



TOWN OF MINTO

MEETING DATE: October 1, 2024
REPORT TO: Mayor and Council
SERVICE AREA: Fire
SUBJECT: FIRE 2024-007 Specialty Rescue Team Update

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT the Council of the Town of Minto hereby receives report FIRE 2024-007, regarding Specialty Rescue Team Update, prepared by the Director of Emergency Services, for information purposes.

BACKGROUND

It has been approximately 8 years since Minto Fire started their water rescue team and confined space team programs. The firefighters involved in each of the teams put a large amount of hours into getting the teams started and functioning. Initial training and equipment purchases were completed and we began to offer the services to the residents of Minto.

COMMENTS:

Fast forward now to the present day and a great deal has changed. The training to certify in either water rescue or confined space has changed significantly. No longer are we able to choose a part of the program to train to. A firefighter must train to the entire discipline. For example, water rescue has 4 disciplines – surface water, ice water, swift water and soon to be flood water rescue. The total training program for all disciplines is approximately 160 hours.

On top of the initial hours of training, a firefighter must complete approximately 40 hours of training each year to maintain their certifications as well as do regular equipment checks and document them. All of this would put a significant strain on the firefighters as they would have to complete all of their other training on top of these additional hours.

After meeting with the specialty rescue firefighters, it was decided that this was too much for our staff to handle right now and we would pause our specialty rescue programs. Currently, we have under 10 firefighters who were originally certified remaining with the department. To have enough firefighters certified to adequately offer these services, we estimate we would need to certify at least half of the staff or 40 firefighters. Our firefighters are torn, because they want to offer the best service to the community, but don't have enough hours to give to be able to certify to either of these disciplines at this time.

In consideration of our teams being disbanded, we are endeavouring to sign an agreement with Centre Wellington to provide water rescue services to our community. We are still weighing our options for confined space services. Right now the closest available would be the Guelph Fire Department. Discussion still continue internally with the three departments in the partnership to see if we can come up with a solution internally.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

A new water rescue team would be a significant cost to both the equipment and the training. Initial estimates are well over \$150,000 to get started.

STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

PREPARED BY: Chris Harrow, Director of Emergency Services

RECOMMENDED BY: Gregg Furtney, Chief Administrative Officer