

VAUGHAN FIREFIGHTER COMBAT CHALLENGE TEAM REQUEST FOR FUNDING

Recommendation

The Fire Chief in consultation with the Director of Budget and Financial Planning recommends:

1. That the City of Vaughan Council approves support of the Vaughan Fire Fighter's Combat Challenge Team in the sum of \$11,942 for the current year 2003, with the source of funding being the Fire Department Operating Budget Sundry Account.

Purpose

The Vaughan Fire Fighter's Combat Challenge Team has competed in numerous Local, Regional, National and International Challenge events over the past several years, being quite successful in winning the Women's Team and Individual Championships—setting world-record times! The Team has undertaken fund raising events to offset much of their expenses and request funding support for the remainder of their expenses for the various competitions this year.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Firefighter Combat Challenge tests skills each year in competitions involving fire departments. The Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service Firefighter Combat Challenge Team consists of a group of Vaughan's professional firefighters who, in addition to their ongoing fire, rescue and first aid training, work to maintain top physical condition to better serve the community and to compete in the Challenge. The Team travels throughout North America competing in events and attempting to qualify for the World Championship event.

In the Team's short history of competition, they have seen their Women's Team capture the National and go on to win the World Championship. In 2002, Firefighter Esther DeBoer has shattered the World-record time to win the National Championship, and Firefighters Lisa Belanger and Jacqueline Rasenberg finished 4th and 5th.

The competitions have resulted in significant media attention for Vaughan's Firefighter Combat Challenge Team. Interviews have been conducted by: TSN, ESPN, Discovery, CBC, CityTV and CFTO. There has been extensive newspaper coverage of the competitions and many articles have appeared in the Toronto Sun, The Liberal and The Vaughan Weekly.

The City of Vaughan has been introduced to untold numbers of viewers across North America—especially as the World Championships are re-run on TV for many months after the event. The Combat Challenge participation has shown what a strong municipality the City of Vaughan is and how exceptional the protection is of its citizens and businesses. Vaughan is also viewed to be very progressive in having the first-ever female firefighter team. Last year at the Canadian Nationals in Windsor, five of the 20 female competitors from across Canada, were Vaughan Firefighters!

The costs of competing are substantial. While the Team has been able to raise some funds and receive some donations from local supporters, additional financial support from the City is requested. The estimated total expenses for year 2003 is \$23,884 of which they believe they can raise about half of that amount, in various fund-raising and other sponsorship initiatives.

In 2001 and 2002, Council approved \$9,500 and \$10,750 respectively, in funding, from the Operating Budget-Corporate Contingency Account, while the 2003 Operating Budget Fire Department Sundry Account is identified for the current source of funding.

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan Firefighter Combat Challenge Team's competitiveness, performance and ambassadorship have been stellar. Their success and media exposure has brought great pride and recognition to the City of Vaughan and the Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service. Council's consideration of this funding request is greatly appreciated.

Attachments

1. Vaughan Fire Fighter Combat Challenge Team, Budget Request and Background Information.

Report prepared by:

John B. Sutton, Fire Chief, on behalf of:
Dave Smith, Firefighter, Team Coordinator
Lisa Belanger, Firefighter, Team Coordinator

Respectfully submitted,

John B. Sutton
Fire Chief

Budget Request

For the Year 2003 Competitive Season



Introduction

Each year fire departments across Canada test their individual skills against each another in the Firefighter Combat Challenge. The **Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service's Firefighter Combat Challenge Team** consists of a group of the city's professional firefighters. In addition to their ongoing fire, rescue and first aid training, these firefighters work to maintain top physical condition to better serve our community and to compete in the Challenge. The team travels throughout North America competing in events, striving to qualify for the World Championship and introducing people to the great City of Vaughan.

Last Year

Last year the team continued to set some impressive records. The 2003 National Women's Champion was once again a Firefighter from Vaughan. Firefighter Esther Deboer won the title narrowing edging out the 2002 National Champion, Vaughan Firefighter Lisa Belanger. The World Champion Women's Relay team captured another National title setting a new world record by 14 seconds. The women also captured several top spots in the regional events. The men's crew continues to improve every year, setting new personal and team records. The men's relay team also won a bye to the finals in the Men's Relay Event by placing second in their regional event. Although, the men turned in their best time ever at the Nationals, only Firefighter Dave Smith qualified to compete in the finals. Both Men's and Women's teams did qualified for the World Championships in Florida. At the World's, the Women's Relay team was narrowly beaten by a hard charging team of young firefighters from Mississauga Fire. Individually, Firefighter Deboer had a costly fall in the finals but Firefighter Belanger came away with an impressive 4th place finish in what was the toughest field of women competitors ever. The Men's team was beat out by a fellow Canadian team that eventually placed 5th in the world.

Two Time World Champions

The Women's Relay Team won the World Championships in 2000 and again in 2001. The team also has won three National Relay titles, setting a new world record, which still stands. The Women's team success is even more amazing since, they only compete with 3 women, compared to all the teams from the larger US department who race with 5 women. The team has been nicknamed **Vaughan's Triple Threat**. Firefighter Lisa Belanger, Firefighter Jacqueline Rasenberg and Firefighter Ingrid Van Gelder are huge reason why the Women's Divisions have grown so rapidly. Every one knows and fears the women of Vaughan.

Media Attention

The team is definitely the talk of the combat challenge circuit. The team is extremely photogenic and are backed up by their outstanding results. During the TSN broadcast of the Canadian National Championship, our team received a substantial amount of airtime both on and off the course. The broadcast included interviews taped in Vaughan and footage of the firefighters in action in the city. The Team has been on the front page of the various local cities' papers and

interviewed by TSN, ESPN, Discovery network and CBC. We have had local interviews on CityTV and CFTO, plus articles in the Toronto Sun, The Liberal and many articles in the Vaughan Weekly. The women also did an excellent article in a US based women's health magazine called Oxygen.

Promoting the city

We have been able to introduce the City of Vaughan to thousands of people across North America. Our various fundraising events allow the team to meet with the taxpayers of Vaughan, as representatives of the city. We have shown everyone the quality of the men and women that serve the citizens and businesses of Vaughan everyday. The team also demonstrates how progressive the city is by having the first ever, all female firefighter team.

The team also was asked to put on a demonstration of the Firefighter Combat Challenge at the Markham Fair last fall. The event turned out to one of the best demonstrations at the fair and the firefighters of Vaughan were the highlight of the show.

Financials

We enjoy competing but the costs involved in competing successfully are substantial. The Vaughan Firefighter Combat Challenge Team needs your support for the upcoming season. Last year, the team was funded by the team members with some help from the Fire Department and with the support from some generous sponsors. We anticipate working with these sponsors again next year, but we still need additional financial support.

We have estimated our expenses for the 2003 season to be approximately \$23,883.59. We are confident that we can raise at least half of the required funds. We are asking the City of Vaughan to support us with \$11,941.80. This will enable us to compete with cities like Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Next Year

Presently, we are negotiating with McDonalds Canada for sponsorship, including the possibility of producing the first ever Co-ed Firefighter Calendar, to be launched during Septembers 2003, fire safety week. Our goal is to make the calendar an annual project allowing the team to be financially self-sufficient.

Your help in our city's team is greatly appreciated and the members of the team are willing to help promote the city in anyway we can. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at anytime. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Firefighter Dave Smith

Cellular with message service 416-806-4941

Vaughan Fire Station 7-1

905-889-5354

Firefighter Lisa Belanger

905-832-1134



2000 Season

Vaughan Fire Combat Team's first season was very successful. The women won many 1st, 2nd and 3rd places while the men had the fastest individual at the prestigious Canada Day competition in Ottawa. The men's team also came 3rd in their first event ever. The women capped off the year by winning the World Women's Relay Title.

2000 Canadian National Championships ; Moncton, NB, September 15/16, 2000.

Women's Individual Results:

2nd Place: Esther DeBoer

3rd Place: Lisa Belanger

Men's Individual Results:

23rd Place: Paul Cox named Canadian Rookie of the Year.

Team Results:

National team members include Paul Cox, Dave Smith, Rob Wilk, Mario Marmora, Lisa Belanger, Esther DeBoer and Jacqueline Rasenberg.

2000 World Championship: Las Vegas, NV, November 2-4, 2000

Women's Individual Results:

3rd Place: Esther DeBoer

4th Place: Lisa Belanger

Men's Individual Results:

21st Place: Paul Cox
out of more than 500 male competitors.

Team Results:

The Vaughan Women's relay team originally came second but they were awarded their first World Title due to a disqualification of the first place Oklahoma team for using a ban substance.

World team members include Paul Cox, Dave Smith, Rob Wilk, Mario Marmora, Lisa Belanger, Esther DeBoer, Ingrid Van Gelder and Jacqueline Rasenberg.

2001 Season

Vaughan Fire Combat Team's second season was just as successful. The women maintained their presence on the podium and won their second world title. The events of 9/11 caused difficulties for many competitors who competed or chose not to compete in this year's championships.

2001 Canadian National Championships ; Shawinigan, QC, October 3-5, 2001.

Women's Individual Results:

1st Place: Lisa Belanger

2nd Place: Jacqueline Rasenberg

Team Results:

National team members include Dave Smith, Jack Benbihy, Rick Pynn, Lisa Belanger, Ingrid Van Gelder and Jacqueline Rasenberg.

2001 World Championship ; Memphis, TN November 2-4, 2001

Women's Individual Results:

2nd Place: Lisa Belanger

Men's Individual Results:

Top200: Dave Smith

Team Results:

The Vaughan Women's relay team won their second straight World Title by setting a new World Record.

World team members include Dave Smith, Lisa Belanger, Ingrid Van Gelder and Jacqueline Rasenberg.

2002 Season

Vaughan Fire Combat Team's third season was the toughest so far. The women continued to win events, but were met with much more competition. They won the Canadian relay title, but were beaten by a younger squad of Mississauga women at the World Championships. The men turned in some of their best times ever this season.

2002 Canadian National Championships

Windsor, ON, September 15/16, 2002.

National Women's Individual Competition Results:

1st Place: Esther DeBoer
4th Place: Lisa Belanger
5th Place: Jacqueline Rasenberg

National Women's Relay Team Results:

1st Place: Vaughan's Team consisting of Lisa Belanger, Jacqueline Rasenberg, Ingrid Van Gelder and Carrie Schnurr

Regional and National Men's Individual and Relay Team Results:

Dave Smith, Tim McFadden, Rick Pynn, Jack Benbihy, Mario Marmora, competed in the Men's Individual and Relay Team categories throughout the year and continued to improve upon their respective personal best and team times. The Relay Team finished 3rd at the regional event earning a bye to the National Championships. The men's relay team finished 11th overall and the Men's team placed 16th out of 43 teams at the Nationals.

2002 World Championship

Deerfield Beach, Florida, November 1/2, 2002

World Women's Individual Competition

4th Place: Lisa Belanger
6th Place: Jacqueline Rasenberg
7th Place: Esther DeBoer

World Women's Individual Competition

2nd Place: Vaughans' Women's Relay Team were the defending World Champions but this year they were narrowly beaten by the Mississauga Fire Women by less than 2

seconds. The team consisted of Lisa Belanger, Jacqueline Rasenberg and Ingrid VanGelder

World Men's Individual and Relay Team Competitions:

The Vaughan Men's Relay team finished an impressive season with an excellent performance of 1:40secs, but was knocked out in the first round by a team that finished 5th in the world. The World team consisted of Dave Smith, Rick Pynn and Jack Benbihy.

Vaughan Fire Combat Team's Personal Records

Firefighter Dave Smith:

Team Captain and one of the founding members of the team.

Personal Best Time: 1 minute and 45 seconds
Regional Competitions: 11
National Competitions: 3
World Competitions: 3

Toughest Firefighter in Vaughan 2002, member of the World Men's Relay team and National Men's Relay team (2002)

Firefighter Jack Benbihy:

Personal Best Time: 1 minute and 52 seconds
Regional Competitions: 7
National Competitions: 2
World Competitions: 1

Sub 2 minute club, member of the World Men's Relay team and National Men's Relay team (2002)

Firefighter Rick Pynn:

Personal Best Time: 1 minute and 55 seconds
Regional Competitions: 6
National Competitions: 2
World Competitions: 1

Sub 2 minute club, member of the World Men's Relay team and National Men's Relay team (2002)

Firefighter Mario Marmora:

One of the founding members of the team

Personal Best Time: 2 minutes and 14 seconds
Regional Competitions: 5
National Competitions: 2
World Competitions: 1

Member of the National Men's Relay team (2002)

Firefighter Mechanic Tim McFadden:

Personal Best Time: 2 minutes and 16 seconds
Regional Competitions: 3
National Competitions: 1
World Competitions: 0

Firefighter Lisa Belanger:

Team Captain and one of the founding members of the team.

Personal Best Time: 2 minutes and 24 seconds
Regional Competitions: 11
National Competitions: 3
World Competitions: 3
4th in World 2002, 4th in Canadian National 2002,
2nd in World 2001, Canadian National Women's Champ 2001,
4th in World 2000, 3rd in National 2000,
2 time World Relay Champ (2000,01), 2nd in World 2002

Firefighter Esther Lakatos:

One of the founding members of the team

Personal Best Time: 2 minutes and 11 seconds
Regional Competitions: 6
National Competitions: 2
World Competitions: 2
Canadian National Women's Champ 2002,
3rd in World 2000, 2nd in National 2000

Firefighter Jacqueline Rasenberg:

One of the founding members of the team

Personal Best Time: 2 minutes and 23 seconds
Regional Competitions: 13
National Competitions: 3
World Competitions: 3
2nd place in Canada 2001, 2 time World Relay Champ (2000,01)

Firefighter Ingrid Van Gelder:

Regional Competitions: 4
National Competitions: 1
World Competitions: 3
2 time World and National Relay Champ (2000,01)

Firefighter Carrie Schnurr:

Regional Competitions: 2
National Competitions: 1
World Competitions: 0
National Relay Champ (2001)



FIREFIGHTER COMBAT CHALLENGE



The Firefighter Combat Challenge was developed to showcase physical fitness, inside the fire service. The competition hi-lites doing the job safer and better.

Three to five-person teams compete individually against the clock wearing full turnout gear (helmet, coat and pants with liners, boots, and gloves) weighing approx. 35lbs while breathing from SCBA.



The event tasks are timed and completed sequentially. 3 lights and beeps sound, then time starts when the pack is picked up and stops when a beam is crossed at the finish line.

The tasks are:

Task 1: Stair Climb with High Rise Pack

Carry a standard high-rise pack (2-50 ft sections of hose--approx. 42 lbs) to the top of a five story tower. The pack is deposited into the designated area.

Task 2: Hose Hoist

From the top of the tower, pull a 5/8 inch rope to hoist a donut roll of LDH hose (45 lbs). This evolution is complete when the donut roll clears the rail and is dropped into the designated area on the floor. Then run downstairs, touching every step.

Task 3: Forcible Entry

Using the 9-lb shot mallet and Force Machine, drive a 165 lb I-beam five ft, which simulates chopping into a roof for ventilation.

Task 4: Hose Advance

After moving a distance of 140 ft around 6 hydrants, pick up a nozzle and move a 1 3/4 inch charged hose straight forward for 75 ft (approx. 300 lbs), crack the nozzle, hit a designated target and place the nozzle on the pavement.

Task 5: Victim Rescue

Drag a 175 lb victim (Rescue Randy) a distance of 100 ft backwards. This event (and the course) is complete when the beam is broken across the finish line.

All competitors are medically cleared fire/rescue personnel, since these tasks, like firefighting, require near maximal effort. An acceptable time is 5:00 minutes and an excellent time is 3:00 minutes or less. The top placing team from each Regional Event earns a bye into the final day of the Canadian National Championships. Teams with a time of 9:00 minutes or less qualify for the 'Wild Card Day' at the Canadian National Championship.

The competition is run by FireFit of Canada and more information can be found on their website at <http://www.firefit.com/>.