

**TOWN OF MINTO**

**DATE:** June 16 2016  
**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Chris Harrow  
**SUBJECT:** Bunker Gear Extractor Purchase

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**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

6.4 Maintain and enhance the local volunteer fire fighter model in Minto, and take a Leadership role in setting the standard for forces for municipalities this size by ensuring training, equipment and vehicles available to volunteers equivalent to any full time fire service.

**BACKGROUND:**

In the past few years, cancer diagnosis within the fire service has become a large issue. The Provincial Government has twice now passed legislation recognizing many different types of cancers as being job related to the fire service. The focus now is on how prevention and how the fire service can do a better job preventing cancers in the fire service.

Recently Ministry of Labour Inspectors visited fire departments and they have made many recommendations in the area of bunker gear decontamination and cleaning. In a few cases, there have been orders served on municipalities.

To be proactive Minto Fire proposes to purchase a bunker gear extractor/washing machine. It is essentially an industrial washing machine set up to clean fire gear. I have spoken with our friends at Mapleton Fire and discussed the idea of sharing a machine and working together to clean gear after any incident. They have agreed in principle to the idea, pending Council approval, to split the cost of the machine 50/50 as well as the detergent and other related supplies. Minto Fire would host the machine in Palmerston as it is fairly central to both departments.

**COMMENTS:**

Some full time departments who have received orders regarding cleaning bunker gear have opted to purchase a second set of gear for each firefighter. This allows them to keep all of their personnel in service and gives time to clean the gear. Purchasing a second set of gear is expensive with each set costing around \$2,000 per firefighter.

Presently, Minto Fire sends gear to be cleaned by a third party in Kitchener. The average cost per set of gear is around \$80-\$100, depending on repairs and factoring in shipping. The third party is certified to inspect and repair the gear if any defects are found. It is our policy to send the gear at a minimum of once per year to have the inspection and testing completed. This will still continue even if an extractor is purchased.

However, with the focus on cleaning the contaminants off gear after every incident, we are finding that we are sending it away more frequently. This requires the firefighter to be assigned to other duties not requiring gear until it comes back, usually with one week.

Having the ability to clean gear internally, and reducing costs of shipping and cleaning to once a year per set of gear, should enable us to pay for the machine in 3 to 5 years. It also reduces the time some responders are without their gear to a few hours after the incident.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

First quote for a new machine is \$10,556.68 plus the cost of a soap dispenser and installation. This cost would be split with Mapleton and installation would occur in the Palmerston Station. The purchase of the machine is outside of the 2016 Capital Budget and will be funded by reduced operating costs for cleaning.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Council receives the Fire Chief's June 16, 2016 report entitled Bunker Gear Extractor Purchase and approves Minto Fire's joint purchase with Mapleton Fire and Rescue.

Chris Harrow, Fire Chief