

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Notes of a Fire & Emergency Services Committee Meeting

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.
Thursday, September 7, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

Attendance

Deputy Chief Dean Schmeisser, Dayspring & District Volunteer Fire Department, Vice Chair
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7
Councillor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10 (via Teams)
Chief Darren Mulock, Northfield District Fire Department
Captain Emily Bowers, Hebbville Fire Department
Herbert Seymour, Member-At-Large
Randy Harris, Member-At-Large

Regrets

Brian Keizer, District 1 & 2 Fire Commission, Chair
Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Ex-Officio
Angela Henhoeffler, REMO Coordinator

Staff

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy C.A.O.
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator
Sandra Challis, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Deputy Chief Dean Schmeisser called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Oickle seconded by Herbert Seymour that the agenda be approved as circulated. Carried Unanimously.

3. Approval of Notes – July 6, 2023

Moved by Councillor Oickle, seconded by Councillor Greek that the Notes of the July 6, 2023, Fire & Emergency Services Committee meeting be accepted as circulated. Carried.

4. Business Arising from Minutes

4.1 Strategic Priorities Survey to Departments

Mr. Kennedy reviewed and answered questions on the “Strategic Priorities Survey” responses, (circulated with the agenda) that was released on July 19, 2023. Thirteen departments responded to the survey.

Highlights of the discussion were as follows:

- Costs associated with FIT testing and limited testing apparatus available for free.
- Hose testing time consuming and costly if third party involved.
- Confusion between Scene Safety Officer and Occupational Health and Safety Officer.
- Fire training barriers - time commitment, resource limitations – trainers and administration support locally and fire school costly.
- Specialized training needs, small space, haz-mat.
- The app “I Am Responding” requires cell service/Wi-Fi and may not be accessible to all.
- Use of the family members assistants program usage low. Staff will focus efforts on improving communication directly with departments.
- Membership on the FESC be altered to include more fire department members.

The draw for two free attendance packages for the Atlantic Fire Leadership Conference to be held in PEI in 2024 for departments completing the survey was made and Hemford and District Fire Department was drawn.

Mr. Dumaresq asked if the Committee felt they had heard the voices of the departments the Committee represents in the responses received. The consensus was that even though the responses was lower than the desire, it represented the same number of departments that take part in the LRFES. It was noted that the fire service membership was notified at the annual meeting that the FESC was preparing a survey to get input on priorities.

Discussion ensued on whether further outreach was needed but no direction was given to proceed.

Mr. Dumaresq asked the Committee what items stood out from the responses received and whether the survey changed their minds on the priorities.

Responses included:

- Continued improvement with communications to all Fire Departments
- Increase of number of fire service representatives on the FESC
- General desire for training;
 - MODL subsidizing costs
 - Review grants available to decide if meeting the desired needs, Leadership Training Grant, community, and capital grants, LRFES fund and coordination of free Fire School courses.

5. L.R.F.E.S. Report

Not available.

6. New Business

6.1 Member-At-Large Term Expiry

Mr. Seymour's member-at-large term will expire October 31, 2023. The vacancy will be advertised at the beginning of October and any member whose term is expiring is allowed to reapply.

6.2 Fire Service's Coordinator Annual Report

Mr. Kennedy reviewed the "Fire Service Coordinator's Annual Report," which will be presented to Council on September 12, 2023. (Circulated with the agenda) The presentation included:

- Long Service Awards
- Leadership Training
- Joint Pump Testing Facility
- Membership Comparison 2021 to 2022
- Call Volume Comparisons 2021 to 2022
- FESC Priorities
- FESC Workshops
- Funding and Revenue Sources
- Retention and Recruitment
- Operating Cost for Fire Fighter

A comment was made that creating a video during firefighter training could help with recruitment. Mr. Kennedy indicated he would discuss with the municipality's Communication officer.

6.3 EAP (Employee Assistance Program Presentation)

Mr. Kennedy advised that effective September 1, 2023, there is a new provider, Inkblot, for the firefighters' FMAP program. He noted this new program closely mimicked the previous program.

Mr. Kennedy presented a PowerPoint (attached to the minutes) on the services offered with Inkblot:

- Accessing Care
- Counselling Services – finding the right counsellor.
- Counselling Sessions
- Work & Life Support
- Accessing Your Program
- Confidentiality
- Security
- Mobile App/Website

Mr. Kennedy explained cost coverage that may exceed the five hours offered. Inkblot offers preferred pricing at \$49/\$95 per ½ hr/1 hr which would be paid for by the individual (or claimed through a medical plan). Funding may also be available through CISM.

7. Added Items – Nil

8. In Camera – Nil

9. Next Meeting – Thursday, November 2, 2023

10. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.