
2021 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Paramedic Services Full-time to Part-time Ratio and Acting Management Assignments

Issue:

This Briefing Note responds to Motion 3, moved by Councillor Layton at the January 22, 2021, Budget Committee meeting:

That the Chief and General Manager, Toronto Paramedic Services prepare a briefing note on how much Full Time Equivalent time is spent by front line paramedics in a supervisory role and, if those Full Time Equivalents weren't included as front line workers in the Full-time to Part-time ratio and how would the ratio change.

Background:

Part-time to Full-time Ratio

During the 2011-2012 round of collective bargaining, the City and TCEU Local 416 reached agreement on the introduction of the classification of part-time Paramedics into the Local 416 bargaining unit. This agreement was part of an overall settlement for Paramedics that provided interest arbitration then and in the future to resolve issues that are not agreed upon during collective bargaining. Prior to this, there were no part-time classifications within the bargaining unit, including in Toronto Paramedic Services.

The purpose of introducing the part-time Paramedic classification was to permit operational flexibility in scheduling and to alleviate the need for full-time paramedics to work excessive overtime hours. Part-time Paramedics are scheduled for planned (vacation, lieu time usage, leaves of absence, long-term illness, extended WSIB, training, union leaves) and unplanned (absence due to illness, medical accommodation and WSIB) absences of full-time paramedics and unpredictable, short-term increases in demand. In 2012, a ratio of 1:5 was negotiated by the parties resulting in one (1) part-time paramedic to be hired for every five (5) full-time paramedics.

At the conclusion of the 2015-2016 round of collective bargaining between TCEU Local 416 and the City, outstanding Paramedic issues were referred to interest arbitration and on July 30, 2018, to respond to the ever-growing service demands on Toronto Paramedic Services and to provide greater scheduling flexibility to meet operational needs, the City was awarded an increase to the part-time ratio from 1:5 to 1:4 during interest arbitration with TCEU, Local 416. The Arbitrator agreed that the City was able to provide evidence of a demonstrated need to increase the part-

time ratio to address staffing demands associated with planned absences of full-time paramedics, meal breaks and unpredictable, short-term increases in demand.

The use of part-time Paramedics is commonplace across Ontario. Most services use part-time Paramedics and either have no restrictions on the number of part-time Paramedics or are allowed a higher ratio of part-time Paramedics than the City. The majority of part-time Paramedics hired by the City obtain permanent or temporary full-time positions within a few years of hiring.

In accordance with the 2018 award, the currently applied ratio is 1:5.2, and includes full-time Paramedics assigned to continuously acting supervisory (i.e., management) positions.

During the most recent 2019-2020 round of collective bargaining, the part-time ratio and other terms related to Paramedics were the subject of negotiations between the parties and remain unresolved. In accordance with the Local 416 Collective Agreement, the City and Union agreed to refer all of the outstanding matters related to Paramedics to interest arbitration. This matter is the subject of both the ongoing interest arbitration process and an active Union grievance.

Paramedics Assigned to Acting Management Roles

Operations Superintendents are supervisors who, in addition to being responsible for oversight of assigned day-to-day ambulance operations, are also responsible for supporting frontline Paramedics. This support includes ensuring the health and safety of frontline Paramedics, providing an access point for City services (e.g., EAP services, payroll services), communicating operational policies and procedures and providing guidance and mentorship in a dynamic and unpredictable environment. Operations Superintendents are also "working" supervisors and have all the patient care responsibilities, requirements and certifications of a full Paramedic. It is one of the most important positions in the Division.

For more than 30 years, Toronto Paramedic Services has utilized frontline Paramedics to temporarily backfill management vacancies through acting assignments on a voluntary basis. In addition to backfilling this essential health and safety officer role for frontline Paramedics, these acting assignments ensure that all affected unionized employees benefit from expanded career growth and professional development, as well as the opportunity to enhance leadership skills. Such assignments afford interested staff the flexibility to trial a management role while still retaining the ability to return to their base Paramedic position, and in so doing, these acting assignments are a key element of the Division's succession management process.

Key Points:

- In 2020, full-time Paramedics were assigned for a total of 66,588 hours or 32 FTEs to continuously acting management positions. At the time of writing, there were 33 Paramedics in continuously acting management positions at Toronto Paramedic Services.
- Removal of these same 33 full-time Paramedics from the current ratio calculation results in a 1:5.1 part-time to full-time ratio (down from 1:5.2) – still within the current 1:4 requirement of the Collective Agreement.

- Toronto Paramedic Services works to ensure it consistently applies the part-time ratio requirement, e.g., through strategic hiring of part-time Paramedics and conversion of part-time Paramedics to full-time status. Local 416 is advised of part-time to full-time conversions and is aware of the composition of the full-time count.
- Paramedics assigned to acting management roles continue to pay TCEU Local 416 union dues and are covered by the terms and conditions of the Collective Agreement.

Summary

The inclusion of Acting Superintendents as Paramedics in the part time to full time ratio has been the practice of Toronto Paramedic Services since the implementation of the part time classification. The Acting Superintendents remain certified, practicing Paramedics whose base positions continue to be Paramedic. They perform essential work for an emergency medical service and are expected to perform Paramedic work when necessary, the same as permanent Superintendents.

Their acting assignment is voluntary – they can choose to revert to their base position at any time and their assignment can be ended by management at any time. They are also represented by the TCEU Local 416 bargaining unit and are protected by the terms and conditions of the Local 416 collective agreement.

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