

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 20, 2005

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF VAUGHAN AND THE CITY OF TORONTO

Recommendation

The Fire Chief, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, recommends:

1. A By-law be enacted to authorize the execution of the Fire Protection Services Agreement between the City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto.

Economic Impact

There are no new operating or capital costs associated with this fire protection services agreement.

Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to formalize the long-standing cooperative relationship that the City of Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service has shared with the Toronto Fire Services.

Background - Analysis and Options

The City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto share a considerable border area along Steeles Ave. from Yonge Street to Highway 50. On occasion, both the Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service and the Toronto Fire Services will receive calls from the public reporting emergency incidents in the area of Steeles Ave. but are unable to determine the exact address. A common scenario would be that the caller can see heavy smoke in the area of Steeles Ave., but does not know if the origin of the smoke is on the north or south side of the street. In that situation, both fire services will respond and worry about jurisdiction later. As apparatus from both services will arrive at approximately the same time, the "visiting" firefighters will assist the "home" firefighters until the fire or emergency is under control. The "visiting" firefighters will then clear and leave the "home" firefighters to finish operations. For many years the City of Vaughan had an informal agreement with the City of North York and the City of Etobicoke that encouraged this cooperation. When the former cities amalgamated into the City of Toronto, the informal agreement continued.

If the participation of the "visiting" firefighters is extensive and over a longer period of time, then the "visiting" fire department will invoice the "home" fire departments to recover expenses. An example of this practice occurred in October, 2004, when the Toronto Fire Service sent an invoice to the City of Vaughan to recover the costs of their assistance to the Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service at the tanker fire at Dufferin St. and Centre St. (Vaughan in turn recovered that cost by billing the tanker owner for total cost recovery).

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, (Section 2(5)), states:

A municipality may, under such conditions as may be specified in the agreement enter into an agreement to,

- a) provide such fire protection services as may be specified in the agreement to lands or premises that are situated outside the territorial limits of the municipality; and,*
- b) receive such fire protection services as may be specified in the agreement from a fire department situated outside the territorial limits of the municipality.*

This section of the FPPA is the legal authority for a fire service protection agreement between the City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto. .

The City of Toronto has taken the initiative to enter into fire service protection agreements with its neighbouring municipalities. Toronto has already completed agreements with Pickering, Markham, Mississauga and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and is desirous of a signed agreement with Vaughan.

The City of Vaughan already has formal "mutual aid" agreements with the other municipalities in the Region of York.

The Director of Legal Services has reviewed and approved the proposed Fire Protection Services Agreement attached.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2007, Item 1.1.5; review and update all City emergency-planning, response and prevention methodologies.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

A Fire Protection Services Agreement between the City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto would ensure cooperation between the two municipalities for fire protection issues not only along their common border but elsewhere in the municipalities during extreme emergencies. This agreement will not mean that the Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service will be going into Toronto to assist at fires any more frequently than it currently does. However, it does mean that Vaughan will have the legal authority under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act and the agreement to do so when necessary. This also applies to Toronto coming to assist Vaughan. It is a matter of due diligence to have this Fire Protection Services Agreement in place.

Attachments

None

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

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Fire Chief