



EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

AGENDA

February 24, 2021 @ 9am

ZOOM MEETING

You Tube Channel: South Algonquin Council

Open Meeting/Call to order

1. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
4. Unfinished Business
 - Fire Permit (Staff Report November)
 - Firefighter pay structure (officers)
5. New Business
 - E & R by-law
 - Fire service to water access properties
 - Vaccination Clinic

Adjournment

NOTE: Submissions received from the public, either orally or in writing, may become part of the public record.

STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: February 24, 2021

Agency: Township of South Algonquin

Staff Contact: Fire Chief Don Kruger

Agenda Title: Fire Department Service to Water Access Properties

Agenda Action: Discussion

Recommendation

If the township E & R by-law is changed to provide fire department service to water access properties, there will need to be a number of additions to the fire department. Specifically training, equipment, and vehicles. The service would need to be defined and the times and locations where the service would be provided determined.

Background

Council has discussed expanding service provided by the Fire Department to include water access properties. Although the specific request is for Aylen Lake there are many lake communities within South Algonquin where there is no defined access for firefighting. The intention of this report is to provide an analysis of the action required if this service is to be expanded, as a starting point for this discussion.

Analysis

Because the township does not currently provide this service there is very little equipment that the fire department currently owns that would allow us to provide this service. Therefore, a great deal of equipment would need to be purchased. Firefighters are not trained to provide this service so they would have to be trained to do so provided they are willing. Some, but not all of the current firefighters are willing to provide the level of service, but they would not be willing to do so without the training and equipment that would make it safe and practical for them to do so. There would also need to be licensing requirements met. Once a determination is made to how and what the service would be, training, policies, procedures and updates to existing by-laws would be required.

Method of Service

The township would first need to determine how to access to the properties that cannot be accessed by road. In order to provide year-round access, there would be a need to determination of the best way to do that. This could be a boat and snowmobiles or a hovercraft, cost may be the determining factor. If we were to purchase a boat would it be a boat with a pump or a boat that could carry a portable pump, the size of the boat would need to be determined. Similar questions would need to be asked if we were to purchase a hovercraft for the winter months. Snowmobiles would provide access, but we would need trailers for the snowmobiles in order to get equipment to the scene as well.

Equipment

The fire department does have portable pumps and some PFDs. In order to provide this service, we would require more PFDs to allow a larger number of firefighters to be on or near the water safely. There would

also need to be towing capabilities and storage for any new vehicles whether it be a boat, hovercraft, and/or another snowmobile.

Depending on the changes to the E & R by-law and the level of service to be provided we may also have to purchase equipment for water rescue. Ropes and other equipment needed for water rescue including floatation devices and proper clothing and floatation for activities in the colder months.

Storage of the additional equipment and vessels or vehicles would also need to be considered. There is no room within either of the two stations for storage and therefore another option would need to be found, perhaps the township roads shed or lot. Some of the equipment could be stored on apparatus but it would not always be needed year-round so it might not always be necessary to have it on the apparatus.

Training and Certification

A swim test would need to be part of the training program and this could make some firefighters uncomfortable and unwilling to provide this service. Reducing the number of firefighters that are able or willing to respond to such calls would make it necessary to make it more of a specialized team response.

There would need to be training on trailering the vessel, using fire apparatus to trailer a vessel would not be the same as when using a personal vehicle because of the size. Driver training for any vessel would be required due to the size and weight of the vessel, if the township were to purchase a hovercraft for year-round access that would require a great deal more training because there is most likely not many firefighters with experience in one. Training for fighting fires on or near water would also require extra training, for example setting up Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT) for firefighter rescue is much different near water. A commercial boat license is required.

Alternatives

We could explore the option of contracting someone to ferry firefighters and equipment across the water when needed. Any contract would have to stipulate that the contractor would be available at all times.

The other alternative is to continue the status quo for suppression and increase the Fire Prevention and Public Education activities for and with property owners with water access only.

Strategic Plan

This action is addressing the strategic plan desire to modernize and update the fire department services.

Fiscal Impact

There would be a significant increase to the fire department budget and the capital costs. Annual costs for equipment maintenance and training would be required. This report is provided for information and as such an annual cost has not been determined, a rough estimate of startup costs would be in the range of \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Consultations

Georgian Bay Township Deputy Chief Chad Dowell, Tay Township Deputy Chief Shawn Aymer,