



Date: Wednesday, July 3, 2024

From: Niall Lobley, CAO

Subject: Fire Prevention Services – Shared Services Agreement

Report CAO2024-015

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Recommendation

That Council direct staff to enter into a Shared Services agreement with the City of Owen Sound for the provision of Fire Prevention Services, and,

That the CAO be authorized to sign an agreement for the provision of Shared Services as per this report on an annual basis, pending budget approval, until such time as the services are no longer required, and,

That the agreement specifies a 'day rate' for Fire Prevention Services to be provided to the Township by the City and that the Township be invoiced on a monthly basis for Fire Prevention Services and,

That the City will generally provide Fire Prevention Services to the Township on one day weekly and that no more than \$50,000 be spent on Fire Prevention Services in 2024

Background

Section 2 of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 as amended, outlines responsibilities of the municipality in respect to fire protection and prevention:

(1) Every municipality shall,

(a) establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention; and

(2) In discharging its responsibilities under subsection (1), a municipality shall,

(a) appoint a community fire safety officer or a community fire safety team



Fire prevention services include a broad scope of activities and may include routine fire safety inspections of commercial and business premises, educational programs such as home visits and school visits and promotional activities such as smoke detector programs. The role of Fire prevention services is, through active community involvement, to reduce the chances of fires starting in the first place, to help reduce injuries, property damage and ultimately, save lives.

The Township of Georgian Bluffs has appointed the Inter Township Fire Department (ITFD) to provide Fire Prevention Services as per Section 2(2)(a) of the Act, as part of its services to the Township. Since 2019, ITFD has worked with the City of Owen Sound Fire Department to provide a range of Fire Prevention services to the Township including Fire Code Inspections, Enforcement, Prosecution and Public Education activities. These services have been provided in the absence of a formal agreement; compensation for the services was historically tied to an understanding that ITFD would provide complimentary services to the westside of Owen Sound during the closure of the 10th Street West (Highway 6/21) Bridge during its reconstruction as a result of delayed response times.

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 as amended includes provisions within Section 2 that allow for the sharing of services between municipalities in respect of Fire Prevention Services;

2 (4) Two or more municipalities may appoint a community fire safety officer or a community fire safety team or establish a fire department for the purpose of providing fire protection services in those municipalities.

2 (5) A municipality may, under such conditions as may be specified in the agreement, enter into an agreement to,

(a) provide such fire protection services as may be specified in the agreement to lands or premises that are situated outside the territorial limits of the municipality; and

(b) receive such fire protection services as may be specified in the agreement from a fire department situated outside the territorial limits of the municipality.

Analysis

Staff at the City of Owen Sound and the Township of Georgian Bluffs are agreed that a more formal arrangement and compensation is required for the provision of Fire Prevention Services and, as directed during budget 2024, the municipalities are working to establish a shared services model, similar to that recently adopted for Building Services, between the City and Township.

During Budget, 2024, the Township identified \$50,000 in 2024 to support the provision of Fire Prevention Services as part of its operating budget. The City of Owen Sound Fire



Department have indicated that they are able to support the continued delivery of Fire Prevention Services to the Township and on June 13th the City of Owen Sound provided support for a shared services model with respect to Fire Prevention Services during their Corporate Services Committee meeting.

In April 2024, Council directed staff to enter into a shared services agreement with the City in respect to Building Services. The agreement has been in place for two months and is operating well. Staff at both the City and Township have used this agreement as the template for the new agreement in respect of Fire Prevention Services.

Under the guidance and with the support of ITFD, the City of Owen Sound will provide a Fire Prevention Officer/Inspector who will be responsible for:

- Ontario Fire code enforcement through building inspections including plans review on an as needed basis.
- Complaint request, routine, and mandatory fire inspections.
- Fire investigation services if requested.
- Scene support only when requested by the ITFD Fire Chief or Deputy Fire Chief.
- Support for the planning and by-law department on an as needed basis.

The Fire Prevention Officer is expected to undertake approximately one day of services for the Township each week, which will be arranged at the mutual convenience of ITFD and Owen Sound Fire Department. Services of the Fire Prevention Officer will only be provided to the Township of Georgian Bluffs.

Financial Impact

The agreement with the City of Owen Sound has an upset limit of no more than \$50,000 in 2024, and was included and approved within the 2024 budget as part of the operating expenses.

Strategic Priorities

NA

Conclusion

Staff are recommending entering into a shared services agreement, as per the enclosed, for the provision of Fire Prevention Services to the Township as legislated under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. The City of Owen Sound will provide these services as it has done since 2019 under the new agreement.

Respectfully Submitted: Niall Loble, CAO