



TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

REPORT

Item No.

REPORT TO: Reeve Vincent and Members of Council
PREPARED BY: Dwayne Evans
DATE: 16/04/2018
SUBJECT: Shared Service – Fire Chief
ATTACHMENTS: Fire Chief Shared Agreement April 2018; Fire Prevention Officer Shared Agreement April 2018

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Council of the Township of North Huron hereby receives the report of the CAO, dated April 16, 2018, regarding the sharing of a municipal Fire Chief and a municipal Fire Prevention Officer;

AND FURTHER, THAT Council authorize the Clerk and Reeve to sign By-law 38-2018 being an agreement between the Municipality of Huron East and the Township of North Huron for the sharing of Huron East's Fire Chief;

AND FURTHER, THAT Council authorize the Clerk and Reeve to sign By-law 39-2018 appointing the Huron East Fire Chief as North Huron's Fire Chief;

AND FURTHER, THAT the Council of the Township of North Huron authorize the Clerk and Reeve to sign By-law 40-2018 being a By-law to appoint Michael Roess as North Huron's Fire Prevention Officer;

AND FURTHER, THAT Council authorize the Clerk and Reeve to sign By-law 41-2018 being an agreement between the Municipality of Huron East and the Township of North Huron for the sharing of North Huron's Fire Prevention Officer;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approves an exception to Section 19.1 of the Procedural By-law to allow By-laws xx of 2018; xxx of 2018; xxx of 2018 and xxx of 2018 to be passed at the April 16, 2018 Council meeting;

AND FURTHER, THAT Council directs the CAO to discontinue the hiring process for a full-time Fire Chief at this time.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Huron has been without a full-time Fire Chief since December, 2017. As directed by Council, staff commenced the hiring process to replace the Fire Chief. Council also authorized staff to simultaneously investigate the sharing of a Fire Chief with a neighbouring municipality. This arrangement was suggested by North Huron's Fire Department personnel.

In early February, North Huron staff met with Huron East staff to investigate the sharing of Marty Bedard as North Huron's Fire Chief. Huron East's response was positive. Mr. Bedard would remain the Fire Chief for Huron East and assume the managerial responsibilities of Fire Chief for North

Huron. Deputy Fire Chiefs Townsend and Kregar would continue to be responsible for the operational aspects of the Fire Department. In a reciprocal agreement, Mr. Bedard's Fire Prevention Officer responsibilities would be assumed by North Huron's Fire Prevention Officer, Michael Roess. Mr. Roess has agreed to provide fire prevention services to Huron East, North Huron and through an existing fire services agreement signed by Huron East, Morris-Turnberry.

DISCUSSION

There is some precedent in the Huron Perth area for a shared Fire Chief position with responsibility for additional fire halls/personnel. Perth East presently provides the services of a Fire Chief and a Fire Prevention Officer to West Perth and there is a similar arrangement between Bluewater and Central Huron.

As directed, staff advertised and received applications for the North Huron Fire Chief position. A significant number of applications were received from qualified candidates. Staff also reviewed the West Perth/Perth East agreement and concurred it was a good agreement. In addition to the potential for cost savings, North Huron and Huron East staff have given significant consideration to the level of service. As part of the review process, North Huron staff have considered the following:

1. North Huron's Fire personnel requested consideration of sharing an existing municipal Fire Chief. The arrangement was not proposed by Council or administration.
2. Mr. Bedard is well known to North Huron's fire personnel and has over 24 years of fire service experience. He currently manages three fire stations and the associated personnel in Huron East.
3. Through this shared arrangement, North Huron will benefit from best practices in Huron East and Huron East will benefit from best practices in North Huron.
4. Over the last 5 months, staff have been monitoring the additional workload assumed by North Huron's Deputy Chiefs. The services of a full-time fire chief do not appear to be warranted at this time.
5. At the December 4, 2017 regular meeting, Council amended the organizational structure of the ESTC and the Fire Department. Under the new organizational structure, ESTC personnel report directly to the CAO and North Huron's Fire Chief continues to report to the CAO. North Huron's Fire Chief is no longer responsible for the ESTC.
6. North Huron currently employs Mike Roess to perform the duties of Fire Prevention Officer for one day per week. Mr. Roess has expressed an interest to increase his Fire Prevention Officer hours. Huron East currently provides this service through their Fire Chief.
7. About a year ago Huron East entered into a new agreement with Morris-Turnberry for the provision of fire services. Huron East provides fire coverage to approximately 55% of Morris-Turnberry and North Huron provides fire coverage to the remaining 45%. Under

this new arrangement, Morris-Turnberry would receive services from one Fire Chief and one Fire Prevention Officer.

8. It is projected the three municipalities involved will incur the following savings from their current service levels.

Huron East	\$20,783
Morris-Turnberry	\$4,550
North Huron	\$45,440

There is likely additional potential savings in administrative costs (cell phone, training/conferences etc.). Proportionate portions of North Huron's savings will have a benefit to the Municipality of Central Huron and the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh.

9. Huron East's Council and Administration have discussed the matter and have expressed an interest to proceed with a shared services arrangement. North Huron's Council and Administration have also discussed the matter and would like to proceed with a shared services arrangement. Morris-Turnberry's staff, Central Huron's staff and Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh's staff have also been consulted and have not expressed any concerns with the arrangement.
10. The projected savings of \$45,440 justifies the changes in organizational structure.

Term of the Agreement

The proposed term of the agreement is from May 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020. This will allow sufficient time to evaluate this new arrangement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

As per the shared Fire Chief services agreement, the maximum amount Huron East will invoice for Fire Chief services for the balance of 2018 is \$46,000. This results in a projected annual savings of \$45,440 for North Huron. It is important to note Fire Chief Bedard may not be as easily accessible or be able to respond as quickly to North Huron issues as a dedicated, full-time North Huron Fire Chief.

Similarly, and as per the shared Fire Prevention Officer agreement, the maximum amount North Huron will invoice for Fire Prevention Services for the balance of 2018 is \$11,000. This equates to one day a week of the Fire Prevention Officer's time.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

If this shared services arrangement is not satisfactory to any of the parties, there are termination provisions in both agreements. If the agreements were terminated, North Huron would proceed with the hiring process of a Fire Chief and Fire Chief Bedard would resume his full-time fire chief responsibilities for Huron East. Michael Roess, Fire Prevention Officer, would resume his one day a week fire prevention responsibility for North Huron.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #3 – Our community is healthy and safe

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dwayne Evans", written in a cursive style.

Dwayne Evans, CAO