



MEMO TO: Sundridge Strong Fire Dept. Joint Board of Management
FROM: Karen Fraser, Clerk Administrator, Village of Sundridge
DATE: July 9, 2018
SUBJECT: Fire Department Succession

Following a closed meeting of Council on June 27, 2018, the Village of Sundridge considered and defeated the following three (3) resolutions:

(9.6) Proposal to Share a Fire Chief (Fire Board Resolution 2018-059)

Resolution #2018-381

Moved By: Ryan Jeffers
Seconded By: Don Richardson

That the Village of Sundridge supports the recommendation of Sundridge-Strong Fire Department Joint Board of Management to have staff explore the sharing of a Fire Chief under contract with either South River, Burk's Falls, or Magnetawan.

Defeated.

(9.7) Consideration of a Full Time Deputy Fire Chief (Fire Board Resolution 2018-060)

Resolution #2018-382

Moved By: Don Richardson
Seconded By: Ryan Jeffers

That the Village of Sundridge supports the recommendation of Sundridge-Strong Fire Department Joint Board of Management to establish and recruit a Full Time Deputy Chief position as proposed by the Chair.

Defeated.

(9.8) Consideration of an Acting Deputy Fire Chief (Fire Board Resolution 2018-061F)

Resolution #2018-383

Moved By: Ryan Jeffers
Seconded By: Don Richardson

That the Village of Sundridge supports the recommendation of Sundridge-Strong Fire Department Joint Board of Management to appoint Andrew Torrance as the exclusive Acting Deputy Fire Chief for the Sundridge-Strong Fire Department.
Defeated.

The rationale behind the defeated resolutions is to clarify and confirm the Fire Department organizational structure following the resignation of the Fire Chief. This should include discussion about responsibility of the Fire Board. Members from the Village of Sundridge can speak to these matters at the July 9, 2018 meeting.

In my opinion, there are certain steps that should be followed to avoid certain unclear past practices. These are, in order of importance and action:

1. Agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Fire Board with respect to recruitment and hiring in the absence of an amended shared service agreement.
2. Confirmation of the interim organizational structure and roles for Fire Department Head and CEMC.
3. Confirmation of the future organizational structure and roles for Fire Department Head and CEMC.
4. Recruitment and/or appointment to fit the interim and future organizational structure for Fire Department Head and CEMC.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Joint Fire Board

The Fire Board has recently agreed that supervision of the Head of the Fire Department falls to the Village of Sundridge as Administrator for the Fire Department. Consensus is that Fire Department staff are employees of the Village of Sundridge. This is also supported by a legal opinion obtained by the Village of Sundridge.

Consequently, the past practice of having the Fire Department Head to report to the Joint Fire Board through the Clerk Administrator for the Village of Sundridge is not appropriate. That organizational model is not clear and makes assumptions that are not manageable. The administrative head of the Village of Sundridge is responsible to the Village of Sundridge Council and not to the Joint Fire Board.

Furthermore, supervision of staff is not a legislated role of Council (or advisory Committees of Council) pursuant to Section 224 of the *Municipal Act*. The current shared fire service agreement does not adequately speak to Council roles.

It is the role of Council to develop and set policy for municipal staff to be aware of and apply human resource laws, policies and practices. Quite simply, the Joint Fire Board does not have access to the administrative tools and training required to manage and supervise staff (payroll, attendance, benefits, performance). Nor is the Joint Fire Board available to reply to urgent and immediate administrative matters that would fall to the immediate supervisor.

Notwithstanding past practice, and notwithstanding procedures for recruitment and hiring within other shared service committees, it is my opinion that the Joint Fire Board is expected to make recommendations, but that candidate selection should rest with the employer.

Fire Department Organizational Model

An important early step in moving forward is the creation of a functional organizational model including reporting structure. Once a model is established, appropriate recruitment and/or appointments can be made.

As a side note, a Local Services Board remains a good option for management and oversight of shared services including the Fire Department, the Arena, and the Medical Centre.

Any new full-time positions within the department will require approved Job Descriptions along with salary ranges, both of which will require time and investigation to produce.

Recruitment and Appointments

While the organization structure is being investigated, there should be no formal communication by members of either Council or by Fire Board members with any firefighter or candidate. In order to avoid embarrassment or irregularities, communication should be reserved for staff of the administering municipality which is where the employment relationship lies.

Currently Andrew Torrence, Acting Deputy Fire Chief, is the point of contact in the absence of the Fire Chief. This is an interim arrangement until the organization structure and succession arrangements are confirmed. Under the *Fire Prevention and Protection Act*, the Deputy Fire Chief has all the Authority of the Fire Chief in the absence of the Fire Chief.

The Village of Sundridge proposes that an Acting Fire Chief be appointed from internal resources. To that end, previous resolutions from the Fire Board may need to be rescinded.

James Mahoney is the alternate CEMC for the Village of Sundridge and has stepped up to the Primary CEMC role for the time being. This is not a sustainable solution.

Action by the Joint Fire Board

The Joint Fire Board is asked to address the following and make recommendations for member municipalities:

1. The role of Joint Fire Board with respect to recruitment and hiring in this instance (internal/external/hiring panel/consultant/appointment/decision-making authority/etc.)
2. Agreement on the interim structure for Fire Department Head with Andrew Torrence as Acting Deputy Fire Chief on a part-time basis for an indefinite period of time.
3. Recommendation on an interim solution for CEMC.
4. Recommendation on the future organizational structure for Fire Department Head and for CEMC.
5. Recommendations for the recruitment and/or appointment based on the above.

A clear resolution for each of these items will allow member municipalities to consider and respond to the recommendations. Once decisions are made and supported by member municipalities, administration can move forward.