

Master Fire Plan

MINTO FIRE

C.FOERTER/C.HARROW

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Executive Summary

In June of 2012, The Municipal Council for the Corporation of the Town of Minto along with the Minto Fire Chief made the decision to formulate a Master Fire Plan for the Minto Fire Department. A report was presented and approved by council in June of 2012. The plan was to be written in house under the guidance of a steering committee.

A committee consisting of one representative of municipal council, three deputy fire Chiefs, the Administrative Coordinator, two firefighters from each station, two members of the community as well as the Fire Chief was formed to provide input into the planning process and construct the plan.

In March of 2017, the process was started to update the plan as 29 out of 35 initiatives had been completed. Surveys were conducted similar to the first time around. The general public was surveyed using Facebook and Twitter to advertise. The firefighters were also surveyed again for information about possible content. New this time, a survey was sent to the Firefighter's spouses/partners to solicit information from a different perspective.

The core components of the plan were determined by the Master Fire Plan Committee. The committee established the core components of the plan by analyzing the data collected. The core components consist of the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| - Administration | - Training |
| - Communications | - Fire Suppression |
| - Information Technology | - Health & Wellness |
| - Public Education | - Organizational Culture |
| - Fire Prevention | - MFD Cares |
| - Apparatus & Equipment | |

Master Plan Committee Members

Council Representative

- Ron Faulkner

Minto Deputy Fire Chiefs

- Mike MacDougall
- Wayne Loos

Minto Firefighters – Clifford Station

- Dan Ellis
- Kurtis Dykstra

Minto Fire Staff

- Cam Forbes
- Callise Foerter

Minto Fire Chief

- Chris Harrow

Minto Firefighters – Harriston Station

- Jeff Hotchkiss
- Paul Zimmerman

Minto Firefighters – Palmerston Station

- Chuck Ellison
- Dean Wick

Mission Statement

“The Minto Fire Department is dedicated to serving the community with a high standard of emergency response and fire prevention programs to ensure a safe environment for the residents of Minto.”

Core Values

We value...

*Commitment
Community Service*

*Integrity
Professionalism*

*Teamwork
Trust*

Introduction

The Minto Fire Department has three stations located in the Town of Minto. The three stations are located in the urban areas of Palmerston, Harriston and Clifford. The Minto Fire Department provides fire protection to the entire municipality as well as operates under fire protection agreements to provide coverage to the Municipalities of Howick and North Perth. The department also operates under the Wellington County Mutual Aid Plan which governs how mutual aid services are shared amongst all departments in Wellington County.

The Town of Minto Strategic Plan, which was recently updated, states:

6.0 Emergency Services and Health

Protect the health and safety of the community and citizens, business and the environment, by supporting a quality Volunteer Fire Department, emergency preparedness, and access to health care, prevention and wellness opportunities.

6.3 Support the Fire Department's mission to service the community with high standards of emergency response and fire prevention programs to ensure a safe environment for residents and to protect local business and property.

6.4 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.

6.5 Make available the Town's Volunteer Fire Services to abutting municipalities at fees that cover the cost of developing and maintaining the service, and support joint initiatives to share the cost of fire prevention and inspection services.

6.6 In partnership with the County, continue the implementation of the Town's Emergency Plan including public education and training exercises.

The Minto Fire Department operates under the corporate structure and reports directly to the CAO/Clerk. The Fire Chief is a Department Head and is part of the senior management team of the Town of Minto. The Fire Chief is also part of other committees under the current structure including the budget committee and emergency management team. The total net budget for the department is \$930,000. Included in the budget are wages for full time administrative coordinator and a part time fire prevention officer. Due to the fact that in the Town of Minto, a 1% tax increase would result in \$45,000 more in tax revenue we regularly investigate alternative sources of revenue to fund various initiatives in our department.

The Minto Fire Department operates under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. In the Act, it stipulates the mandatory services a department must offer. These include, a smoke alarm program, an inspection program, a public education program and a completed risk assessment. The risk assessment involves taking a look at unique characteristics of the municipality, the building stock present, and the demographics of the people living in the community. These items are compared to the incident call volume and the types of calls responded to. The risk assessment assesses the outcomes of the comparisons and itemizes the top risks the municipality faces with regards to fire. The municipality utilizes the risk assessment information to set the level of service provided to their citizens. This is accomplished through the Establishing and Regulating By-Law which will also be updated in the Master Fire Plan process.

Under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) oversees the Ontario fire service. The Office makes recommendations through various means to assist in regulating the Ontario fire service. On a yearly basis, statistics are submitted including total and types of incidents, fire inspections performed and number of individuals receiving public education. The OFMEM has an advice and assistance branch that is willing to come and speak with Council to assist in making decisions if need be.

Department Analysis

Administration

About

The Administrative team consists of one full time Chief, one Administrative Coordinator, one part time Fire Prevention Officer and 2 casual Deputy Chiefs. The two casual Deputy Chiefs represent the Clifford and Harriston stations. The overall structure includes a third casual Deputy Fire Chief, but this position is currently not filled with the Chief and Administrative Coordinator providing these services in Palmerston. Administration duties consist of; but are not limited to:

- Records Management:
 - Continual maintenance of training, incident, equipment and apparatus records.
 - Payroll, Attendance and Medical records for all firefighters
- Recruitment & Retention of firefighters
- Investigation of burn permits & complaints
- Reports to Council and all other duties involved with being a Municipal Department Head
- Oversees the implementation & development of the Department budget

The rest of the department consists of 85 firefighters among three stations. An organization chart can be found in appendix 'C'. Firefighters are compensated for each call that they attend. They receive \$35 for each call for the first 2 hours. This is paid even if the duration of the call is less than 2 hours. If the call progresses past 2 hours, they are paid \$15 per hour until the end of the incident.

The \$15 per hour is continued for all other fire department pay areas. Firefighters are paid for all truck checks, public education events, inspections, practices, meetings or any other fire department function attended. It is up to each individual firefighter to submit a pay sheet for the hours worked. They are usually paid these wages monthly.

Other areas of the department are paid differently. Any courses that firefighters attend away from their station are paid the per diem rate the municipality sets for half days and full days. Mileage is the same as municipal rates. Firefighters perform standby on weekends from July Canada Day weekend until September Labour Day weekend. They receive \$75 per day for standby. Any meetings that are attended out of town for county associations or other functions are also paid at the per diem rate. The Palmerston firefighters receive cheques for wages in June and then at the beginning of December. The other two stations receive cheques one time a year in December (Clifford is paid their standby in September).

Town Council acts as the Fire and Emergency Services Committee with a Chair appointed through the municipal appointment by-law. Policy and budgeting decisions are presented to Council through Committee by the Fire Chief and other Senior Department Staff.

From the SWOT analysis (Appendix A) the major concerns in Administration are:

- Top Down Communication: As Minto Fire is such a large entity with many moving parts; it is

THAT a mechanism is established to update all members on a monthly basis about workings of all divisions

THAT a change in organization structure be explored as demands change in the fire service

difficult to keep all members updated in a timely manner. Nevertheless, it is imperative that MFD strives to improve communication as excellent communication creates engaged employees.

- Staff Resources: Our deputy chief positions are involved from an operational standpoint; but have very little tasks administratively which leaves eighty percent of the work to be completed by the Fire Chief & Administrative Coordinator. In the future, with increasing regulations and demands, the current administration structure may need to be revisited.
- Succession Planning: With our retention rates being so high, MFD seldom has to replace a position. Although this is a great place to be in, it's also an area of weakness because it discourages our younger members to try to advance up the ranks. In order to remediate this problem, MFD needs to revamp its divisions structure to engage and encourage the youth of the department.

THAT all division operations be revamped to become more effective at involving more members.

THAT a change in compensation be explored to better reflect the new wages landscape.

Opportunities that MFD could work towards in the future include partnering with other departments or community organizations for various reasons from public education to collective buying.

Upcoming threats the department may have to mitigate through may include work –life –balance for administration as the fire service landscape changes. The increase in minimum wage and the other rules surrounding the increase may force MFD to overhaul the compensation plan for firefighters.

Overall, there are not many major problems in the administration division that the master fire plan needs to address immediately.

Communications

The County of Wellington under an agreement with Bell provides and operates 9-1-1 Public Emergency Reporting Service (PERS). The County is responsible for providing and operating a 24/7 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for 911 calls placed in Wellington County. To fulfill this obligation, the County of Wellington contracts the OPP to operate the PSAP. The majority of 911 calls in Wellington County are answered by North Bay OPP. Some wireless calls may be answered by adjacent PSAPs such as Guelph Police. Call takers at the PSAP will request from the caller the emergency response required – police, fire or ambulance. The calls are then transferred on to the appropriate Police, Fire and Ambulance dispatch center. In our case, this is the Guelph Fire Department. 911 calls can be received from a landline, wireless or VoIP telephone service. However, only landline calls will display with the telephone subscribers name, municipal civic address and telephone number. Wireless calls display the name of the wireless phone subscriber, the telephone number and the X and Y coordinates of where the call originated. For Fixed VoIP service the information is the same as landline calls. Nomadic VoIP does not display information. For landline, fixed VoIP and wireless calls the Dispatch Centre will receive information as to the responding police, fire and ambulance service. For Fire Departments in Wellington County, the information displayed includes the first responding municipal Fire Department. Nomadic VoIP calls are a concern with 911 call takers. Receiving text message 911 calls for the hearing impaired are now being piloted in Ontario.

Dispatch Center

All fire departments in Wellington County utilize the Guelph Fire Department for dispatching of incidents. They are responsible for answering the calls and dispatching fire department(s) to the incidents. There are two dispatchers working 24/7 in the dispatch control centre. Guelph Fire dispatch is going live in Summer 2017 with a new dispatch system. The new system will be capable of offering full dispatch services to all County fire services. Presently, we record our own benchmark times after the page has been acknowledged. Full dispatch services would perform this function for us, as well as keeping a consistent record of times and benchmarking. The price for dispatching services would increase. A further investigation into need versus cost will need to be completed to identify if the benefit will outweigh the cost. As well, new recording software has allowed Guelph fire dispatch to record all of our radio transmissions, eliminating the need for in house recording equipment. Finally, by moving to the County radio system, we are able to communicate with Guelph dispatch clearly on 2 two different channels.

THAT the investigation of full dispatch through Guelph is explored

Paging

All fire fighters wear personal pagers which are used to alert them for incidents. The paging system in the county, including multiple tower sites and repeater equipment, is owned and operated by the County of Wellington. They maintain and finance the infrastructure involving the paging system. The pagers themselves are maintained and financed by the fire department. The pagers consist of both Motorola and Swiss phone pagers. At this time, pagers are a mandatory part of notifying firefighters. Many issues have come up with the reliability of pagers and the cost to maintain them. There are very few alternatives on the market. Digital paging or cell phone notification might be an alternative approach in the future, but is out of the scope of this 5-year plan.

THAT MFD partner with Public Works to install generator backup at the two paging sites

A paging repeater is located on the water tower in

Harriston, which provides good coverage for Harriston and Palmerston. Clifford did have some issues with paging but they were alleviated with the installation of a paging repeater during the previous plan. Neither of the paging sites have generator back up, an issue that may be discussed within the next plan.

The HUB or central receiving point for pages is a tower located south of Arthur off of Highway 6. The Tower is owned by the County and we lease the land on which the Tower stands. All of our paging sites were upgraded in 2016/2017 by the County of Wellington to ensure all of the technology is up-to-date and functioning well. The work was completed by MRC Communications and was directed by a Consultant who was hired by the County.

Mobile Communications

Communications via radio is a fire department requirement. Presently, each station talks to Guelph dispatch via a radio linked to Guelph using the Bell Fleetnet system. Sometime over the summer, the system will change. We have upgraded to digital radios utilizing the County radio system. Guelph Dispatch has installed the County system into their consoles which will enable us to talk directly to Guelph on our system. The new method should be an upgrade as now we will be talking radio to radio. However, at this time the fire department radios have no ability to talk directly with the OPP or the Ambulance. Both are on different systems and will not allow fire department access to the system to communicate with them. We are currently experimenting with the Ambulance Supervisor having a radio on our system with the ability to monitor and talk directly to us.

As mentioned, communications amongst fire fighters and base is accomplished utilizing the Wellington County radio system. We have 2 channels on this system, both of which are used for operations. All of the County Fire Departments are on the system (with the exception of Wellington North), as well as all of the County Public Works crews. This allows us to be interoperable with all departments and public works. We are currently going through the process of upgrading coverage area of the new radio system by adding a repeater site in Clifford. This will give us a site in Palmerston and Clifford which should blanket our area with good radio coverage. All of these communications operate on a UHF system digitally using the 400 MHz frequency.

Radio transmissions are presently recorded by voice recorders located in each main pumper in each of the three stations when they are operable. On a regular basis, someone is required to download the transmissions off of the recorders and load them onto the server for safekeeping. This is a very labour intensive process. With the new radio system and new dispatch equipment in Guelph, we will be looking at using recording capabilities in Guelph to accomplish the task of recording our transmissions.

One downfall we have is interoperability with Mutual Aid partners outside of our County. All of the departments are not on digital frequencies, so our radios will not talk to them directly. We are investigating methods to patch the 2 systems together through Guelph Dispatch, but it will be a while before we can accomplish it. In the meantime, we have kept old radios and portables in certain trucks and at the bases to use when performing mutual aid with these departments. This is a temporary solution and we are continuing to search for a more permanent solution.

The identified areas of concern for the communications division are:

- Record keeping resources are minimal: To be remedied by going to full dispatch through Guelph Fire
- Neither paging sites have generator back up
- Interoperability between first response partners (Other FDs, OPP, EMS)

Overall, the communications division seems to be operating in good condition; however, the issues that need to be remediated could have financial implications.

Information Technology & Infrastructure

The Minto Fire Department runs entirely on our own server located at the Harriston Station. On it is the department's software, Fire Pro. All stations use this to enter incident reports, inspections, employee records and training data. As well, the department's entire inventory is found on the program.

We have done a good job pairing down the computers used in the Stations to a manageable level. Each radio room has a newer computer to be used by all department personnel as well as radio operators during incidents. Laptops are utilized by training personnel to enable them to do portable presentations. Chiefs and Admin staff use laptops so they can be taken to incidents and meetings. Computers are upgraded every four to seven years, depending on life expectancy.

In the municipal world, records management has emerged as a hot topic in the last few years. With Freedom of Information requests on the rise proper records management is becoming very important for many municipalities. The Ontario Municipal Records Management System is widely used as the standard for record storage in the province.

Areas of weakness in IT include proper maintenance of records, and proper documentation. There are always opportunities in information technology as it changes at a rapid pace; however, MFD could look into software programs that help to automate record keeping practices. This may come at a significant cost; so a benefit analysis must be completed before any decision making occurs.

Currently, to the Town's records management system TOMRMS and financial system, Keystone, is not accessible to Fire Department personnel. Remote access to the newly established "T" drive would gain us access to TOMRMS and enable us to file our records according the new municipal standard. At the same time, establishing access to Keystone would enable us to properly manage the budget.

In this next Master Fire Plan, it is paramount that the Department analyze their records management systems and work towards minimizing inefficiencies in our systems. Our focus will be on reorganizing both our electronic and paper filing systems, increasing our note taking capabilities and ensuring incident scenes are documented appropriately.

THAT the use of technology on the firetrucks and in the fire halls be reevaluated

Social Media

THAT the standard operating guideline for documentation and record keeping be updated to better capture current municipal standards

"Minto Fire has an active social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. Minto Fire has been a leader in the use of social media to promote Departmental activities including presenting at the 2015 Ontario Fire Prevention and Public Education Seminar at the Ontario Fire College. In the last six years this social media presence has proven

invaluable for communicating during tornado, ice storm and flood events. June 23, 2017 Minto Fire performed a key role coordinating communication on behalf of the Town of Minto and the Department. Minto Fire's social media program has become a trusted place for many residents to monitor during emergencies, road closure and other calls. Social media is also an important mechanism for public education and communication. The Master Fire Plan supports

the Department continuing its leadership role in the area of social media including coordinating communications with the Town during emergencies.”

Department Website & Email

In 2012 a website was created internally for Minto Fire, the website is successful mainly because it is controlled by Minto Fire. MFD is able to update the website on the go and it follows the same brand guideline as many of our apparatus. In this master fire plan, the focus for the website will be to make it accessible and increase the functionality of the website for the firefighters.

The MFD email is now controlled by the Town of Minto’s IT company, and therefore there is no maintenance needed from MFD’s side.

Public Education

The Office of the Fire Marshal has identified three “lines of defense” in terms of the overall fire protection for a community:

- Public fire safety education
- Fire prevention inspections and code enforcement
- Emergency response

The philosophy of this strategy is to provide buildings which are as fire safe as possible, to educate residents in fire prevention/fire safety and to provide effective emergency response should the first two strategies fail. While the general public views the fire service as primarily providing emergency response services, the premise of the “three lines of defense” is that the system has failed each time an emergency fire response is required. As mentioned in the Introduction, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act mandates that municipalities provide specified core services as related to fire prevention-code enforcement and public fire safety education. The mandatory provisions include:

- A recognized residential smoke alarm program
- Fire inspections and code enforcement upon complaint or request and other inspection services as determined by the needs and circumstances of the community
- A public fire safety education program

- Completion of a Simplified Risk Assessment

THAT the public education portfolio be rejuvenated

The Minto Fire Department runs some very successful public education programs. We have done so for many years. There is a Public Education Division in the department. It consists of a Division Chief, and 3 Station Pub Ed officers. Each Public Education Officer is responsible for the occurrences going on in their area. The group meets up to 3 times a year and plans their events for the year, including Safe Kids Day and other events as they come up. The group does need to do a better job at scheduling their events for the year to allow other firefighters the opportunity to help. This will also lead to more lead time for budgeting purposes.

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The last edition of the Master Fire Plan recommended we look at a safety day for children in the community. This led to the development of our very successful SafeKids Day. Over the past 5 years, we have also developed Touch-a-Truck and other worthwhile events that has elevated our status in the community. We are very fortunate to have completed a hugely successful branding campaign which has brought in a large amount of money to the department to enable us to fund numerous initiatives, including our water and confined space rescue teams. We need to continue to strive forward with our marketing plan and enhance it even more to achieve more partnerships which help us to spread our public education programs.

A revitalization of the Public Education division, as well as finding more help for members will be a focus moving forward. The group has many ideas, just not the man-power to see them to completion. We will focus on new partnerships as well as utilizing more firefighters on the committee.

A last area of focus is the County Fire Prevention Committee. We are endeavoring to lead the committee in a revamp in order to work together on county-wide projects. We see a large opportunity to work together with other departments

in the County and create some exciting new programming. The result of the revamp is to also form a buying group to help save money as most public education divisions buy the same materials.

One area that lacks in the public education area is the education of adults, especially seniors. Due to lack of available time for this division, many programs cannot be offered. The department has put a large part of their resources towards the education of school children. There is an opportunity for the department to branch out to different age groups. The Master Fire Plan committee has recommended we establish a smoke alarm program for Seniors. Minto has a large population of Seniors living in single family dwellings. A new smoke alarm program could be very beneficial for this group.

THAT a smoke alarm program targeting seniors is developed and implemented

Another area that is lacking in the public education area is educating businesses about fire safety. The department would like to become more proactive and educate our businesses as our downtown cores have been identified as high risk areas. The biggest hurdle will be the availability of staff hours to dedicate to any more programming.



Fire Prevention

The Minto Fire Department has a fire inspection division. We were fortunate enough through the first version of this plan to hire a part time fire inspector/by-law enforcement officer. The new Inspector has done great work keeping us in line with new regulations regarding Long –term care facilities and hospitals. He has kept up with the required annual fire inspections and fire drills. Without the newly appointed position, we would have struggled to remain in compliance. As well, he has been able to keep up with our burn permits and burning complaints.

The duties of the fire department in terms of fire prevention/code enforcement include:

- Enforcement of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. Inspections and code enforcement as related to the Ontario Fire Code (a regulation under the F.P.P.A.) including inspections due to complaint,
- inspections on request, regularly scheduled inspections of vulnerable occupancies and retrofit inspections
- Business registry inspections
- Liquor license application inspections
- Provincial ministry license inspections (day care etc.)
- Commenting, as requested by the Building Department, on Ontario Building Code issues as related to buildings in the municipality
- Fire cause determination and investigation
- Commenting on site plan issues as requested by the Clerk's Department
- Data compilation and record keeping duties

Request inspections are becoming more frequent. Many real estate transactions require that an inspection has to be completed before closing. These are usually requested less than a week before the closing date, so time is a factor. A follow-up must also be completed on the inspection after it has been performed. This all takes a considerable amount of staff time to complete.

A risk assessment must also be completed on the municipality, and then steps taken to mitigate the risks in the assessment. MFD needs to update their risk assessment and take a proactive approach to the risks identified.

THAT the risk assessment be updated

Every municipality both inside and outside the County of Wellington has to have a fire prevention and public education division. It is evident that resources could be shared between department, it is recommended that MFD try to partner with other agencies to share resources.

THAT fire prevention partnerships inside & outside the county of wellington are explored

Apparatus & Equipment

Apparatus

An outcome of the last Master Fire Plan was the Equipment Committee's work writing a truck deployment plan. This plan studied where all of the trucks were stationed, their usage and any cost savings that could be achieved. During the duration of the last plan, the deployment plan was implemented. We were able to remove 3 trucks from service and not replace them. New trucks purchased were built in a way to enable us to eliminate other trucks that were duplicating service. The committee deserves a lot of credit for working together to accomplish these results.

The twenty-five-year truck financing plan was continued and updated to match the new fleet deployment. The financing plan will continue to be followed and utilized to purchase future trucks. Council has been a huge supporter of this plan and the efforts that went into it by Firefighters.

The Clifford station has the following trucks:

- Rescue Pumper #140
- Crew Cab Tanker/Pumper #148
- 1500 Gallon Tanker #147

The Harriston station has the following trucks:

- Rescue Pumper #110
- Aerial Truck #114
- 1500 Gallon Tanker #117 (Maybe upgraded to a Crew Cab Tanker in the future)
- Water Rescue Unit #115

The Palmerston station has the following trucks:

- Rescue Pumper #100 (To be replaced starting the process in 2018)
- 1500 Gallon Tanker/Pumper #107
- 1500 Gallon Tanker #108
- Heavy Rescue #105
- Car 2 (Pick Up) and Technical Rescue Trailer with Gator

THAT the capital purchasing plan continue to be followed

Minto Administration Vehicles

- Car 1 (2016 Ford Escape Black)

All Tanker/Pumpers will be 1500 Gallon tanks with an approximately 500 gpm PTO pump.

Appendix 'B' is the twenty-five-year apparatus financing plan that was implemented a few years ago. It is a working document that will fluctuate.

All apparatus is repaired locally at numerous garages in each of the three urban areas. They are safetied each year as per the Ministry of Transportation standards. There is no service contract signed with any particular service center. There is also a need to ensure all of our trucks stay with the current technologies. Right now, there are paper map books in the trucks that are used to assist with locating properties. There is presently no capability of using GPS to locate addresses or to keep track of a trucks whereabouts. Truck routes are not recorded. There is an abundance of

software that is available to assist with locating trucks and response areas. In the future, this can be investigated to see if the viability of implementing software is financially possible.

A policy on servicing of our motorized equipment has been established by our Equipment Committee. It includes testing of our SCBA units every 2 years, pump testing the trucks every 2 years and servicing and testing our ladders every 5 years. The committee continues to review this document and update as the requirements change. They will be looking at standardizing how often our pumps and generators are serviced and will endeavor to find a contractor to complete it.

Equipment

MFD makes it a priority to operate lean among all stations. Currently, the consensus from all three stations is that the firefighters' needs are met in regards to equipment. However; in this master fire plan, quite a few items replacement items will need to be purchased in order to meet industry standards. All items that are up for replacement as well as costs associated with each item are found in Appendix 'B'.

Training

The training division is a very active and dynamic division. They are responsible for all of the practices held by the department, as well as organizing courses both in house and provided by outside agencies. The training division requires a lot of record keeping which puts higher demands on the Training Officers and Administration staff. The training division consists of a Training Officer in each station and the Fire Chief who oversees the division as well as chairs the Training Committee. If training demands continue to increase; more staff in this area might be needed.

THAT an increase in support for Training Officers be considered in the medium term

In 2011, the County of Wellington, through the Wellington County Fire Chiefs Association, hired a full time Training Officer. This position was created to assist all fire departments in the County with reporting requirements and the creation of lesson plans. The position has evolved and is now also responsible for coordinating the County recruit process. Each recruit hired by departments in the County goes through a recruit training program run by the County Training Officer. It involves attending sessions for 6 weekends throughout the Spring and early Summer. It also involves doing all of the administration before-hand on-line through Resource 1. The system works very well, but puts a lot of demands on a new hire. New recruits have found the training to be very worthwhile. When they complete the training, they are fully certified and ready to be a firefighter right away, which is a huge benefit to the department.

All three stations practice twice a month on the second and fourth week of each month. The Harriston station practices Tuesdays, Clifford station Wednesdays and Palmerston station Thursdays. The different nights are beneficial because it allows firefighters who miss a practice at their home station to attend another station to stay current with training. It also allows us to offer courses on these nights and give all firefighters three different nights to attend.

THAT the number of three station practices increase

All practices have been scheduled for the year. A yearly calendar put out by Administration has each practice scheduled with a topic listed in order to provide firefighters ample time to plan accordingly. Each year there is 1 three station practice as well.

Examples of these are 3-Station practices, extrication practices and extra sessions when we are donated places to use (vacant houses). Firefighters feel that it would be beneficial to have three station practices more often, as with any major incident, more than one station attends.

All full time and volunteer firefighters now train to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for the fire service. There is Firefighter 1 certification and Firefighter 2 certification. When new recruits finish the training program, they complete the exam for Firefighter 1. After a few months of experience on the Department, they return and complete the exam for Firefighter 2. This fully certifies each of them to full Firefighter status and allows them to take further courses in the NFPA curriculum. Existing Firefighters were grandfathered to the Firefighter 2 level when the transition took place in 2015. This also enables them to take further courses like Fire Officer and Fire Instructor courses.

There are many locations which are starting to get into offering NFPA training courses. The Emergency Service Training Centre in Blyth, the Ontario Fire College and the WESTREC training facility in Waterloo are just a few of the places we can send Firefighters to participate in training. However, we are finding it difficult to find the proper courses required at and asking firefighters to travel to these courses is quite expensive for the Municipality.

We have been working on bringing as many course as we can to Minto, so it is more convenient for our personnel to take training. The water rescue and confined space training are two examples of this. They both worked well and were convenient for all of our personnel. They didn't have to travel and could be home at night with their families. The one thing we are lacking is a proper training facility in Minto. We don't have a designated spot to be able to set up props and materials that we need to properly train.

Recently, the three Associations together have discussed putting all of their funds towards constructing a training facility in Minto. Grand Valley Fire has recently constructed their own utilizing "C" can storage units. The

benefit of the storage unit is it is low maintenance and fairly inexpensive to construct. It also gives us the ability to offer training in many disciplines we currently can't without a proper setting. A steering committee would coordinate the project including: researching the viability of the project, project proposal and implementation. A properly built training facility could be a huge benefit to the department for many years.

The Minto Fire Department has a standard operating guideline (SOG) in place that all firefighters have to be signed off in eleven different areas every eighteen months. This SOG renews itself every eighteen-month period. It allows every fire fighter to demonstrate every eighteen months that they are proficient in all vital skill areas, and it ensures that they attend an appropriate number of practices. There are also mandatory practices scheduled throughout the year in

regards to first aid and CPR renewals, agility testing and any other courses that arise.

THAT current training programs in relation to a succession strategy be reevaluated.

THAT a leadership program, including officer training, is created to encourage firefighter advancement up the ranks.

THAT a designated training weekend with multiple topics is explored.

leadership training into current programming.

THAT the building of a training centre be explored

Succession Planning & Leadership Development

In the firefighter survey a common theme in training was leadership development. It appears our young members may want to move up the rank at some point in their firefighting careers; however, are not confident enough in their leadership skills to do so. As the department gets older, there is going to come a point in time when we will need younger firefighters to step up into leadership positions. It is recommended that MFD evaluate its current training programs, and develop a strategy to incorporate

Fire Suppression & Emergency Response

The Minto Fire Department offers a large variety of services. We complete both interior and exterior fire attack. We are also proficient in urban and rural water supply. Certification was achieved in the Superior Tanker Shuttle Accreditation process. It was achieved in 2010 and enables residents in our rural areas within an eight kilometer radius of any fire hall savings on their fire insurance rates. We were able to be certified to 570 gallons of water per minute level, which is a very high level for rural fire departments.

Another response that is offered is medical first response. All of our fire fighters are trained to a Standard first aid level with some enhancements. They are also certified in CPR and defibrillation operations. All stations carry defibrillators and have used them at various times. There is also a defibrillator in the pick-up truck that travels around the municipality. All of our tiered response agreements have been updated to be consistent throughout all three Stations. We currently have tiered response agreements with Perth County Paramedic Services, Guelph/Wellington Paramedic Services and Huron County Paramedic Service. We are also part of the simultaneous notification trial through Wellington County. Simultaneous notification means we are dispatched at the same time as Ambulance is, there is no delay relaying the call between services. It has been working extremely well and it is our hope the MOHLTC will continue with it.

The Minto Fire Department also offers full motor vehicle collisions (MVC) response. This includes full extrication services, air bags capabilities and any other requests as necessary. We also assist with traffic control at the request of OPP and any investigative needs they require.

There are many other miscellaneous services that are offered including carbon monoxide investigations, natural gas leak investigations, illegal burning complaints and many others. Over the duration of the previous Master Fire Plan we

implemented a Confined Space team and a Water Rescue team. Both teams are now fully trained and ready to respond to various emergencies. We are offering a second course in both disciplines this fall to expand the number of firefighters on each team. Services that are not offered by the department

include ice rescue, trench rescue, and hazardous materials operations or cleanup. All firefighters are trained to the awareness level in all of these areas, but not the operations level. Most services are offered through county mutual aid agreement by other departments. If there is a call involving one of these rescues, we call in the department specified in the mutual aid agreement. This is done on a fee for service basis. We pay the department coming in a specified fee. Hazardous materials response is provided to us through a private company. The fee for the response and clean up is paid for by the person at fault or the company responsible for the spill.

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The department uses a two station response guideline for any reported structure fire. The complete guideline is Appendix "D". If there is a reported structure fire, two of Minto Fire's stations respond with a full compliment. This includes the aerial truck, tankers and pumper. Guelph Fire dispatch pages out both stations at the same time resulting in a simultaneous response. Utilizing this method of response ensures we have adequate personnel on the scene to complete initial operations and enough apparatus to utilize during operations. We are currently working with Guelph Fire Dispatch to modernize our method of dispatching. It will include alarm levels for calling in additional resources. As well, it will automatically dispatch resources to high risk buildings that require a larger response. Finally, we will be able to automatically dispatch more of our Stations to calls during certain time periods throughout the day where we are

traditionally short staffed. This new ability through Guelph Dispatch will alleviate some of our identified response shortcomings.

Currently we have lamResponding as our software program that alerts Firefighters of incidents on their personal cell phones. For the most part, it alerts on most of our responses, but it is not 100 percent reliable. The new Guelph Dispatch system will soon have the capability to send alerts to personal cell phones, this program will most likely be adopted by Minto in the short term. We will also progress to including monitors and digital firefighter response in the future.

One of the weaknesses in our fire suppression efforts is preplanning of buildings. This was made clear after the Listowel Dollar store fire. Many businesses and industrial buildings are being made of lightweight construction. These buildings,

as well as all other buildings in the municipality need to be preplanned. Preplanning involves planning out how firefighters would initiate an attack on a fire involving the building. This includes where water supplies are located, fire suppression systems in the building, shut offs of services, and positioning of fire

THAT a pre-planning task force & guideline is established

trucks. All of this information can be brought back to the fire officers and discussed so everyone is prepared for an incident at the building.

Our preplanning right now is minimal. It is very difficult to gather the information required to bring back to the fire officers. Building tours are set up for firefighters to go through and gather information. Many times though, the information is not processed. It would take a good 6-10 hours to process the information for a small building and present it into a format for all to use at the fire halls;

however, accomplishing this for all of our business and industrial buildings would be very time consuming.

THAT preplanning be increased on higher risk buildings

Agreements

Currently, Minto Fire has Fire Protection Agreements with North Perth and Howick Township where we provide services to each of those municipalities. Both agreements have been recently updated, the North Perth agreement because it was set to expire and the Howick agreement because it was requested. We will continue to monitor the agreements and ensure they are functional for Minto Fire. We will continue to strive to have agreements completed where the closest fire department responds to incidents for the protection of residents no matter which municipality they live in. At the end of each year, each agreement will be reviewed together with the corresponding responses to ensure all needs are being met.

Health & Wellness

Decontamination

Firefighters, in the course of their duties, may be exposed to contaminants during training exercises or emergencies. As per the general duty clause 25(2) (h) of the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), employers are required to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers. There are various areas that should be improved in order to properly decontaminate equipment after training or incidents. In the short term, MFD needs to reevaluate and redevelop their decontamination policies.

THAT decontamination procedures be reevaluated, redeveloped and implemented in accordance to Section 21.

Occupational Stress Injuries & Mental Health

In Spring 2016, the province passed the Supporting Ontario's First Responder Act, which is legislation that creates a presumption that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in first responders is work-related. The act is part of the province's strategy to prevent or mitigate the risk of PTSD and provide first responders with faster access to treatment and the information they need to stay healthy.

THAT the PTSD plan & firefighter debriefing plans be implemented & further developed

Employers of workers covered under the PTSD presumption were directed to provide the Minister of Labour with information on their workplace post-traumatic stress disorder prevention plans April 23, 2017. MFD has submitted their plan, and the

implementation process must soon follow.

Wellness & Member Benefits

It was identified in the firefighter surveys that physical fitness is a priority to many of our members and that having a fitness program incorporated into the fire department would increase our employee satisfaction. In the past, Administration Staff has researched into partnering with fitness centers in the area to provide discounts to members; however, it is very difficult to provide this membership to firefighters as there is no fitness centre in Minto. It's also a detriment to us encouraging firefighters to go out of town in groups in case of an emergency. The best solution to incorporate fitness into our member benefits is bring fitness programming into the firehalls. It is well known how beneficial workplace wellness programs are to employee productivity. Workplace wellness creates avenues to decrease stress, fosters an environment of teamwork, and encourages better work performance.

THAT the idea of a firefighter gym cooperative be explored

Organizational Culture

Firefighter Associations

Each station has their own member association responsible for hosting the Christmas parades, breakfasts and any other traditional firefighter events. It was identified in both the firefighter and spouse survey that all members of Minto Fire would like to see an increase in members only family events. The spouses would also like to be included more often on various occasions.

THAT a social committee, consisting of the association presidents, is formed to meet on an as needed basis to increase engagement at firefighter events throughout the department

THAT the newly formed social committee works together to develop family activities for fire departments to build upon the family culture

THAT initiatives for spousal engagement be increased

THAT each association establish consistent nominations procedures for each association executive

It is recommended that the associations standardize their processes, and meet all together yearly to coordinate all of the happenings for all stations, as well as, plan three station family functions.

Minto Fire Cares

A not for profit organization is being developed to aid in the number of donations Minto Fire receives every year from various organizations and businesses.

THAT the MFD cares structure & organization be established

Upcoming Matters

Currently going through the Provincial Legislature is legislation for the placarding of lightweight constructed industrial/commercial buildings. Minto Fire through the Chief has been working closely with our local MPP who has been spearheading the Bill. We will continue to stay briefed on this issue and see how it progresses through the Legislature. We may need to incorporate local By-Laws or improve upon our pre-planning in the future with regards to this issue.

Another issue to focus on is the current review of the Fire Protection and Prevention Act by the Provincial government. They are looking at modernizing the Act and changing some of the ways fire departments do business. One key issue is the mandatory certification of firefighters and officers. This would require all future personnel to be certified by the applicable NFPA standard as recognized by the Province. We will keep an eye on the progression of these talks and may have to revamp our training program within the department.

Finally, decontamination in the fire service is a hot topic. It includes decontamination at the scene as well as back at the Station. We have been watching the changing guidelines for some time and are preparing for possible future upgrades. This could include an upgrade to both the Palmerston and Clifford Station buildings. A main focus of our renovation to the Harriston Station was the separate bunker gear room. We may need to look at completing this as well at the other 2 Stations. Clifford would be first, as we need washroom upgrades and classroom upgrades. Palmerston will be in the future, probably out of the scope of this plan.

Also included in the decontamination guidelines will be diesel extraction equipment and bunker gear cleaning solutions. The process has already been started by the joint purchase of a washing machine extractor with Mapleton Fire. We both have seen success in being able to wash our own gear and not have to continually send it away to be cleaned.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Category	Implementation
THAT a change in compensation be explored to better reflect the new wages landscape	Admin	
THAT a change in organization structure be explored as demands change in the fire service	Admin	
THAT various division operation be revamped to become more effective at involving more members	Admin	
THAT a mechanism to update all firefighters on a monthly basis is established	Admin	
THAT the investigation of full dispatch through Guelph is explored	Communication	
THAT MFD partner with Public Works to install generator backup at the two paging sites	Communication	
THAT a social committee, consisting of the association presidents, is formed to meet on an as needed basis to increase engagement at firefighter events throughout the department	Culture	
THAT the newly formed social committee works together to develop family activities for fire departments to build upon the family culture	Culture	
THAT each association establish consistent nominations procedures for each association executive	Culture	
THAT initiatives for spousal engagement be increased	Culture	
THAT the capital purchasing plan continue to be followed	Equipment	
THAT fire prevention partnerships inside & outside the County of Wellington are explored	Fire prevention	
THAT the risk assessment be updated	Fire prevention	
THAT a pre-planning task force & guideline is established	Fire Suppression	
THAT response capabilities are enhanced for certain time periods based on research completed by Administration Staff	Fire Suppression	
THAT preplanning be increased on higher risk buildings	Fire suppression	
THAT decontamination procedures be reevaluated, redeveloped and implemented in accordance to Section 21.	Health & Wellness	
THAT the PTSD plan & Firefighter debriefing plans be implemented & further developed	Health & wellness	
THAT the idea of a firefighter gym cooperative be explored	Health & Wellness	
THAT the use of technology on the firetrucks and in the firehalls be reevaluated	IT	
THAT the standard operating guideline for documentation and record keeping be updated to better capture current municipal standards	IT	
THAT the MFD Cares structure & organization be established	MFD Cares	
THAT a smoke alarm program targeting seniors is developed and implemented	Public Education	
THAT the public education portfolio be rejuvenated	Public Education	
THAT current training programs in relation to a succession strategy be reevaluated	Training	
THAT a leadership program is created to encourage firefighter	Training	

advancement up the ranks		
THAT the building of a training centre be explored	Training	
THAT the number of three station practices increase	Training	
THAT a designated training weekend with multiple topics is explored	Training	
THAT an increase in support for Training Officers be considered in the medium term	Training	

Appendices

APPENDIX “A”

SWOT ANALYSIS

Administration

Strengths

- Members of the administration team work diligently to operate on a lean budget
- Firefighters respect department leaders
- Operations completed efficiently

Opportunities

- Partnerships with other Departments
- Partnerships with Community Organizations

Weaknesses

- Staff resources are sparse
- Communication among all divisions
- Lack of succession planning

Threats

- Work / Life Balance
- Increasing standards & regulations
- Becoming Stale
- Increase in minimum wage
- Budget constraints

Communication

Strengths

- One main dispatch centre
- Direct communication with Guelph & other FD on the same system

Opportunities

- Full dispatch through Guelph

Weaknesses

- Record keeping resources are low
- Neither paging sites have generator back up
- No way of talking to OPP or Ambulance
- interoperability between departments

Threats

- pagers becoming obsolete

Information Technology & Infrastructure

Strengths

- Operating on lean network

Opportunities

- New technologies that help to automate processes

Weaknesses

- Electronic filing system has no standard
- SOG's do not reflect the municipal standard

Threats

- Equipment failure: proper maintenance mitigates this risk

Public Education

Strengths

- Current programming is successful

Opportunities

- County Wide Partnerships
- Business Community Partnerships

Weaknesses

- Limited staff time
- Programs not reflective of the demographics in Minto
- Budget Constraints

Threats

- None identified

Training

Strengths:

- All training across all stations is identical

Weaknesses:

- Staff resources
- Teaching resources – lack of props and proper training grounds

- Lack of joint training sessions among stations
- Leadership training opportunities

Opportunities

- Building a training centre
- Increasing 3 station practices
- Increasing mutual aid partner training sessions
- Increasing leadership training opportunities

Threats

- An increase in tasks for training officers may result in a need to increase staff in that division

Fire Suppression & Emergency Response

Strengths

- Three stations working together

Weaknesses

- Manpower response during the day

Opportunities

- Preplanning on high risk buildings

Threats

- New rules & regulations

APPENDIX “B”

Replacement Items – Major Costs

HELMETS							
YEAR		QUANTITY			PRICE		
		CLIFF	HARR	PALM			
2018		10	11	10	TOTAL	31	15500
2019		0	0	6	TOTAL	6	3000
2020		2	2	1	TOTAL	5	2500
2021		0	2	2	TOTAL	4	2000
2023		0	1	0	TOTAL	1	500
						47	23500

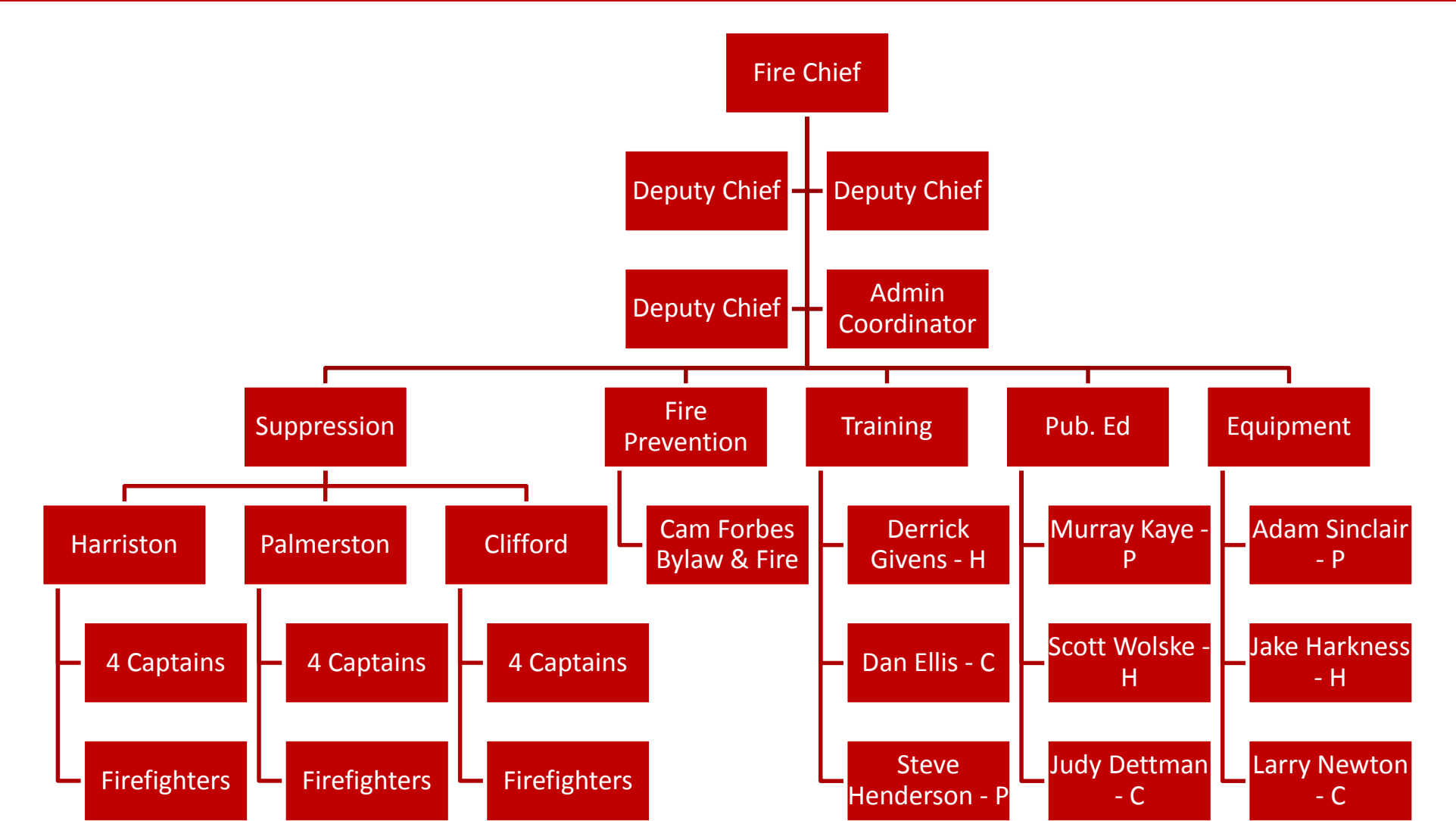
BOOTS							
YEAR		QUANTITY			PRICE		
		CLIFF	HARR	PALM			
2018		1	2	5	TOTAL	8	2000
2019		5	5	6	TOTAL	16	4000
2020		0	1	0	TOTAL	1	250
2021		2	3	2	TOTAL	7	1750
						32	8000

BUNKER GEAR						
YEAR	QUANTITY			PRICE		
2018	2	3	3	TOTAL	8	9600
2019	2	5	4	TOTAL	11	13200
2020	3	3	2	TOTAL	8	9600
2022	4	1	0	TOTAL	5	6000
					32	38400

Replacement Year	Station	Vehicle Type	Retired Unit	Estimated Cost	Yearly Contribution	Reserves
2006	Harriston	Aerial	114	\$85,000.00	\$120,000.00	
2007	Palmerston	Rescue	105	\$200,000	\$ 120,000.00	\$310,501.55
2008					\$ 120,000.00	\$ 444,595.73
2009	Borrowed Amount			\$50,000	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 543,505.73
2010	SCBA Borrowing & Clifford Pumper Payment			\$380,000	\$ 155,000.00	\$ 326,337.52
2011	Clifford	Pumper	141	\$200,000	\$120,000.00	\$ 222,255.01
2012					\$ -	\$222,255.01
2013	Minto	Tanker	148	\$215,000.00	\$ -	\$ 7,255.01
2014					\$ 192,850.00	\$ 200,105.01
2015					\$206,000.00	\$ 174,027.85
2016	Minto	Tanker	107	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 206,000.00	\$ 160,027.85
2017	Adjustment Made to reserves				\$ 206,000.00	\$ 41,652.00
2018					\$ 222,000.00	\$ 263,652.00
2019	Palmerston	Pumper	100	\$ 450,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 35,652.00
2020				\$ 40,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 217,652.00
2021	Minto	Tanker	117	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 139,652.00
2022					\$ 222,000.00	\$ 361,652.00
2023	Harriston	Tanker	110	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 283,652.00
2024		Pumper		\$ 500,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 5,652.00
2025				\$ 125,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 102,652.00
2026				\$ 125,000.00	\$ 222,000.00	\$ 199,652.00

Apparatus Replacement Financing Program

Organization Structure



Two Station Response Guideline

PURPOSE: To implement a standard procedure for an automatic two-station response to ensure proper staffing levels at structure fires.

SCOPE: This guideline is to be followed by all members of the department.

Structural firefighting including rescue is a core service delivered by the department. The Fire Chief has an obligation to delivery this service properly, safely and sufficiently staffed as per PFSG #04-08A-03 and as per other applicable legislation and codes.

PFSG #04-08A-03 states fire ground operations are time critical. 10 firefighters in 10 minutes from the time the department receives the call, is the optimal staffing level required for delivering this service.

It may be necessary to dispatch 2 stations within the Town of Minto to achieve this staffing level.

This is in part due to the possibility of low staffing levels at any of the 3 stations.

NOTE: Although the time of day may dictate the staffing levels available in each station (sufficient or insufficient), the only way to ensure that proper levels are achieved is by a 2-station response.

PROCEDURE: Upon receiving a report of a structure fire, the department's dispatch service (Guelph Dispatch) will set off two tones, one for the normally responding station (as per response area maps) and one for the backup station according to the attached spreadsheet, then a voice message giving the appropriate response information.

The objective of this guideline is to reduce the time it would take for the initial firefighters to respond to the station, determine staffing levels and then advise the dispatch service to tone a second station.

This guideline will also assist the Fire Chief to ensure the proper staffing levels are attained as set out in PFSG #04-08A-03 and to ensure firefighter safety and community fire protection is not compromised.

This procedure shall be followed for every structure fire or possible structure fire. It will be up to the Dispatcher's discretion if the call fits into this protocol. The responding Incident Commander also has the option of immediately requesting for the second station to respond at his/her discretion.

The station responding to assist the first station will after stating on air that they are responding as per SOG 208, will maintain radio silence unless absolutely necessary to speak on air. Before departing the station, they should ensure they know the directions of travel. This will allow the Incident Commander to complete a proper size up and incident action plan. It will be the responsibility of the Incident Commander to contact the responding station and inform them of their responsibilities upon arrival.

REFERENCES: **Public Fire Safety Guideline #04-08A-03 Optimizing Rural Emergency Response**
 Public Fire Safety Guideline #04-08-12 Staffing-Single Family Dwellings
 Public Fire Safety Guideline #04-03A-12 Volunteer Firefighter Staffing

THE END.