

To: Chief Administrative Officer
From: Mark Goddard, Fire Chief
Subject: Mission Fire Rescue Annual Report 2022

Date: April 3, 2023

Recommendation(s)

That the idea of pursuing compensation for the rising cost of responding to medical calls be considered as part of Council's request for meetings with Ministers at the 2023 UBCM convention.

Purpose

As a best practice, the Fire Department decided to start bringing annual reports to Council in 2020. As a continuation of this commitment, this report will outline and highlight the 2022 Annual Report document (Attachment A), including explanations for variances and highlights from the period. A presentation is also included as Attachment B.

Background

Annual reports as a stand-alone document have value by allowing departments to give a summary of successes, activities, and challenges over a set period. In compiling and comparing successive years, these reports also show trends over time which can rationalize past Council decisions and show how they have impacted service in the near and long terms.

Discussion and Analysis

Mission Fire Rescue Services (MFRS) continues to deliver great services for the dollars spent on fire protection by taxpayers. If 2022 could be themed, it would be a period of growth and challenge that the department countered with hard work and innovation. The number of gross calls grew again this year to a record 3,472 calls. Medical calls drove these figures with the largest increase rising from 56% of total calls to 62%. Staff recommend that Council consider pursuing compensation for costs associated with responding to medical calls that are underserved by the BC Ambulance Service by requesting a meeting with the appropriate Minister at the 2023 UBCM convention.

Familiar multi-year challenges such as the pandemic, homelessness, and the opioid crisis continue to challenge services. Coupled with this, the department, along with Fleet Services, identified a real threat in the amount of unplanned maintenance that was being required to keep our fleet of custom fire engines on the road. Realizing the challenges around this issue, Council supported our recommendation to purchase a used fire engine to fill multiple rolls including a back up fire engine, training engine, and prevention education engine.

MFRS worked with Corporate Administration, Finance and the Asset Management Group to synergize their tracking of Key Performance Indicators. Prior to this, reporting of KPIs was a difficult and time-consuming process for staff and every department was requiring different data. In the annual report this year, page 8 shows a table with 22 mutually agreed upon KPIs that are

consistent, founded in good data collection practice, and can be accurately tabulated every year giving staff and Council a true picture of performance going forward.

Council supported the growth of MFRS' Prevention Division through the creation of a Fire Prevention Lieutenant position. This growth allowed us to right size the division at exactly the right time as we entered the post pandemic phase of COVID-19. To see public education hours climb from nearly zero to 682 is a direct result of this support. The ability to meet the increased demand for face-to-face facilitation of public safety education also allowed for a successful relaunch of Fire Safety Week including our wildly successful first edition of the Fire Safety Grand Tour.

The metrics and figures in this report tell a story of a department that is improving every year. The department went from a rate of 44% full-service firefighters to 90% in two years. This means that the community is now better served by the majority of responders, which is an important factor in the success of the composite model of fire protection. Fire inspections are up and this is a direct result of the implementation of a Fire Prevention Lieutenant. The significant detail about the figure this year, however, is it was accomplished while the Prevention Division completed almost twice the number of fire investigations as the previous two years.

Staffing became more challenging in 2022 as we saw the realization of what the potential to backfill 16 suppression staff with full-leave complements really looked like, and its true impact on the backfill system could be assessed. Through a lot of extra shifts and some very dedicated paid-call backfill firefighters, 2022 unfortunately still tallied an unprecedented amount of both overtime and forced overtime. These metrics, while negative, have value as they are the harbingers that growth is necessary to sustain current service levels.

2022 was the first year of having a dedicated Emergency Program Manager and the Emergency Program has excelled in a very short time. All computer technology was updated thanks to grant funding, with the added benefit that the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) now has the capability to mobilize and evacuate if necessary. Several plans were updated and drafted including some of vital importance to the risk management picture of the City, for instance the Atmospheric River Plan and Lock Down Plan. The Resident Emergency Guide was developed and is currently being translated into several different languages. Staff throughout the entire city benefited from EOC training sessions, from micro-activation drills to tabletops, enabling us to introduce many new staff to the world of emergency management.

Our Emergency Support Services team is still very strong and active in the community and is the envy of all of our neighboring municipalities. Through 16 activations they assisted 166 residents and also partnered with the Fire Department on several other charity and public education events.

Council Goals/Objectives

This report is consistent with Councils' goal of Safe Community.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communication

The 2022 Annual report will be placed on the City's website and a general press release will be issued.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, putting an end to the pandemic allowed MFRS to return to a new normal albeit in a changed world and re-engaging with a changed population. Growth, social issues, and increased service demand on all fronts were drivers towards another busy, successful year serving the City of Mission.

Report Prepared by: Mark Goddard, Fire Chief
Reviewed by: Kim Thoms, Admin Assistant
Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Attachment A: Mission Fire Rescue Annual Report 2022.
Attachment B: Mission Fire Rescue Annual Report Presentation 2022