

**Municipality of the District of Lunenburg  
Minutes of a Fire & Emergency Services Committee Meeting  
Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS  
Monday, November 8 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Attendance**

Brian Keizer, District 1 & 2 Fire Commission, Chair  
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5  
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4  
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7  
Chief Tom Lockwood, Indian Point Fire Department  
Retired Chief Steve Patterson, Cornwall Fire Department  
Deputy Chief Dean Schmeisser, Dayspring & District Volunteer Fire Department  
Herbert Seymour, Member-At-Large  
Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Ex-Officio

**Staff**

Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator  
Sandra Challis, Administrative Assistant

**Guests**

Edmund Nix, Senior Client Executive, BFL Canada

**Regrets**

Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9, Vice Chair  
Randy Harris, Member-At-Large  
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy C.A.O.

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**Moved by Chief Lockwood, seconded by Deputy Chief Schmeisser that the agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.**

**3. Approval of Minutes – September 13, 2021**

**Moved by Chief Lockwood, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Minutes of the September 13, 2021 Fire & Emergency Services Committee meeting be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.**

**4. Presentation – Insurance Sector Overview**

Mr. Nix gave a verbal presentation on the current state of the insurance industry and how this impacted fire departments. This year's Fire Department insurance rates were, on average, increasing by approximately 22% (allowing for new apparatus and/or property - each department's premium was based on their own individual assets) and by approximately 18% for departments without any changes in assets.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- Residential/Commercial had large premium increases.
- Liability and Apparatus/Vehicle Rates had increases.
- Stabilization of property and equipment sectors.
- Cyclical nature of the Insurance Industry.
- Covid-19 pandemic and impact on insurance rates.
- How to reduce premiums.

Comments:

- Disappointed in the increase in premiums.
- Premiums not based just on the risk assessment of MODL, but on the sector as a whole.
- The Group Personnel Insurance Policy created equalization in terms of coverage with some departments seeing a decrease in premiums and increase in coverage.
- Higher deductibles could be an issue for smaller departments and hinder their ability to repair/replace equipment in the event of a claim.
- If the number of departments in the municipality reduced, i.e., through merger, the overall premium for Vehicles and Property would decrease only if some department assets were divested; there would likely be no impact on the Liability premium as this rate was mostly determined by population.
- Not possible to negotiate fixed terms for fire departments – usually only occurs with life insurance premiums.

A discussion followed regarding premiums and deductibles and options to reduce premiums was discussed. Mr. Nix would provide Mr. Kennedy with options to bring back to the FESC.

*Mr. Nix left the meeting at 7:43 p.m.*

## **5. Business Arising from Minutes**

### **5.1 Fire Scene Security**

Mr. Kennedy reported a contract had been received from the Commissionaires and was currently being reviewed by Staff prior to presenting to the FESC and to the fire departments.

### **5.2 Mutual Aid Agreement Revisions**

Mr. Kennedy reported Mutual Aid Agreement revisions were still with the solicitor. It was requested that the delay be highlighted to the Deputy CAO to ask that the matter be a higher priority item for the solicitor.

### 5.3 MODL Policy 036 Amendments & Accessible Formatting

It was noted that the incorrect motion from Council had been circulated with the agenda and the Committee was informed the proposed amendments to MODL Policy 036 had been approved by Council on October 12, 2021.

### 5.4 Air Pack Certification/Turn-out Gear Safety

This item was not yet discussed at LRFES but would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

### 5.5 Cell Coverage

The Committee discussed the lack of cellular service in many areas in the Municipality and the fact that many residents now rely solely on cellular communications. It was agreed to request Council to write a letter to the local political leaders, highlighting the problem.

**Moved by Deputy Chief Schmeisser, seconded by Chief Lockwood that the FESC recommend that Council write a letter to the local MLAs and MP regarding the problems with cellular service in the Municipality. Motion Carried.**

### 5.6 Procurement of Equipment for Departments

Deputy Chief Schmeisser reported that cost of equipment is increasing and so is the cost of borrowing. It was requested that Staff look at possible options for municipal funding opportunities. It was noted that a department would be required to have capacity for repayments.

## 6. L.R.F.E.S. Report

Mr. Keizer provided a verbal update on the recent online meeting held by LRFES. The main topic of discussion was Covid vaccinations and how departments were dealing with vaccination requirements for their members; some departments mandated double vaccination for their active members, while others did not. Chiefs were looking for some clear direction, from either the Province or the Municipality.

## 7. New Business

### 7.2 Covid-19 Vaccinations

Councillor Greek provided a verbal request for the FESC to recommend that Council strongly urge departments that all responding firefighters be double vaccinated. The presentation highlighted the following:

- Firefighters are often in close proximity to the public, whether it be people's safe spaces, their homes, businesses, schools and vehicles.
- The public should not need to worry if the attending firefighter is double vaccinated or not.
- Firefighters should not need to worry if the firefighter they are working alongside is double vaccinated or not.
- With no mandated regulations, and different rules imposed by departments, mutual aid calls could be an issue, where one department who insists on double vaccination is working alongside a department who does not.

The matter was discussed by the Committee and the following points were raised:

- Committee members would like to see double vaccination for firefighter's mandatory.
- Some Chiefs are already imposing double-vaccination restrictions to members, but there is no consistency.
- Double vaccination is not mandated in the MODL offices, but procedures are in place for the unvaccinated.
- Vaccination mandates, or lack of, may affect retention and recruitment.

**Moved by Deputy Chief Schmeisser, seconded by Chief Lockwood that the FESC recommend that Council write to the Province and the Chief Medical Officer, with a copy to Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) to recommend every active firefighter in the province be double vaccinated. Motion Carried.**

### **7.1 Budget Discussion 2022/23**

This item was on the agenda for members to consider budget requirements in advance of the January FESC meeting when the Budget would be formally discussed. It was noted that last year the request was for a 2% increase.

### **7.3 Review of FESC Calendar 2022**

The FESC Calendar 2022, circulated with the agenda, was discussed. It was requested items be automatically added to agenda when appropriate and that the calendar be provided with the agenda for each meeting.

### **8. In Camera**

Not required.

### **9. Next Meeting – Monday, January 10, 2022**

**10. Adjournment**

**There being no further business at 8:44 p.m., it was moved by Chief Lockwood, seconded by Deputy Chief Schmeisser that the meeting adjourn. Carried unanimously.**