



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Review and Analysis of Service and Working Conditions within Toronto Paramedic Services – UPDATE

Date:	May 27, 2016
To:	City Council
From:	Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services Executive Director, Human Resources
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to City Council's request that the Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services and the Executive Director, Human Resources engage in consultation with authorized representatives of TCEU Local 416 (CUPE), including communication with and engagement of front-line staff, including paramedics, on Toronto Paramedic Services' (TPS) Five-year Plan and the ongoing collective efforts within TPS to improve employee engagement and morale.

In accordance with Council's direction, TPS has implemented a multi-year employee engagement initiative in an effort to improve working conditions and morale for all TPS staff. This process has included a confidential and anonymous employee engagement survey, as well as face-to-face brainstorming sessions. Throughout the process, TPS has continued to work closely with the City's Human Resources Division, as well as with both TCEU Local 416 (CUPE) and CUPE Local 79.

As a result of the input received from employees during the face-to-face brainstorming sessions, which ended in May 2016, TPS will continue to work with Human Resources and the Unions to review the results of these sessions over the summer. In the fall of 2016, TPS will provide updates to staff regarding these results and will undertake follow-up employee engagement activities during continuing education sessions beginning in January 2017. These activities will continue to occur in consultation with Locals 416 and 79, and with the City's Human Resources Division.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services and the Executive Director, Human Resources recommend that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the implementation of recommendations in this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on September 30, October 1 and 2, 2015, City Council requested the Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services and then Acting Executive Director, Human Resources to engage in consultation with authorized representatives of TCEU Local 416 (CUPE), including communication with and engagement of front-line staff, including paramedics, on the Toronto Paramedic Services' Five-year Plan and the ongoing collective efforts within Toronto Paramedic Services to improve employee engagement and morale and to report back to the June 7 and 8, 2016, meeting of City Council with respect to employee engagement and morale.

The full report can be found at

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.CC9.3>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

TPS is responsible for all aspects of land ambulance service for the City of Toronto. It also operates a Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) for the City through a formal Performance Agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), including performance expectations and guidelines.

With the implementation of its Five-year Plan, TPS has continued to experience positive results in recent years (e.g., enhanced evidence-based clinical care, increased ambulance availability, improved response times, increased customer compliments). The Plan includes 220 new Paramedic positions over four years (2013-2016), as well as 17 new Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) positions, enhancements in dispatch technology, and improvements in patient care equipment and infrastructure. As a result, response times are now at their lowest levels in a decade, despite increasing emergency call demand over the same period.

In 2015, TPS implemented a number of clinical, operational and infrastructure improvements to support working conditions for its staff. The following video highlights these improvements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFAheSoPlkA>.

While the Division has seen positive trends, TPS also recognizes the need to continuously improve employee engagement, morale, and working conditions for all its staff. In doing so, TPS is committed to continuing to work collaboratively with TCEU Local 416 (CUPE) and CUPE Local 79 to make these improvements.

The Division has a number of mechanisms in place to enable management and Union staff to work collectively to effect positive change. These include several workplace committees that receive feedback from staff and seek Union input on various aspects of its operation. In addition, the Division communicates with and receives feedback directly from staff through numerous channels. These include in-person communications, continuing education sessions, newsletters, social media, an internal staff blog, and corporate City of Toronto publications.

COMMENTS

In accordance with Council's direction, TPS has implemented a multi-year employee engagement initiative in an effort to improve working conditions and morale for all its staff. Throughout the process, TPS has continued to work closely with the City's Human Resources Division, as well as with both TCEU Local 416 (CUPE) and CUPE Local 79. TPS has also continued to provide regular updates to its staff regarding progress of the initiative.

In the fall of 2015, TPS commenced Phase 1 of its employee engagement initiative with the launch of a divisional survey¹ designed to elicit high-level, preliminary themes to help guide and inform the subsequent phases of the process. The survey was completely confidential and anonymous, and was made available to all staff within the Division – including Paramedics, Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs), Support staff and Management staff. Upon completion, 1,199 staff (approximately 85% of the Division's workforce) had responded to the survey.

Following an analysis of the survey data, Phase 2 of the initiative was launched with face-to-face brainstorming sessions for all staff in order to refine and validate the summary findings of the Phase 1 survey and to solicit further recommendations for improving working conditions. In order to ensure that these sessions were delivered in a fair and unbiased manner, they were facilitated by Human Resources and were regularly attended by representatives of the respective Unions for the Paramedic, EMD and Support staff groups.

¹ The City's corporate-wide employee engagement survey was also conducted in the fall of 2015 as part of its Talent Blueprint workforce plan, using the services of Ipsos-Reid. TPS' employee engagement initiative was delivered as a parallel, but separate process specifically for TPS staff.

As a result of the input received from employees during the face-to-face brainstorming sessions, which ended in May 2016, TPS will continue to work with Human Resources and the Unions to review the results of these sessions over the summer. In the fall of 2016, TPS will provide updates to staff regarding these results and will undertake follow-up engagement activities with all employees during continuing education sessions beginning in January 2017. These activities will continue to occur in consultation with Locals 416 and 79, and with the City's Human Resources Division.

CONTACTS

Paul Raftis
Chief
Toronto Paramedic Services
416-397-9240
praftis@toronto.ca

Kerry Pond
Executive Director
Human Resources
416-397-4112
kpond@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Paul Raftis
Chief, Toronto Paramedic Services

Kerry Pond
Executive Director, Human Resources