



TOWN OF MINTO

MEETING DATE: March 1, 2022

REPORT TO: Mayor and Council

SERVICE AREA: Fire

SUBJECT: FIRE 2022-003 Firefighter Mandatory Certifications

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT Council of the Town of Minto receive report FIRE 2022-003 regarding Firefighter Mandatory Certifications for information.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, there were draft regulations proposed to make minimum levels of certification mandatory for different firefighter services offered by a municipality. The new regulations never made it through the approval process and were tabled. I was part of this process from my time on the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Board of Directors.

Now in the beginning of 2022, the regulations have been proposed again and are on track to be adopted by the province before Spring 2022. The proposed regulations would come into effect on July 1, 2022. The regulations are very similar to the previous version. The basic concept is if you decide to offer a service as a fire department, you must have your firefighters certified to the applicable standard. For example, if you offer auto extrication or interior fire operations you must have all firefighters certified to the standards applicable to those skills.

COMMENTS:

The new standards are a major change for the fire service as there have never been mandatory certification standards previous. Many other professions in the province have mandatory certifications, including other emergency services, such as police and paramedics. However, neither one of those services have such a strong contingent of volunteers that make up their rosters which will make certification more difficult. Nevertheless, the job the volunteers perform is the same risk and duties that any part time or full time firefighter must perform making it imperative all firefighters are trained to the same level.

As a management team, we have been preparing for the potential regulations. It started many years ago with the hiring of a County Training Officer to look after a recruit program for the entire County. Now, every recruit coming out of the training is certified as a firefighter and capable to performing all of the duties required for our firefighters. This has been a huge help and has given us a head start in ensuring all of our firefighters are certified. We have also had some good success in the past with grandfathering our older firefighters to the new

standards as well as newer firefighters and officers taking courses to make sure they were ready for the roles they have taken on.

We are also in the process of implementing all of our new software recently approved by Council. With the anticipation of the new regulations coming, implementing the new software to be able to keep proper training records and incident data will help us immensely in retaining the data and being able to reproduce it when audited by the Office of the Fire Marshal. The new data management systems we are working on will also help us in keeping track for the firefighters topics and information they need to complete so we ensure all are on track to becoming certified.

If the new regulations come in as written, we will have 4 years to catch up on any outstanding certifications needed for our personnel. We have started making plans with the rest of the county chiefs to start booking the courses we are going to require to get our people certified. We will be able to bring all of the courses locally to make it easier for our firefighters to take them. There is also the capability of online learning for some courses through our new learning management system we are implementing.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

An increase to the training budget may be a necessity in the future to compensate the extra courses and exams that will need to be taken.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Maintain and enhance the local volunteer fire fighter model in Minto, and take a leadership role in setting standards for municipalities this size by ensuring training, equipment and vehicles available to volunteers compares with a full time fire service.

PREPARED BY: Chris Harrow, Director of Fire Services
Marco Guidotti, Deputy Chief
Callise Loos, Deputy Chief

RECOMMENDED BY: Derrick Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer