

BUDGET COMMITTEE - FEBRUARY 19, 2004

WOODBIDGE EXPANSION AREA NEW FIRE STATION 7-9 STAFFING PRE-BUDGET APPROVAL REQUEST

Recommendation

The Fire Chief, in consultation with the City Manager, Commissioner of Finance and Corporate Services and the Director of Budgeting and Financial Planning, recommends:

1. That the complement of the Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service BE AMENDED and APPROVED to include twenty (20) new employees: consisting of four (4) Captains and sixteen (16) Firefighters for assignment to Fire Station 7-9;
2. That:
 - eight (8) of the twenty (20) new staff be hired for Fire Station 7-9 to commence training April 19, 2004 and
 - the remaining twelve (12) new staff be hired to commence training August 9, 2004, BE APPROVED, with an operating budget impact in 2004 of \$665,375 and that the full annual impact of the new Fire Station will be approximately \$1.5 million;
3. That upon completion of the training, the new firefighters will be assigned to existing fire stations located west of Highway 400, to supplement the on-duty staffing and improve the response capability in West-Vaughan, at the discretion of the Fire Chief, until the new Fire Station 7-9 construction project is approved and completed;
4. That the Fire Chief and support staff as required, BE AUTHORIZED to engage in partnership discussions with York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS), in regard to constructing a joint EMS Paramedic Response Station with Fire Station 7-9;
5. That the construction of the new Fire Station 7-9 and acquisition of the fire apparatus and related equipment be considered in the 2004 Capital Budget deliberations;
6. That staff be directed to provide notice of an intention to adopt part of the 2004 Operating Budget pursuant to the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 291 (1) and By-Law 394-2002, Section 4(12); and
7. That this report be brought forward to the Council Meeting at which the proposed adoption is to be considered.

Purpose

The purpose of this item being recommended at this time is:

- a) To expedite the lengthy process to interview, hire and train new staff, to ultimately assign firefighters to enhance the fire protection service-level in West-Vaughan; and,
- b) To initiate partnership discussions for the joint use/construction of a Fire and EMS Station, with York Region EMS.

Background - Analysis and Options

Service Levels

Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service (VFRS) provides emergency response fire protection services from eight fire stations; one of which is 'composite' (staffed with a full-time crew and supplemented with call-out volunteer firefighters, in Woodbridge) and one other is staffed on a call-out basis by volunteer firefighters only (Kleinburg). The following table depicts the distribution of stations, apparatus and firefighters:

East-Vaughan	West-Vaughan
Fire Station 7-1 Clarke/Bathurst Engine 711 Crew of 4 Aerial 716 Crew of 4	Fire Station 7-3 Woodbridge Ave Engine 731 Crew of 4 Engine 732 (Volunteer Firefighters) HazMat 738 (No assigned crew)
Fire Station 7-2 Keele/Rutherford Engine/Quint 726 Crew of 4 Rescue 729 Crew of 3 Tanker 724 (No assigned crew)	Fire Station 7-4 Kleinburg Engine 741 (Volunteer Firefighters) Tanker 744 (Volunteer Firefighters)
Fire Station 7-6 McLeary Court Engine/Quint 763 Crew of 4 Rehab 760 (Volunteers)	Fire Station 7-5 Fieldstone Engine/Quint 756 Crew of 4 TechRescue 759 (No assigned crew)
Fire Station 7-8 Racco Prkwy Engine/Quint 786 Crew of 4 (Currently assigned to Sta. 7-1)	Fire Station 7-7 Eagle View Hts Engine/Quint 776 Crew of 4
	<i>Fire Station 7-9 (Proposed)</i> <i>Islington Ave.</i> <i>New: Engine/Quint 796 Crew of 4</i>
Total: 23 full-time	Total: 12 full-time + <i>proposed 4 new</i> plus Volunteer Firefighters
+ 1 On-duty Platoon Chief City-wide	

The 'level of service' historically envisioned in the Development Charges By-Law, is to essentially have a fire truck respond to/arrive at the vast majority (+/-90%) of emergencies in the urban area within an average of 6 minutes from time of dispatch and that the 2nd and 3rd crews-in would arrive in about 8 and 10 minutes respectively.

The Ontario Fire Marshal now provides a guideline that requires ten firefighters to arrive at a structure fire in an average sized single family residential house in an urban area, within ten minutes, 90% of the time, from the time of receiving the 9-1-1 emergency call. Response to other occupancy types or larger homes or multiple units, etc., would not be covered in the 10-in-10 guideline, but would likely require additional staff/units in the same or shorter response time—depending on "...local needs and circumstance".

The main difference in the response-time calculation methods is that the OFM now requires the response 'time-clock' to start when the 9-1-1 call enters the system—not after the call-details have been recorded and processed and the 'dispatch' function is activated. This adds about 1 minute over-all response time to all emergency incidents previously envisioned in the DC By-law's 6-minute service standard.

Aside from WEA, perimeter areas of West-Vaughan previously thought to be within an acceptable service level 'standard', i.e. 6 minutes for 1st-in, now do not meet, or may marginally meet, the OFM 10-in-10 'standard'.

The Woodbridge Expansion Area is currently 'under-serviced' in accordance to both the DC By-law and OFM 'standards' of service. A map is attached, depicting the computer generated calculations of City-wide (without Sta. 7-9 in WEA) response service level of ten firefighters arriving at an emergency scene in about eleven minutes (as our original computer calculations did not include the approximate one minute call processing time before the incident is actually dispatched, thus one minute must be added, which will reduce the depicted service area around some of the perimeter).

The full-time staffing of the proposed new Fire Station 7-9 in the WEA (Islington corridor, between Rutherford & Major Mackenzie) would provide 1st-in response times and 10-in-10 overall staffing at most structure fires, to the greatest proportion of the urbanized area of West-Vaughan.

Firefighter Recruitment

The VFRS conducted the preliminary phase of the Firefighter Recruitment, consisting of newspaper advertisements to solicit applications and conducting the written aptitude testing for about 1,600 applicants, in 2002. Successful applicants (+/-1,200) from the aptitude testing were placed in an 'applicant pool'. About 120 applicants were selected for interviews, resulting in 28 firefighters being hired to fill 8 previously existing vacancies and to fill 20 new positions for Fire Station 7-8 on Racco Parkway in 2003. Unsuccessful applicants after the interviews were returned to the 'applicant pool'.

Currently, there are four firefighter vacancies to be filled (3 existing & 1 pending retirement) and 20 new positions are proposed for the new Fire Station 7-9 in WEA. On the authority/approval to fill the existing and pending firefighter vacancies, the selection process has commenced. VFRS senior officers reviewed the 'applicant pool' in the preliminary screening process to select applicants for interviews. The normal process is to select about four applicants for each vacant position. About 120 applicants were invited to interviews. Senior Fire Officers, with the assistance of Human Resource Partners, conducted the first-round of interviews during the first week of February 2004, to short-list about 36 applicants. The second round of interviews will be conducted by the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and an HR Partner, during the last week of February, to select the final four candidates to fill the existing vacancies and the requested 20 new positions, subject to Council approval of the complement amendment request and 2004 Operating Budget approval.

Conditional job offers and fitness/medical testing, etc., will be conducted in March, followed by confirmation of acceptance and hiring to start the four vacancy replacements (along with eight of the new recruits) on April 19, 2004 (to give applicants time to resign current employ). The remainder would be hired to start training August 9, 2004.

The VFRS must establish the annual Duty Roster staffing schedule in December, each year, for the next calendar year. Duties are assigned to assure staffing on all fire trucks, with appropriate supervision and a margin to cover un-scheduled sudden sick leave/emergency/bereavement absences, 24/7. Training schedules are also included in the Duty Roster process. Staff was then tasked to select all 2004 vacation and lieu days in accordance with the Collective Agreement and Duty Roster Guidelines, within the remaining available time.

Training Division officers are obligated to provide training courses and performance testing, to firefighters hired in previous years, as they progress from 4th Class, to 3rd, 2nd and 1st Class Firefighter classifications. Such firefighters engaged in the progression process are relieved from fire fighting operations for two-week periods while attending the upgrade training programs/performance testing at the Training Division.

The obligation to establish the Duty Roster and grant vacation requests by the end of December, essentially firms-up the work plan for the Training Division in 2004.

The 2004 recruit hiring and training plan has been established in a similar manner as the previous 2003 hiring and training plan for Station 7-8 firefighters, in that the group would be split into two classes—one to start in late Spring with the vacancy replacements and the other to start in the Summer. Formal training would be conducted for 13 weeks, followed by 2-3 weeks of on-the-job training and familiarization before final crew assignment, to be considered as an improved/increased level of on-duty staffing and improved service level.

In addition to the recruit training program, extensive internal Qualifying and Promotional Routines must be conducted in accordance with the Collective Agreement to 'qualify' firefighters for acting-officer assignments and eligibility for promotion; and to select officers for promotion to fill the proposed new Captain positions for the new Fire Station 7-9 and the back-filling of resulting Assistant Captain's vacancies. The 2004 Qualifying Routine is scheduled for the first two weeks in April and the Promotional Routine interview with the Fire Chief will be conducted in October, in part to establish the officer assignments for the Duty Roster for 2005.

Operating Budget Impact:

Operating Budget 2004 Recommendation:

The Fire Chief is recommending that approval be granted to increase the complement of the VFRS in 2004, to provide 20 new firefighters for assignment to the proposed new Fire Station 7-9 in WEA.

The recommended hiring plan would place an additional fire truck and full crew in-service from an existing fire station, in the Fall-2004, until the land acquisition is completed and the new fire station project is approved through the 2004 Capital Budget process and constructed (opening about Spring-2006).

The following table reflects the 2004 VFRS Operating Budget Schedule "F" submission for staffing and the proposed Fire Station 7-9 in WEA:

FINANCIAL DETAILS (as recommended)	Firefighters	Captains	Total
NEW FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE-complement)	16	4	20
2004 BUDGET SALARY: Hire 20 new Firefighters 4th Class Probationary (8 FF start Apr 19th & 12 FF start Aug 9th); Promote 4 existing Firefighters to Captain (acting pay in late Nov-Dec 2004); Partial year employ = 11FTE\$bdgt.	\$471,500	\$24,000	\$495,500
BENEFITS @ 25.0%	\$117,875	\$6,000	\$123,875
OTHER EXPENSES: Training costs: instructor secondments, materials, supplies, manuals, rentals, registration & certification costs. \$20K; Personal protective equipment/uniform \$26K;	\$44,000	\$2,000	\$46,000
2004 Operating Budget Impact:			\$665,375

Given the construction of the new fire station can not be completed in 2004, the following costs/savings would occur beyond 2004 or 2005: a) general operating/maintenance costs +\$40K; b) New Sta 7-9 Fire Reserve Fund contributions +\$100K; and c) reduced volunteer call-outs -\$40,000; for a net additional operating budget impact of about \$100,000 thereafter.

Operating Budget 2004 Option:

The City Manager and the Commissioner of Finance and Corporate Services, because of pending severe budget constraints anticipated in 2004, requested the Fire Chief to propose an alternate implementation/funding plan, for the consideration of Council. The following option minimizes the 2004 funding impact, while presenting a more-gradual increase in the level of fire protection services.

This option would place one extra firefighter on two, then three existing fire trucks (to help achieve 10 firefighters-in-10 minutes) west of Hwy 400, until Spring/Summer-2005, when the remaining eight firefighters are hired/trained; then, a new/additional fire truck with full crew would be placed in-service from an existing fire station, until the new fire station construction is completed in the Spring-2006.

The following table is a revised summary (to reflect a reduced number of new firefighters to be hired in 2004) of the 2004 VFRS Operating Budget Schedule "F" submission for staffing the proposed Fire Station 7-9 in WEA:

FINANCIAL DETAILS (as an option)	Firefighters	Captains	Total
NEW FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE-complement)	12	0	12
2004 BUDGET SALARY: Hire 20 new Firefighters 4th Class Probationary (4 FF start Apr 19th & 8 FF start Aug 9th); Remaining 8 new FF to start after 2004-12-31 and promote 4 existing Firefighters to Captain in 2005.	\$272,240	\$0	\$272,240
BENEFITS @ 25.0%	\$68,060	\$0	\$68,060
OTHER EXPENSES: Training costs: instructor secondments, materials, supplies, manuals, rentals, registration & certification costs. \$12K; Personal protective equipment/uniform \$18K;	\$29,700	\$0	\$29,700
2004 Operating Budget Impact:			\$370,000

York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Partnership

York EMS currently has ambulances co-located in Fire Station 7-1 in Thornhill and Fire Station 7-2 in Maple. The new Fire/EMS Station 7-8 on Racco Parkway will be purposely built to fully accommodate EMS and VFRS ambulances, fire trucks and crew members, jointly sharing building infrastructure and certain amenities.

York EMS had previously expressed an interest to be considered a partner in any future fire station construction project. Depending on their needs, they may want to partner with us again.

York EMS has recently verbally confirmed their specific interest in partnering with the VFRS in the WEA fire station project—in a similar manner as before.

The Fire Chief and the Director of York EMS also agree that it is appropriate to use the same building design as Fire/EMS Station 7-8 (see attachment) to avoid additional architectural design expense.

York EMS further advises that they have currently submitted a request to the Region of York, in the Region's 2004/2005 Capital Budget program process, for the funding of a Paramedic Response Station in West-Vaughan.

The Fire Chief has submitted a request for the funding of the new Fire Station 7-9, apparatus and equipment, in the 2004 Capital Budget process.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

In relationship to Vaughan Vision, these recommendations would:

- Improve community safety;
- Present a partnership opportunity;
- Enhance relationship with another agency; and
- Provide effective and efficient delivery of services.

This report recommends partnership discussions with York EMS, in accordance with priorities/direction previously set by Council.

This report also recommends a change from the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have not been allocated (i.e. pre-budget approval request herein).

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the Fire Chief's recommendation herein:

5. *That:*
 - *eight (8) of the twenty (20) new staff be hired for Fire Station 7-9 to commence training April 19, 2004 and*
 - *the remaining twelve (12) new staff be hired to commence training August 9, 2004, BE APPROVED;*

An appropriate alternative amendment, with respect to available funding in 2004, while acknowledging the need and committing action to gradually improve the level of fire protection services in West-Vaughan, the following revision to Recommendation #5 may be considered:

5. *That:*
 - *four (4) of the twenty (20) new staff be hired for Fire Station 7-9 to commence training April 19, 2004;*
 - *eight (8) more of the new staff be hired for Fire Station 7-9 to commence training August 9, 2004; and*
 - *the remaining eight (8) new staff be hired and the four (4) new officers be promoted after December 31, 2004, BE APPROVED;*

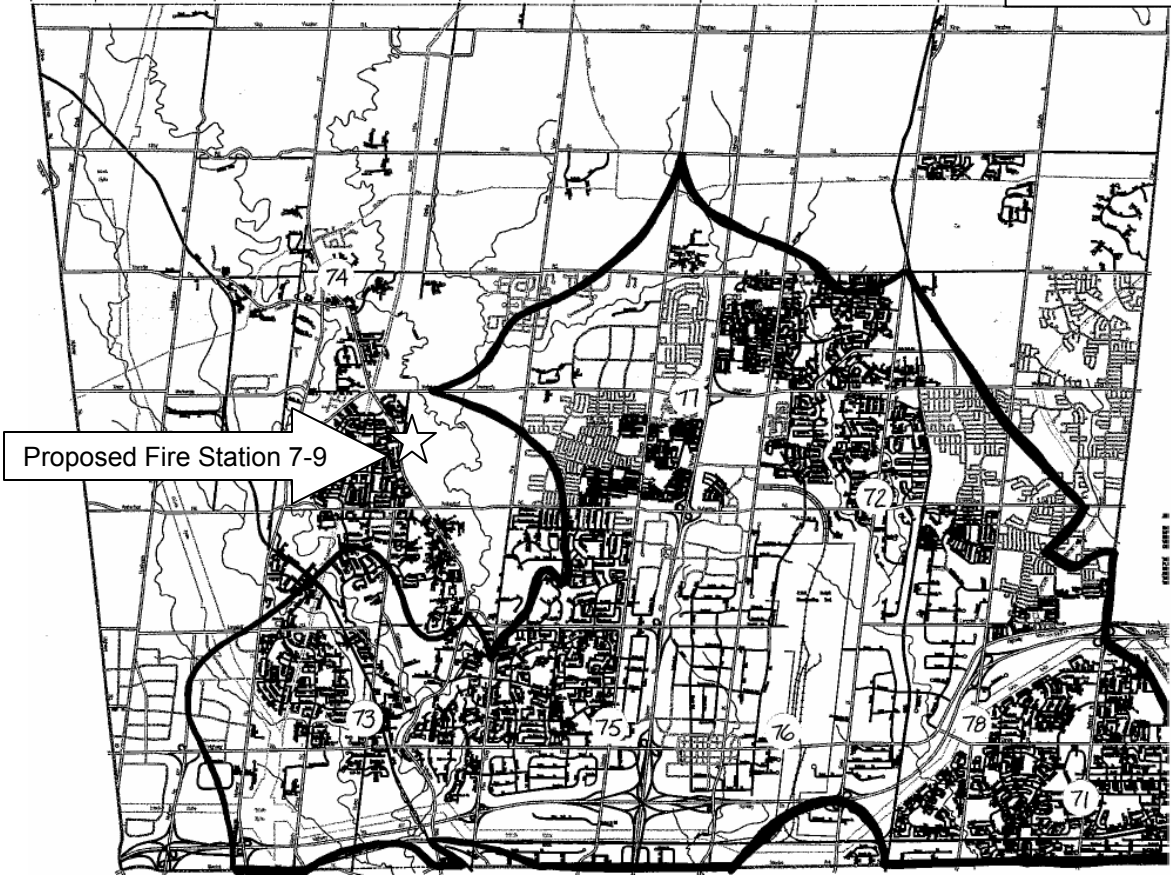
The Fire Chief has been advised that, should Council concur with the proposed increase in expenditure, this action would be considered an adoption to part of the 2004 Operating and Capital Budgets. Pursuant to the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 291 (1), before adopting all or part of the budget, a municipality shall give notice of its intention to adopt all or part of the budget at a Council meeting. In accordance with By-Law 394-2002, Section 4(12), notice of an intention to adopt all or part of a budget consists of publication notice in a newspaper of a public meeting to consider the proposed adoption at least 14 days prior to the date of the Council meeting at which the proposed adoption is to be considered

Attachments

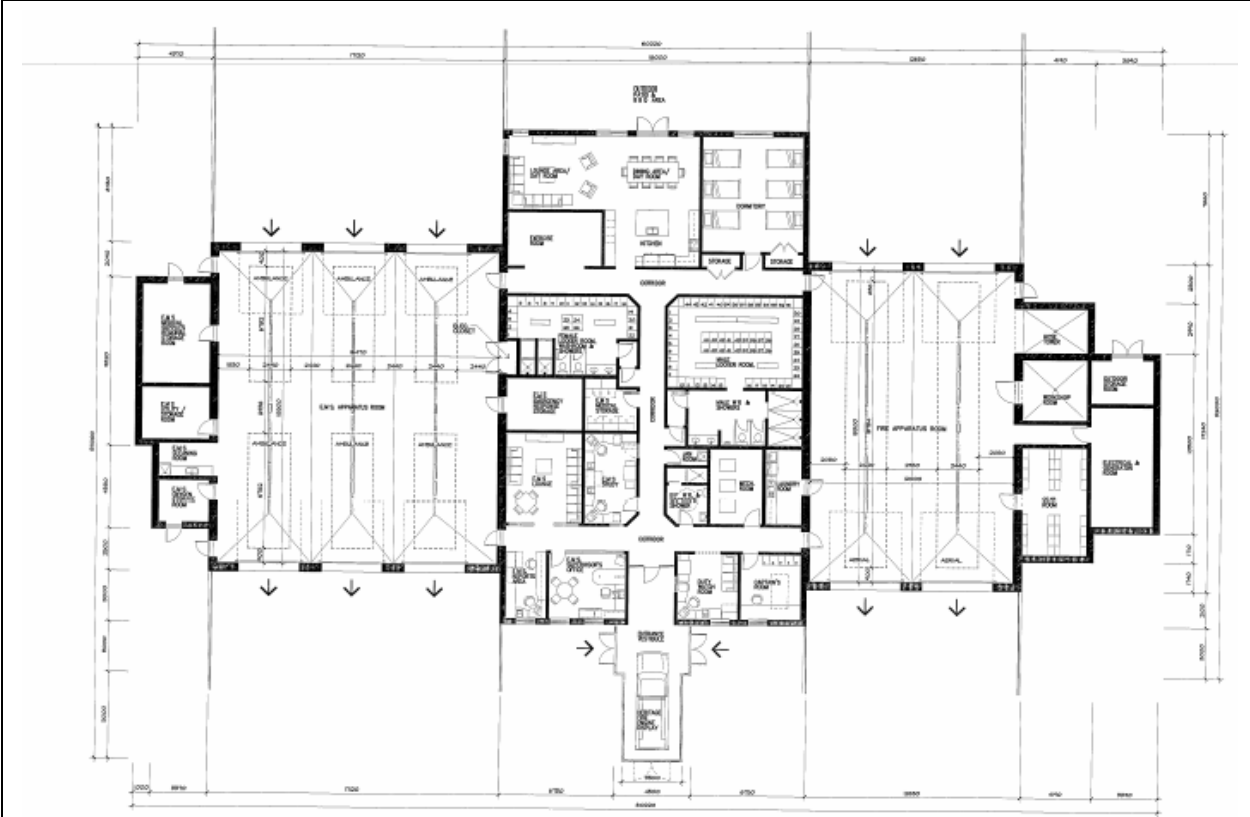
1. City of Vaughan Service Level Map
2. Fire/EMS Station 7-8 Building Elevations

Respectfully submitted,

John B. Sutton
Fire Chief



Service Level Map
10 Firefighters Arriving
In +/-11 Minutes
From Existing Fire Stations



FLOOR PLAN

SCALE : 1/4" = 1'-0"



York EMS Paramedic Response Station and VFRS Fire Station 7-8
111 Racco Parkway