adults.”

“(With respect to Fire Prevention), farmers are being more educated on the environment. Is the Town more concerned about putting out fires or liability?”

Response: “The Fire Department is just trying to provide the best fire services possible.”

“The Fire Department is a very important part of the municipality and I would like to see more fire prevention and education.”

“I echo everyone’s comments. I feel there needs to be an emphasis put on Prevention and Public Education and Safety. I do not want to see the department slipping backwards.”

Current Number of Calls

“With all the new buildings, have the calls gone up?”

Response: “We need an updated needs analysis. The department is not necessarily looking for bigger, just more efficient. We are looking to get additional full time staff to help with prevention, education and training. We have a serious issue with recruitment and retention. We have over 50% of Firefighters with 2 years experience or less. We have just had a successful recruitment with eight more Firefighters, but again they are of little help until they get adequate training. “

Response: “Chimney fires have been down due to public education and insurance company requirements.”

“I would like to know whether there has been an increase in calls.”

Emergency Preparedness

“The farm plan that farmers are required to put together should be shared with the Fire Department.”

Response: “Maybe we need to look into doing preplans for farms the same as we do in commercial buildings.”



Response: "Fighting a fire at a farm is much more of a challenge than an industrial fire."

"If you put the environmental farm plan, fire prevention and insurance working together it could be a much better situation."

Response: "Yes, that would be similar to what is being done with bunkhouses. The Fire Department and Health Unit work together on inspections and get them done efficiently all at one time."

"Environmental farm plan incentives could be considered as well."

"What would be done in the event of a chemical fire?"

Response: "That would all depend on the location, contents of chemicals as well as amounts. For example, with the Co-op that used to be on King St, if it were to catch fire it might almost be better to let it burn and evacuate as water is not a good idea on some of these chemicals."

"Farmers are assuming that others know what they know and that may not be the case."

"Firefighters should be taking pesticide courses."

Response: "Firefighters take WHIMIS but not specialized courses for pesticide, but it could be done."

"Does the department feel they are qualified for chemicals?"

Response: "They can recognize a hazard and know the resources to contact if needed. They do take farm machinery courses in the case of accidents on the farm with farm equipment."

Full- time Firefighters

"Would having 8 full-time Firefighters and 12 Volunteers be a problem in that the Department could become unionized?"

Response: "There have been problems in some departments with full-time unionized and Volunteer Firefighters, but it does not have to be that way. It is how you set up the relationship between your full-time and Volunteers. Quinte-West is a good example of a mainly Volunteer department with just a group of full-time Firefighters helping out."

"Administration would have to be on top of that."

Response: "The trick is keeping the wages competitive to surrounding full-time departments, for example, Collingwood and Owen Sound."



“The issue now is staffing and it is a very big problem.”

Response: “There will not be interior attack of fires if we do not have enough trained Firefighters on scene. Having said that, to help with the issue we have also put a plan in place that when there is a structure fire, both halls will be dispatched and to add to that if it is a call in the village core both halls as well as Collingwood would be dispatched. We are having a problem with recruitment and retention. We are losing too many young Firefighters to full-time departments. There are not enough good paying jobs for the Volunteers to keep them here and housing costs are too high as well. If we were able to have full-time staff that could do more extensive training as well as some full-time Fire Prevention staff that could do both suppression and prevention, that would be a huge step in the right direction.”

“Council needs to address the labour shortage. It is a #1 major priority and should be included in the expenditure of taxes. This needs to be addressed and if not we may be looking at full-time Firefighters down the road if we cannot solve the recruitment and incentive problems.”

Priority Setting

“The Development Charges will pay for infrastructure so the tax hikes (relating to implementation of the Fire Services Master Plan) would not be outrageous, but could be as high as 25%.

“It needs to be recommended to Council that a solution for recruitment and staffing needs to be looked instead of spending money on bicycles and other recreational things. We need to spend the money correctly.”

“Priorities need to be set and Council should follow through. The Fire Department should know what they need and should be taken care of. They should quit spending money on niceties and focus on services such as Fire Department.”

“I am not well enough informed (on the Fire Services Master Plan) to advise Council. There is a need to facilitate a better understanding of farm issues. The Fire Department is doing a good job and they themselves should know what they require better than the public.”

I hope Council will make the Fire Department a priority over and above recreation. The Fire Department should be able to obtain what they need to do the job efficiently.”



Training

"I see the potential for the municipality having a liability problem. This is a serious matter. We are lacking the capability to carry out duties mandated because of a lack of trained personnel. It needs to be impressed on Council that this is as important a situation as the lack of doctors in the area."

5.0 Conclusion

The discussion, which took place over the 2 sessions, indicated a great amount of interest in the Fire Services Master Plan, including the current level of service as well as plans for the future of Fire Services in The Blue Mountains.

In both sessions, there was significant dialogue between participants and staff, largely for the purposes of clarifying current service levels, legislative requirements and previous efforts, which have been made to maintain or enhance Fire Services in The Blue Mountains. This was beneficial to the dialogue for a number of reasons. First, it indicated the participants have a genuine interest in the subject. Second, it suggested that there might be untapped opportunities to engage the community further on this subject. Third, it suggests that these participants may welcome further dialogue with the Town regarding ways to cost effectively enhance Fire Services.

Both groups spent considerable time discussing recruitment and retention, with the intent to understand what has and has not worked in the past, and to offer new ideas. In addition, both groups agreed that the true rate of development must be carefully investigated and reviewed when discussing enhancements to Fire Services.

Session 1 participants, consisting of a range of residents, Volunteers and business and industry leaders, spent considerable time on the concept of improving service through community partnership initiatives. This discussion focused on Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd. and select participants brought forward ideas to reduce costs to both the Resort and the Town for false alarms. Meanwhile, only minor discussion on the challenges and benefits of a full-time Firefighter complement took place. Neither of these concepts was fully developed and may need further discussion.

Session 2 participants, consisting of members of the agricultural community, offered a number of comments and ideas with respect to rural service. Some participants felt that service was currently at an 'expected level', while others felt that further discussion between the rural community and the Town would be required to review the issue and identify ways to enhance rural service. As well, a good discussion took place regarding ways in which the rural community and the Fire Department could work together or further the dialogue on Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness for the agricultural community. These discussions were indicative of a genuine interest to build a stronger relationship with the Fire Department.



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Also during Session 2, there were few comments respecting the addition of full-time Firefighters to the Department. However, participants made numerous comments, suggesting that Fire Services delivery must be a priority for Council.

In conclusion, the participants did not come to a decision, either individually, or through consensus on the proposed Fire Services Master Plan. While there were a number of ideas discussed, further dialogue with the group may help mature these opinions and ideas and encourage additional discussion on cost-effective ways to maintain and enhance Fire Services in The Blue Mountains.