



Staff Report to Council

Fire & Rescue Service

FILE: 01-0620-03/23

REPORT DATE: November 29, 2023 **MEETING DATE:** December 11, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Stephane Drolet, Director of Fire Services

SUBJECT: Fire and Emergency Program Administrative Clerk

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Approve additional funding by a 2024 tax increase to increase the 0.5 FTE Fire and Emergency Program Administrative Clerk position to 1.0 FTE; OR
- B. Direct Staff to monitor the effectiveness of the part-time 0.5 FTE Fire and Emergency Program Administration Clerk position and report back to Council if further funding is needed; OR
- C. Other.

PURPOSE

At the November 27, 2023 Business Planning meeting, Council identified the following Parking Lot item for staff to report back:

- 1. Fire and Emergency Program Administrative Clerk

Information Report Decision Report Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

In the Fire Service Review conducted in 2020, the need for additional administrative support was identified, once the Emergency Program was integrated into the fire department. Further, during

2021 Business Planning a parking lot item was identified by Council, namely “administrative backfill”. Subsequently, on December 7, 2020, when Council deliberated the 2021 budget, the following motion was passed:

A. Refer to the CAO the following Parking Lot items to implement within the approved budget if time and resources allow:

A.4 Staffing backfill for PMFRS Administrative Assistant as required; AND

B. Bring back to Council if budget limitations delay fulfillment of these items.

As a result of this referral to the CAO, 0.2 FTE was approved within the existing approved budget however, it was not implemented due to implications of the pandemic and the department’s move into a temporary fire hall, amongst other factors.

In 2023, once the department moved into the new fire hall, the position was reassessed and an additional 0.2 FTE was approved by the CAO and the department was able to find 0.1 FTE funding from the Emergency Program, bringing the current funding to 0.5 FTE. While this 0.5 FTE has been authorized and has approved funding, it has not been posted and permanently filled. This will occur shortly.

Analysis:

Typically, past practice when adding departmental clerical support (most recently Bylaw Clerk & Building Clerk), has been to begin filling a part-time position, and reassess in subsequent years to determine sufficiency and effectiveness. This practice allows for a consistent and fair approach amongst departments, as well as ensures additional resources match work activities.

That said, with the continued growth of the department, 0.5 FTE may prove to be insufficient to adequately support the administrative needs of the department.

Alike all City departments, over the past 20 years, the PMFRS has seen an extraordinary growth however, unique to the Fire Department is:

- The significant change to its service delivery model with 24-hour career coverage;
- Workforce transition from a volunteer model to a composite department;
- Oversight and responsibility for the Emergency program was moved under the Fire Department portfolio in 2021; and
- Layout of the Fire Hall, having a disconnect between the Chief Officers requiring support and the Administrative Assistant, seated two floors down at the front door. Interruptions from foot traffic from the public, suppliers and volunteers visiting the fire hall is further impacting the Administrative Assistant’s ability to fulfill her primary role of administrative support to the Chief Officers.

Since the early 2000’s, the administrative function of the department has remained constant at 1.0 FTE and has now grown to 1.5 FTE based on recent approvals.

There are many functions which are demanding more time and focus to ensure we are meeting requirements. For example:

Inspections and pre-plans

This position is tasked with creating and maintaining the pre-incident plans for the City's inspectable properties which have grown from 300 in 2004 to over 800 currently. This increase has also been observed in the number of inspection reports needing to be processed by the Administrative Assistant.

Training records for all employees

Training is now occurring daily by both day and night shifts in addition to paid-on-call training, resulting in increased efforts to manage training records for a larger group of employees.

Call response and management

FDM Call data is carefully reviewed on a daily basis to ensure accuracy in both personnel data as well as statistical data.

Personnel file management

The department has slowly been working towards transitioning to a fully electronic file management system, in an effort to reduce the volume of paperwork created requiring storage. Due to lack of administrative time, however, most of the personnel files and training records are still in paper format.

Procurement

To streamline the procurement of operational supplies, the Administrative Assistant has undertaken a larger role in ordering supplies and liaising with vendors to arrange logistical details of same.

Pre-Incident plans

The City has seen a substantial increase in construction and development projects over the past several years, including, amongst others, two large Amazon warehouses, two new vehicle dealerships, a new YPK terminal, a new fire hall and a large airplane hangar facility on Baynes Road. Each of these projects requires the preparation of a pre-fire plan, used by crews when responding to incidents at these facilities. Each pre-fire plan requires many hours of in-depth work to create utilizing sophisticated vector graphics software. Several remain incomplete.

Paid-on-Call Training Records and Payroll Management

The department has seen a record amount of turnover amongst paid-on-call ranks over the past several years. Therefore, with each new recruit class comes a large volume of paperwork, during both recruitment and once hired, in addition to ongoing training records which must be carefully entered into the department's FDM database as well as captured in the POC payroll software.

Failure to properly document training is a substantial liability risk as proof of competency would be hard to prove without proper record keeping. In addition, POC remuneration is tied to certifications and apparatus completion, which requires careful ongoing review to avoid any lapses in due wage increases. Monthly payroll is also a detailed process requiring careful preparation and review prior to submission.

Business Plans and Staff Reports

In recent years, the Administrative Assistant has played a key role in the preparation of annual business plans, under the direction of the Fire Chief. Further, any reports or presentations submitted during the year to Council or the CAO are prepared by the Administrative Assistant, with guidance and input by the Fire Chief.

Accounting

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for the preparation of invoices for cost recovery, false alarms and re-inspection compliance. In addition, the department has identified a need to recover costs associated with plan reviews, the billing of which would be done by the Administrative Assistant. Further, due to the department's wildfire response during the Summer of 2023, cost recovery invoicing for apparatus and firefighter compensation will be the responsibility of the Administrative Assistant. It is anticipated that wildfires will continue to increase annually in both severity and number and therefore invoicing and cost recovery will become a regular administrative duty.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

Not applicable.

Alternative:

In keeping with typical past practice when additional clerical positions are added, reassess the effectiveness of the part-time 0.5 FTE Administrative Clerk position in the subsequent years once the position has been filled. This allows for a phased approach to consider if further funding is warranted.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- Principled Governance Balanced Economic Prosperity Infrastructure
 Community Spirit & Wellbeing Corporate Pride Public Safety
 Not Applicable
-

WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS

- Already accounted for in department work plan / no adjustments required
- Emergent issue / will require deferral of other priority(ies)
- Other

Part-time approval of the Administrative Clerk and full-time Administrative Assistant were the known resources when developing the Fire Department’s 2024 Business and Work Plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- None Budget Previously Approved Referral to Business Planning
- Other – Calculations Below

<u>Funding Currently Approved</u>				
Approved by CAO	0.4 FTE	PG 14 Step 4	\$ 31.9959	\$ 23,300
Obtained from Emergency Budget	0.1 FTE	PG 14 Step 4	\$ 31.9959	\$ 5,800
Plus Employer Paid Benefits @ 28.5%				\$ 8,300
			Total	\$ 37,400
<u>Proposed Additional Funding Sought</u>				
Additional Council Request	0.5 FTE	PG 14 Step 4	\$ 31.9959	\$ 29,100
Plus Employer Paid Benefits @ 28.5%				\$ 8,300
			Total	\$ 37,400

Should Council wish to fund conversion of the current part-time Administrative Clerk to full-time, an additional budget of \$37,400 will be needed. This equates to a 0.13% tax increase in 2024 or \$3.34 to the average single family home.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Referral Yes No Other

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Stephane Drolet,
Director of Fire Services

Reviewed by:

Mark Roberts,
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S):

None.