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EMERGENCY MUTUAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS WITH MUNICIPALITIES AND AGENCIES EXTERNAL TO YORK REGION

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, August 27, 2004, from the Chief Administrative Officer:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the concept of mutual assistance agreements with municipalities outside of York Region and other external agencies as an effective means to provide and receive assistance in times of an emergency;
2. The Chief Administrative Officer and Commissioner of Finance be authorized to enter into future mutual assistance agreements based on the principles outlined in this report with municipalities outside York Region and other external agencies; and
3. The mutual assistance agreements be in a form that is satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to have mutual assistance agreements (MAA) in place without the need to negotiate assistance terms during an emergency and to seek Council approval for the CAO to sign future agreements on behalf of York Region.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Legislative Authority

The *Emergency Management Act* enables municipalities to enter into agreements with any other municipality or external agencies which provide for each party to offer assistance, in the form of personnel, services, equipment and/or material, if called upon to do so by a requesting party in times of an emergency.

3.2 Resource Management

Mutual assistance agreements are an effective means to obtain resources and should be developed whenever possible. They define liability and detail funding and cost arrangements. Emergency Management Ontario and the Ontario Association of Emergency Managers have advocated the use of MAA's throughout the Province. Recent emergency events indicate that it would be prudent for York Region to reach agreements with municipalities beyond those on its immediate borders.

3.3 Status of Agreements to Supplement Resource Needs

York Region has already concluded agreements with the Regional Municipalities of Durham and Peel and the City of Toronto. Regional staff have contacted staff at the City

of Barrie and Simcoe County regarding arrangements for similar agreements with their respective municipalities. Halton Region and the City of Hamilton have requested MAA's with York Region in substantially the same form and content as those already in place between York, Durham, Peel and the City of Toronto.

Regional staff will consult with the local municipalities to determine if it would be useful to have similar preparedness arrangements in place between the Region and the local municipalities.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

It is important that the Region have in place mutual assistance agreements, which would be based on the following principals:

- Authority for the CAO to determine the nature and scope of assistance to be offered or requested
- Limitations on assistance to be provided and exemption from any liability should the Region refuse an assistance request
- Recovery by the Region of costs for any assistance provided
- Payment by the Region of the cost of any assistance received from another municipality or external agency
- Insurance and indemnity provisions
- Information provision
- Assignment of a liaison officer for exchanging of information during the emergency

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

These agreements provide for payment for services provided to York Region and for the Region's recovery of costs when assistance is provided. The associated assistance costs and the provisions for payment would be specifically defined in the agreement by the Commissioner of Finance.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

These agreements will improve the Region's capability to assist local municipalities during serious emergency events.

7. CONCLUSION

Mutual assistance agreements will enable York Region prior to an emergency, to set the terms and conditions of assistance which may be requested or provided. By approving the completion of mutual assistance agreements with other municipalities and external agencies the Region will be contributing to the disaster resiliency of our communities.