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2018 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Sick Time Analysis

Issue / Background:

- At the Budget Committee meeting held on December 18, 2017 the Fire Chief and General Manager, Toronto Fire Services (TFS) was requested to provide an analysis of sick time usage by TFS staff.

Key Points:

Sick Time Usage at TFS

- Table 1 outlines the sick time usage data for the 2015-2017 period.
- This data indicates a 7.3% increase in the use of sick days since 2015.
 - Note: Fire Services staff work a variety of shift schedules, including the 24 hour shift schedule in the Operations Division. For purposes of comparing sick stats with other City Divisions, this data is converted to "standard" 8.4 hour days by Corporate Payroll.

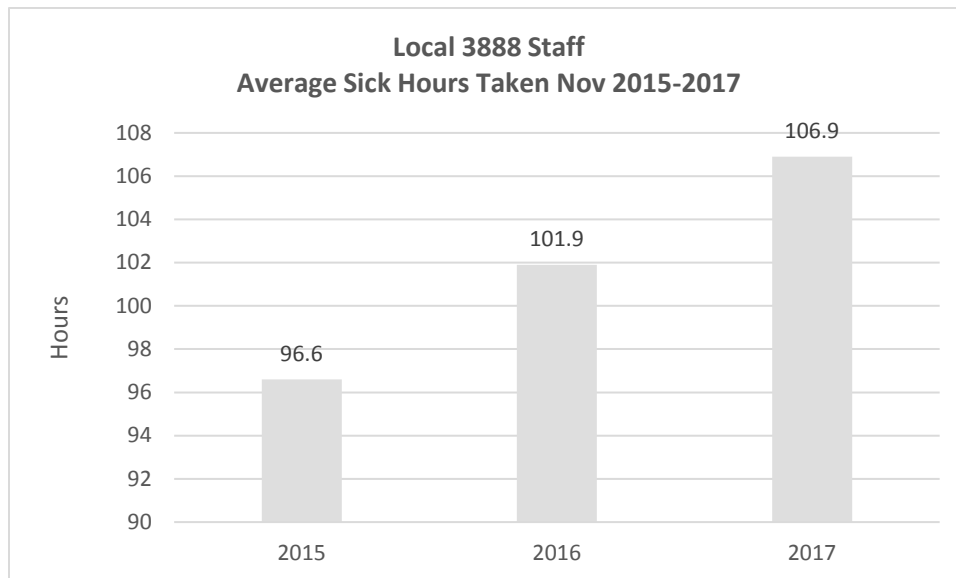
Table 1 – Average Sick Day Usage (8.4hrs) by Employee Group

	2015	2016	2017 (projected to year end based on November 30 data)
Local 3888	8.7	8.3	8.9
Local 79	5.7	9.4	8.0
Management/Exempt	1.9	2.7	3.3
Fire Services Total	8.2	8.7	8.8

NOTE: It should be noted that as of November 2017, 23% of TFS sick time in 2017 is attributed to absences exceeding 40 days. When excluding sick time greater than 40 days from the calculation, the TFS average sick time usage is 7.0 days.

Sick Time Usage by Local 3888 Staff (hours)

- Sick time usage (in hours) for Local 3888 staff over the past three years is shown in Figure 1.



- Sick time usage for Local 3888 staff in 2017 increased by 10.7% over 2015, and by 4.9% over 2016.
- NOTE: Sick time does not result in overtime in the TFS Operations Division. On a day-to-day basis, as sick time occurs, the number of available emergency response apparatus / crews are adjusted accordingly. Firefighters calling in sick are not replaced with other staff on overtime.

Impact of 24-Hour Shift on Sick Time Usage

- The 24-hour shift was implemented in the Operations Division on a trial basis in 2005 and on a permanent basis in 2006.
- Prior to implementation of the 24 hour shift, an average of 10.4 days of sick time were used annually.
- Following implementation of the 24 hour shift, sick time usage dropped to an average of 8 days of sick time per person.
- The 2017 year-end projection for sick time usage is 8.8 days per person.

Issues Increasing Sick Time Usage

- At present, there are a number of provisions in the Local 3888 collective agreement that result in the increased use of sick time. These provisions include:
 - Employees approved for Long Term Disability (LTD) benefits have the unilateral option of remaining on sick time as opposed to transitioning to LTD immediately upon approval for LTD benefits as LTD income is less than sick time income.
 - Current attendance management program thresholds (implemented by an Arbitrator) are set at 9 days per year;
 - Firefighters are not required to provide medical verification for sick time usage until such time as their absence exceeds 36 consecutive scheduled hours for employees assigned to the 24 hour shift schedule or 3 consecutive days of scheduled work for employees not assigned to the 24 hour shift schedule.
- TFS is experiencing increases in the usage of sick time related to mental health and wellness.
 - This is a normal and predictable trend that occurs immediately following the implementation of any mental health and resiliency training programming, including the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) program that is underway within TFS, as employees become increasingly aware of issues affecting their overall mental health.
- TFS' ability to proactively manage sick time is limited by TFS Staff Services resource capacity. At present, TFS has one FTE allocated to tracking, analyzing and identifying potential attendance concerns and absenteeism patterns for approximately 3,000 staff.

Improving Sick Time Usage

- The management of sick time continues to be an important priority for TFS.
- Regular discussions are ongoing between TFS Management and Local 3888 with respect to opportunities to reduce the usage of sick time.
- The following are examples of the ongoing efforts to control and further reduce the use of sick time:
 - Continue to apply the TFS Attendance Management Program in accordance with the provisions of the Collective Agreement;
 - A pilot project was launched in 2017 with respect to the creation of an on-shift modified duties program for the 24-hour shift, aimed at reducing sick time by returning employees to work in an expedited basis. The results of this ongoing pilot program will be evaluated over the course of 2018;
 - Ongoing identification of culpable absenteeism patterns which result in corrective and/or disciplinary action as appropriate;
 - The TFS Transformation Plan includes an initiative related to the investigation of expanded wellness/fitness initiatives aimed at improving overall employee health and reducing sick time;

- Efforts are ongoing with respect to completing a comprehensive analysis of both sick time usage by hour and sick time usage by occurrence. Once completed, this analysis will enable enhanced management of attendance and sick time usage;
- A number of collective agreement proposals with respect to attendance management and sick time usage are under development, which will form part of the discussions in the next round of collective bargaining. The current collective agreement expires on Dec 31, 2018.

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