TORONTO

STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED
with Confidential Attachment

Toronto Fire Services Update

Date:	September 4, 2012
To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services
Wards:	All
Reason for Confidential Information:	This report contains advice or communications that are subject to solicitor client privilege. This report contains communications about labour relations or employment negotiations.
Reference Number:	p:\2012\ClusterB\FIR\cd120022.doc

SUMMARY

This report responds to requests made by City Council and the Community Development and Recreation Committee. At its meeting of January 17, 2012, City Council directed the Fire Chief and General Manager of Fire Services to report on the impacts of the hiring freeze on response times; emergency preparedness; public, and firefighter safety; and the progress of the 2012 Fire Underwriters Survey. City Council also directed that the Fire Chief include in the report both the interim results of the Fire/EMS Efficiency Study and comments on any effect on response times from hiring part time firefighters.

As well, at its meeting of June 26, 2012, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested the Deputy City Manager, in conjunction with the Acting Fire Chief, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) staff and the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association report on the development of a protocol on the use of overtime for the purpose of calling back front-line operation firefighters.

TFS is currently involved in three separate reviews, Fire Underwriters Survey, TFS/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Efficiency Study, and a Health and Safety Risk Assessment, that will, upon their completion, assist in further managing effective and safe levels of service delivery. A review of current injury and emergency response time data appears to indicate that, to date, the current number of deferred positions has had a minimal impact on first-in apparatus response time, and that TFS has managed any associated potential risks appropriately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services recommends that:

1. this report be received for information.

2. City Council direct that the confidential information contained in Confidential Attachment 1 to the September 4, 2012 report, from the Fire Chief and General Manager of Fire Services remain confidential as it is subject to solicitor-client privilege and pertains to potential labour relations or employment negotiations.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Estimated costs associated with the implementation of overtime for the purpose of calling back front line operation firefighters are included in this report. The financial impact will be determined once a decision is made on the implementation of a call back protocol.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of January 17, 2012, City Council directed the Fire Chief to report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on the impacts of the hiring freeze on:

- response times;
- emergency preparedness;
- public and firefighter safety; and
- the progress of the 2012 Fire Underwriters Survey, including any potential changes to commercial insurance rates.

City Council also directed that the Fire Chief include in the report the effect on response times by hiring part time firefighters, and the interim results available from the Fire/EMS Efficiency Study.

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getCouncilDecisionDocumentReport&meetingId=5072

As well, at its meeting of June 26, 2012, the Community Development and Recreation Committee requested the Deputy City Manager, in conjunction with the Acting Fire Chief, Toronto Fire Services staff, and the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association, report on the development of a protocol on the use of overtime for the purpose of calling back front-line operation firefighters.

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.CD14.3

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting of January 17, 2012, City Council approved the 2012 Operating Budget for Toronto Fire Services (TFS) of $369.756 million gross and $354.624 million net, composed of the following services:

Service:	Gross ($000s)	Net ($000s)
Fire Operations	297,855.9	283,990.8
Fire Prevention & Public Safety	14,409.3	14,084.8
Communications & Operational Support	29,139.0	28,697.1
Professional Develop. & Mechanical Support	25,097.9	24,697.9
Fire – Headquarters	3,254.1	3,153.8
Total Program Budget	369,756.2	354,624.3

Toronto Fire Services' total approved staff complement for 2012 is 3,176.3 positions. As part of the 2012 budget approval process, Council approved the deferred hiring of 68 positions to the end of 2012.

COMMENTS

Staffing

In December 2011, the City Manager approved the enrollment of 40 recruits. The recruits graduated in April 2012 and are active firefighters.

Approval has recently been given to hire another class of 40 recruits and training is scheduled to commence on September 17, 2012. Approval has also been given to hire 10 Fire Prevention personnel, one Division Commander, one Communications staff, and one Budget Analyst in 2012.

There were a total of 131 vacancies across TFS as of July 31, 2012. In the Operations Division, it appears that to date, the current gapping level has had a minimal impact on first-in apparatus response time and that TFS has managed any associated potential risks appropriately. TFS will continue to monitor the impact of the vacancies.

There are a total of 128 heavy apparatus available to TFS, which includes pumpers/rescues, aerials and other specialized vehicles. During the period of January 1 to June 30, 2011, an average of 4.1 apparatus was out of service daily. During the same period (January 1 to June 30) in 2012, an average of 5.5 apparatus was out of service daily. It is normal that apparatus may be taken out of service for several reasons including gapping, scheduled and unscheduled absences, and personnel on Long Term Disability.

TFS manages the staffing of apparatus on a daily basis to ensure appropriate response to incidents. TFS has initiated several approaches as noted below to be used as needed.

- TFS staffs aerial apparatus with three personnel to compensate for vacancies and to keep apparatus in service. This is currently being reviewed as part of the upcoming Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Pending the outcome of this review and in response to a recommendation by the Joint Central Health and Safety Committee, TFS senior management has opted to dispatch an additional fire apparatus to all initial fire and fire alarm calls.
- Predetermined designated fill-in apparatus are utilized in each station so as to ensure even coverage of resources. This approach allows TFS to keep at least one pump class apparatus with four personnel in each station. Fill-in vehicles include pumpers, rescue pumpers and aerial apparatus, depending on need and availability.
- Area Commands will cover their own areas until two apparatus are out of service at which time other Area Commands will assist and co-ordinate additional apparatus to ensure there is an appropriate distribution of in-service fire apparatus across TFS.
- Apparatus may be pulled from scheduled training. Training is scheduled on a daily basis to maintain staff skill and knowledge levels to appropriately respond to incidents. Training includes the required certification and re-certification necessary to perform some disciplines.
- Apparatus previously committed to attend community events and familiarization tours may be withdrawn if it is determined that attending the event may delay response to incidents.

In all circumstances of community events, familiarization tours and training, TFS apparatus remain in service and available to respond to incidents.

Call-backs and Overtime

In their letter dated May 16, 2012 to the Chair of the Community Recreation and Development Committee, the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association, Local 3888 suggested the use of call-backs in TFS to mitigate issues related to staff vacancies in the Operations Division and apparatus out of service.

TFS Senior staff met with Local 3888 Executive staff in August and September 2012 to discuss and identify issues associated with the development of a call-back protocol for front-line operation firefighters. A formalized protocol, based on that invoked in a deployment of the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue team (HUSAR), has been mutually agreed upon, and once in use, will be monitored regularly.

TFS management is of the opinion that the use of call-backs under certain pre-determined conditions may provide a cost effective option to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. However, the use of call-backs on a regular basis is not viewed as a necessary or prudent use of financial resources. Overtime costs associated with placing one out of service apparatus back into service daily are estimated to be $2.13 million annually

(based on 2009 salaries.) Based on an average of 5.5 apparatus out of service daily, overtime costs are estimated to be close to $12 million annually.

Containment of costs related to overtime has been the subject of a number of reviews undertaken by staff in the City Manager's Office (Internal Audit) and the Auditor General's Office (Continuous Controls Monitoring Initiative). TFS manages this area very closely and has been successful in containing costs related to overtime.

Response Times

Public safety is a top priority for TFS and improving response times is a key component. The establishment of a Quality Assurance Manager Position and the roll-out of Business Intelligence Software , as well as a co-operative and concerted effort by TFS Management and Local 3888 Executive to benchmark and reduce turn-out times across TFS, demonstrate the commitment to improving response times. Business Intelligence Software is a data warehousing product which uses historical data previously gathered by the computer aided dispatch system to map, analyze, and report on trends over time.

A review of response time data indicates that TFS response times have improved when compared to 2011. All aspects of total response time which include dispatch times, turnout times and road response times have been reduced and TFS was on scene approximately 30 seconds faster in 2012 than in 2011. In May 2011, TFS total response time (from receipt of alarm to arrival) was 7 minutes and 36 seconds or less, 90% of the time. In May 2012, the total response time was 7 minutes and 7 seconds or less, 90% of the time.

The NFPA 1710 standard indicates that the combination of call processing, turnout time and road response time for a first-in apparatus should equal 6 minutes and 20 seconds, 90% of the time. This is comprised of one minute for call processing, 80 seconds for turnout time, and 4 minutes for road response). At the end of May 2012, TFS was achieving this standard 80.90% of the time.

TFS will continue to monitor, identify, and implement improvements with a view to achieving further efficiencies in emergency call processing, the dispatching of responding crews, and overall response times.

Ongoing technological enhancements that will assist in achieving these goals include:

- Modifications to existing CAD to CAD Interface with EMS to increase the instances of simultaneous dispatch;
- Continuing implementation of, and modifications to, the Business Intelligence Software.
- Link from CAD to the Records Management System (RMS) to provide building and inspection information to emergency responders; and
- Future fire station alerting upgrade to IP based alerting system as part of the overall radio replacement project, which will reduce the number of seconds that it takes for an alert to sound in the fire hall after the dispatch is initiated in the Communications Centre.

Part Time Firefighters

The employment of part time suppression firefighters in the Operations Unit is not viewed as a viable option for TFS, given the considerable logistical, health and safety, and training issues that arise from employing part time operational staff. However, the use of part time staff in other TFS Units is an option that TFS management is open to investigating further; particularly if improvements in the delivery of fire prevention and support services could potentially be realized. In the absence of a completed feasibility review, TFS is not in a position to comment further on the potential use of part time staff at this time.

Public and Firefighter Safety - Interim Results of the Health and Safety Risk Assessment

The safety of firefighters in carrying out their duties on the fireground (the operational area at the scene of a fire) is of paramount importance. To assist in assessing the current level of firefighter safety; TFS staff, in consultation with staff in the Deputy City Manager's Office, Cluster B and the Corporate Health & Safety Unit determined that as a first step, a detailed review of historical injury data should be undertaken.

The purpose of undertaking a historical injury review is to gain a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding TFS firefighter injuries on the fireground (specifically residential firegrounds) and to determine if any of the injuries could be linked to findings contained in a 2010 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) report, designed to determine the impacts of crew size, first-in apparatus arrival time, and subsequent apparatus arrival times on firefighter safety and effectiveness at a low-hazard residential structure fires.

As the NIST report also quantified the effects of changes to staffing and arrival times for residential firefighting operations, a secondary component of the injury review is to determine if the TFS practice of staffing its aerial apparatus with three person crews is appropriate. A number of fire services across Canada and the United States staff their aerials with four, or in some cases, five person crews. Staffing aerial fire apparatus with a four person crew is the NFPA standard.

The injury review includes all residential fireground injuries that have occurred over a five year period from 2007-2011 with a specific focus on injuries that occurred at two-storey detached residential dwellings (to mirror the type of structure used in the NIST study).

Pending the outcome of this review and in response to a recommendation by the Joint Central Health and Safety Committee, TFS senior management has opted to dispatch an additional fire apparatus to all initial fire and fire alarm calls.

The second component of the undertaking will involve the assessment of fire risk within the City of Toronto, using two risk assessment models developed by the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal: "Operational Planning: An Official Guide to Matching Resource

Deployment and Risk"; and "Comprehensive Fire Safety Effectiveness Model (Fire-Risk Sub Model)".

Any identified gaps in fire suppression capabilities that are revealed as a result of this undertaking will be considered and recommendations will be developed to address the associated risk.

Interim Results - 2012 Fire Underwriters Survey

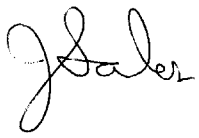
The data collection and analysis of the fire insurance grades for the City of Toronto is progressing. FUS anticipates delivery of the final fire insurance grades for the entire city including Public Fire Protection Classifications of all areas within the City as well as Dwelling Protection Grades in the fall of 2012.

Interim Results – Fire and EMS Efficiency Study

As part of the 2012 budget process, City Council directed that efficiency reviews be undertaken during 2012, including an EMS/Fire Service Efficiency Study. The City retained Pomax Public Safety Inc. to develop a ten-year resourcing and efficiency plan for Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Emergency Medical Services. Pomax recently submitted a preliminary interim report to the City Manager, indicating that they continue to collect and analyze data, look at comparator communities, and consider a range of policy options which will be developed later into a final report in the fourth quarter of 2012. The scope of work defined by the City specifically requires the consultant to consider a range of options to minimize costs while achieving appropriate service levels.

CONTACT

Debbie Higgins
Deputy Fire Chief
Phone: 416-338-9055, Fax: 416-338-9060
Email: dhiggin@toronto.ca



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J.W. (Jim) Sales,
Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Confidential Information – Toronto Fire Services Update