

**Extract From
Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee Meeting
FCSCAC#01-18 held April 18, 2018**

2. Fire Shared Services Study - (Staff Report SRCAO.18.06)

Moved by: Mayor Barrow

Recommendation 1

That the Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee recommends to Council:

- a) That staff report SRCAO.18.06 regarding the Fire Shared Services Study be received for information;**
- b) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Richmond Hill, Cities of Markham and Vaughan, pertaining to the funding of a Fire and Emergency Services Shared Services Feasibility Study, upon the written recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer.**

Carried



Staff Report for Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee

Date of Meeting: April 18, 2018

Report Number: SRCAO.18.06

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Division: Strategic Initiatives

Subject: Fire Shared Services Study

Purpose:

To update the Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee on work undertaken jointly by the Town of Richmond Hill, the City of Markham and the City of Vaughan to investigate the feasibility of shared services opportunities.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That SRCAO.18.06 be received for information;
- b) That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Richmond Hill Cities of Markham and Vaughan pertaining to the funding of a Fire and Emergency Services Shared Services Feasibility Study, upon the written recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer.

Contact Person:

Lise Conde, Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Steve Kraft, Fire Chief

Submitted by:

"Signed version on file in the Office of the Clerk"

Gwen Manderson
Director of Strategic Initiatives

Approved by:

"Signed version on file in the Office of the Clerk"

Neil Garbe
Chief Administrative Officer

Background:

The Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee was originally struck in 2016 in response to discussions between Richmond Hill and the Towns of Newmarket and Aurora about the feasibility of consolidating fire services between Richmond Hill and Central York Fire Services.

The Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee met on October 25, 2016 and received the results of the study on the feasibility and impacts of consolidation of Richmond Hill Fire and Emergency Services with Central York Fire Services. The Advisory Committee recommended, and Council later approved, a direction to continue to pursue consolidation. However, the Town Clerk was advised that both Newmarket and Aurora Councils passed resolutions stating “that the consolidation of Central York Fire Services (CYFS) with Richmond Hill Fire and Emergency Services (RHFES) not be pursued, as there is not a sufficient business case for CYFS at this time” in May 2017.

In June 2017, the Town Clerk brought forward a report to Council recommending that the Fire Consolidation Study Council Advisory Committee be disbanded as it had completed its mandate. Council chose to continue the committee for the purpose of studying opportunities for the Richmond Hill Fire and Emergency Services to consolidate or share services with other municipal fire and emergency services.

In recognition of the continued desire to find opportunities for sharing and collaboration with other fire services, Richmond Hill staff began discussions with the Cities of Markham and Vaughan to pursue investigation of such opportunities.

Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan Fire and Emergency Services Shared Services Feasibility Study

Staff discussions about the investigation of potential collaboration opportunities led to the approval of a terms of reference for the project by the CAOs of Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan in January 2018.

The project involves the Commissioners of Community Services, Fire Chiefs and Strategic Initiatives staff of each of the municipalities, working together on three areas that were identified as worthy of further research and investigation. These three areas are: Automatic Aid, Joint Communications/Dispatch, and Shared Procurement and Training. Should opportunities for shared services be identified, implementation would be a separate project.

The Steering Committee of CAOs and staff divided up and assigned the work to each of the three municipalities. Markham was assigned Automatic Aid. Vaughan was assigned Communications/Dispatch. Richmond Hill was assigned the work on Shared Procurement and Training.

Work is now underway in each municipality to gather information and complete a findings and directions analysis, leading towards an anticipated report back to the committee in late Spring 2019.

Memorandum of Understanding

Due to the technical nature of examining the potential for shared dispatch the Fire Chiefs determined that an external consultant would be hired to support the work coordinated by Vaughan. The three municipalities agreed to share the total costs for this, which are anticipated to be no more than \$10,000 per municipality, which can be funded for Richmond Hill through the Community Services 2018 budget. This report recommends that the Town enter into a memorandum of understanding to formalize this cost sharing arrangement.

Richmond Hill - Shared Procurement and Training

As in Markham and Vaughan, the Town's Fire and Emergency Services and Strategic Initiatives staff have been working on our assignment within the project. Two specific areas were prioritized for this study – shared procurement and training. RHFES already has a number of collaborative activities underway in these areas, notably in the past, the shared purchase of bunker gear with Central York Fire Services. Discussions are currently underway between Richmond Hill and Markham to jointly procure uniforms in the hope that a larger volume purchase will result in an economy of scale and savings for both municipalities. Similarly, other fire services use Richmond Hill's training facilities through purchase of service agreements. Because such ad hoc work has already been done, procurement and training were thought to be good activities to potentially leverage community benefit and savings and therefore worthy of further, more systematic investigation.

Fire and Strategic Initiatives staff continue to work on this project to identify community benefits, potential impacts on service levels, cost avoidance, savings and efficiencies, understand challenges and opportunities for specific shared services, as well as identify impacts on existing and future agreements/contracts. Meanwhile Richmond Hill is involved in discussions on the other two pieces of work for this project lead by our neighbouring municipalities to support their work on the project. The goal is to provide recommendations on how to proceed and what success factors need to be considered, along with potential next steps and timing. The results of the study, anticipated to be complete in late Spring 2019, will come forward to the committee at that time.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

As Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan agreed to share the costs of hiring a consultant to complete the communications/dispatch portion of the project, it is recommended that staff be directed to execute a memorandum of understanding to that effect. The anticipated costs to Richmond Hill are less than \$10,000, which can be funded through the Community Services budget.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

Evaluation of the potential for collaboration or shared services between Richmond Hill Fire and Emergency Services and other fire services speaks to the goal of Stronger Connections in Richmond Hill by planning for and responding to the changing needs of the community by adapting services. It also represents Wise Management of Resources by considering how best to deploy resources to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

Conclusion:

Richmond Hill continues to investigate opportunities for collaboration with other fire services in Markham and Vaughn as directed by Council, including automatic aid, communications/dispatch and shared procurement and training.