



# TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

# REPORT

Item No.

**REPORT TO:** Reeve Vincent and Members of Council  
**PREPARED BY:** Deputy Chief Matt Townsend  
**DATE:** 28/02/2018  
**SUBJECT:** Potential changes to the F.P.P.A. through the M.C.S.C.S.  
**ATTACHMENTS:** None

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby authorizes Deputy Chief Matt Townsend to provide the following comments, on behalf of the Township of North Huron, on the proposed draft regulation changes of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (M.C.S.C.S.) under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (F.P.P.A.)

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The comments below are recommended as the Township's response to the proposed draft regulation changes of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (M.C.S.C.S.) regarding:

- 1) Mandatory reporting to the FMO.
- 2) Mandatory certification of fire department staff.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **-COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED MANDATORY REPORTING TO THE FMO**

- Like many other municipality, North Huron has provided mandated reports to the FMO for many years. No issues or concerns.
- Several years ago the FMO strived for a 10 in 10 number. i.e. 10 firefighters within 10 minutes on scene of an emergency. This proposed change to the regulations may necessitate the need to hire more full time paid fire department staff to provide service to municipalities. North Huron's fire services are adequate.
- Many factors affect response times of rural fire departments and need to be taken into consideration as part of the mandatory reporting. Some of the contributing factors are;
  1. Location of fire/emergency (Wingham has a maximum distance of 19km from its station and Blyth has a maximum distance of 24km)
  2. Proximity of firefighters to their halls. Currently we have imposed in our hiring practice that fire personnel are required to be within a 9 km distance from the hall "as a crow flies".
  3. Weather/road conditions
  4. Time of the day/traffic
- North Huron has implemented a successful program to accurately document information into our FirePro program. It would not be difficult for fire department personnel to extrapolate information at any given time to prepare/produce statistical reports. As usual with reporting programs, you "get out as much as you put in". Data entry by our current FD staff (from Captains and Deputy Chiefs) is exceptional. In the past year we have seen cost recovery revenue of over \$20,000 because of accurate data entry of recoverable costs at emergencies.
- There may be some reactionary departments that may only produce reports to the FMO when forced to do so. This is not the case in North Huron and may be the reason that the FMO feels the need to download this task to the lower tiers of government.
- As long as the proposed changes are transparent, this will be a great tool for council to understand the activities and costs of a functional fire department.

#### **-MANDATORY FD STAFF CERTIFICATION**

- The proposed changes to the regulations require that the provincial government provide liability indemnification for all municipal governments who comply with these new regulations at least 12 months before the training and certification regulation comes into force. If they do not provide this liability indemnification, it will be necessary for the province to provide new funding that would be required to train and certify all firefighters to achieve the standards before the mandatory training and certification regulation comes into force.
- 2018 is a municipal election year. As consistent with prudent planning and municipal election legislation, all municipal councils need to assume that as of July 2018 they may have a Lamé Duck period. Given this and that the proposed draft regulation is to come into force by January 1, 2019, there may not be enough time before July 2018 or at the initial council meeting on or after December 1st, 2018, to make decisions (e.g. training funding) allowing for full implementation of the Mandatory Training and Certification regulation. For this reason, a later effective date is recommended. In the interest of time, North Huron's fire department personnel will consider moving towards compliance with the new draft regulations.
- The time frame set forth of January 1, 2019 is not achievable. It is recommended fire services be given a minimum phase in period of 5 years to comply with the new required programs.
- Table 1: Wording needs to be introduced to ensure future updates to NFPA standards are implemented by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). This will support and complete the certification process. The Internship Program of 24 months needs to be expanded to include all applicable areas and positions, such as fire inspectors and Fire Officer I & II, replacing the limiting language found in section 3(b). As currently written, the regulation only applies to new hires.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The financial impact could be significant. It would not only be the cost of mandatory courses but also the cost of training hours for FD staff. If "grandfathering" is not recognized then North Huron would be looking at significant increase to its fire department budget. For every day of required training North Huron would see a cost increase of \$4,400 if every FD staff was to be required to attend courses. (Full complement of 44 firefighters) The cost of mandatory reporting to the FMO through council may not be as significant. Although there are costs associated with fire reports on buildings, North Huron has a great tracking and documentation program. Through proper use of FirePro, North Huron fire personnel would be able to build very accurate reports to submit either through council or on their behalf. The costs of reports to the FMO through council should not be significant as those costs are already or could be part of the job descriptions for the Chief of Emergency and Fire Services and/or an Administrative Assistant.

#### **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

If the province proceeds with the proposed changes, it is suggested North Huron proceed with training and certifying fire department staff in order to be able to instruct/certify FD staff to the required level of certification as proposed. This may ease the financial burden to the Municipality.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Goal #3 – Our community is healthy and safe

Goal #4 – Our municipality is fiscally responsible and strives for operational excellence.

Matt Townsend

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Matt Townsend, Deputy Chief  
FDNH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dwayne Evans", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Dwayne Evans, CAO