

Master Fire Planning Committee

Minutes

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Station 4 – 427 Merritt Street: Training Room at 4:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Councillor Jennifer Stevens
Shelley Chemnitz, Commissioner of Corporate Services
Bryan Shynal, Commissioner of Operations
Kristine Douglas, Director of Financial Management Services
Ryan Madill, President St. Catharines Professional Firefighter's Association
Mike Vail, Vice President St. Catharines Professional Firefighter's Association
Fire Chief Dave Wood
Deputy Fire Chief Larry Jones
Deputy Fire Chief Monique Belair
Maggie Riopelle, Executive Research Assistant

Absent:

Councillor Sandie Bellows
Councillor Bill Phillips
Heather Salter, Director of Legal and Clerks Services/City Solicitor

Staff Liaison:

Fire Chief Dave Wood

1. Call meeting to order (Chair) B. Shynal

4:35 pm

2. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Motion to approve the agenda

Motion:

That the Master Fire Planning Committee approve the agenda as presented.

Moved: Councillor Stevens

Carried.

4. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

Motion:

That the Master Fire Planning Committee adopt the minutes of the meeting of February 16, 2017.

Moved: Chief Wood

Carried.

5. Business arising from the minutes

None.

6. Declarations of Interest

None.

7. Presentations – Draft Recommendations

7.1 Recommendation 17.1 – Suppression Personnel – Deputy Jones

Deputy Jones provided a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix) outlining the recommendation to increase the staffing complement in the Suppression Division by 16 personnel. The 2008 Master Fire Plan recommended hiring 4 Fire Fighters in the first year and 4 Fire Fighters each year for the following 4 years in order to man all pumps with 4 Fire Fighters.

This recommendation was completed with the exception of the aerial. Currently, personnel at Station 4 and 5 switch between using aerial and pump trucks based on the type of response required (i.e. pump would be used to respond to a medical call; an aerial would be used to respond to a structure fire or remote alarm). The addition of 16 personnel would eliminate the need for Fire Fighters to switch between vehicles. This would assist in improving response times as equipment would not have to be moved between vehicles.

Deputy Jones noted that both the International Association of Fire Fighter's (IAFF) and the Dillon Consulting GIS reports recommended the relocation of an aerial to Station 1 and both reports concluded that response times would improve if an aerial was staffed full time at Station 1. The IAFF report indicated that response times could improve by up to 25% as a result of this change. Furthermore, the expectation of building intensification and vertical growth within St. Catharines along with an aging population increases the frequency of responding with aerial trucks.

The addition of 16 Fire Fighters (4 per platoon) would increase St. Catharines Fire Services' ability to respond to multiple incidents simultaneously without incurring overtime costs. Currently, 19 Suppression personnel are required to

respond to structure fires, leaving only 8 personnel (2 trucks) to respond to all other calls within the city. It is beneficial to have more staff on duty in the event of multiple incidents occurring simultaneously. Adding 4 personnel (1 truck) would provide better coverage throughout the city and would allow staff to respond to a second structure fire. Further, adding 4 personnel to each platoon while keeping minimum manpower at 27 per shift could reduce overtime costs which result from sick calls, vacation or bereavement.

Suggestion was made to include statistics to demonstrate the frequency that St. Catharines Fire Services responds to multiple incidents at the same time in the Master Fire Plan. Chief Wood noted that it would be beneficial to show the types of incidents occurring simultaneously (i.e. 2 structure fires; structure fires and remote alarms; structure fires and medical calls, etc.).

Question was raised regarding the benchmark in terms of St. Catharines Fire Services' depth of response compared to other municipalities. Chief Wood noted that the benchmark used relates to the initial response (4 Fire Fighters on scene within 6 minutes and 20 seconds). Deputy Jones added that the depth of response (including the decision to call in additional staff to man spare apparatus to provide coverage for the rest of the City) is determined by the incident commander in consultation with the senior officer on call. The depth of response is situational, based on the incident. For example, a fire resulting from a pot on the stove may require 1 additional crew (4 Fire Fighters) to be called in. A larger scale incident requiring personnel to remain on scene for an extended period of time may warrant calling in more personnel.

Motion:

That the Master Fire Planning Committee receive the presentation by Deputy Jones.

Moved: Councillor Stevens

Carried.

Discussion ensued about the upcoming meeting schedule. The Economic Circumstances subcommittee is currently adding the preliminary cost estimates to the draft recommendations and expects to have this completed over the next 2 weeks. Additional information requested from Council is currently being compiled by St. Catharines Fire Service Management.

Consensus was to tentatively schedule the next meeting for March 9th with the agenda to include the receiving of preliminary financial information and prioritizing recommendations.

Chief Wood asked that Committee members advise Patricia Kraft of upcoming vacation schedules as the intention is to have all members present to vote on the recommendations and provide input as the Master Fire Plan is being finalized.

Question was raised about the estimated date of the completion of final Master Fire Plan. Chief Wood expressed concern about estimating a date and added that he hopes to have the final version of the Master Fire Plan completed in April.

8. Date of next meeting

March 9, 2017

9. Motion to Adjourn

5:00 pm

Appendix

2017 MASTER FIRE PLAN

RECOMMENDATION: 17.1 – SUPPRESSION PERSONNEL (PG. 67)

***To Increase The Staffing Complement In The
Suppression Division By 16 Personnel***

BACKGROUND:

2008 Master Fire Plan Recommendations:

- Hire four firefighters in year one and then four firefighters for the next four years in order to bring all pumps to four (4) man pump crews.
- This endeavour has been completed with the exception of the aerial. Our current manning requires firefighters to switch apparatus at the two Aerial Stations (Station 4 & 5), based on the incident

BACKGROUND:

- NFPA 1710 recommends 4 Firefighters per apparatus (this includes Aerials)
- According to the Dillon and IAFF Reports, one of the options to reduce overall response time was to house an Aerial at Headquarters. The IAFF report also indicated our overall times could improve by up to 25% thus helping to meet NFPA 1710 Response requirements of 6:20 seconds
- Upgrading Station 1, would allow for an aerial to be relocated there resulting in a projected cost savings as 1 aerial could be removed from the fleet bringing the total number of aerials from 3 down to 2

FINDINGS/ANALYSIS

- Intensification and vertical growth of buildings (higher buildings – e.g. Garden Park St.) in the city due to limited availability of land for development in St. Catharines.
- Ontario Building Code requirements for fire alarm and protection systems is increased for higher buildings. This will increase the possibility of Fire Alarm and Protection activations resulting in a higher frequency for aerial responses.
- The Niagara Region indicates that in five years' time seniors aged 65+ will account for 60% of the population. As a result, if the building is classified as a Care Facility or Licensed Retirement Home based on response protocol for fire response we will see an increase in responses requiring an aerial device
- With current staffing levels (27 minimum manning) in the event of a structure fire 19 personnel (full response) are required to be on scene to perform firefighting tactics in accordance with FEMS Incident Management System. In the event of additional call requiring a full response there are only 2 remaining fire apparatus (8 personnel) available to respond to the incident. Recall is automatically required. With the addition of 16 personnel (4 personnel per platoon) FEMS can now fully staff an additional vehicle which enables firefighters to perform limited rescue and suppression activities simultaneously but is not in accordance with NFPA 1710.

CONCLUSION: “*RATIONALE FOR THE ADDITION OF 16 SUPPRESSION PERSONNEL*”

- Meet the requirements of NFPA 1710 for staffing of fire apparatus (aerial) with 4 personnel
- Staffing an aerial and positioning it at station 1 would result in a 24.6% increase the area where firefighters could assemble on scene within NFPA 1710 recommended timelines
- Staffing would reduce response time of the aerial by eliminating the requirement to switching trucks by station crews thus improving life safety, fire loss, and delays
- Additional personnel available to respond to two fire incidents
- Reduction in requirements to hire back personnel in the event of illness, injury, vacation and bereavement to maintain designated staffing level of 27, thereby reducing overtime costs
- Reduction in the need for recall which is a costs savings to Overtime Budget
- Enhances Fire Protection Services to the community
- Projected cost savings will result in the elimination of one aerial when station 1 is renovated or replaced.

QUESTIONS????