

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

**REPORT NO. 3
OF THE REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON JUNE 20, 2002**

**For Consideration by
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
on June 27, 2002**

PRESENT:

Chair: Mayor Wayne Emmerson

Members: Regional Councillor D. Barrow
Mayor M. Black
Regional Councillor J. Frustaglio
Mayor T. Jones
Regional Councillor F. Scarpitti
Mayor J. Young
Regional Chair Bill Fisch, ex-officio

Staff Present: K. Hill, J. Davidson, J. Hulton, W. Wells and J. Williams

The Fire Services Committee began its meeting at 10.16 a.m. on June 20, 2002.

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CENTRALIZED FIRE DISPATCH

The Fire Services Committee recommends the following:

- 1. That the presentation by Maureen McCauley, McCauley Nichols, regarding Centralized Fire Dispatch and Work Plan, be received.**
(A copy of the presentation is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk)
- 2. That the presentation by Ray Armstrong, Treasurer, Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association, be received.**
- 3. That the recommendations contained in the following report, June 13, 2002, from the Chief Administrative Officer, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council receive this report and approve the Work Plan as shown within Appendix A, which outlines a process for the Region and area municipal staff to work collectively toward a plan for the implementation of a Centralized Fire Dispatch service for York Region.
2. Regional Staff arrange a meeting(s) in early July, with representatives of Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Markham and their Professional Fire Fighter Associations (PFFA) regarding fair terms for the payment of appropriate costs to cover the participation of the PFFA members in the Centralized Fire Dispatch service process.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Regional Council's approval for a Work Plan which provides a comprehensive framework for Region of York staff and representatives from each area municipality to work in collaboration to investigate all aspects of a proposed Centralized Fire Dispatch service for York Region.

3. BACKGROUND

Early this year Regional Council supported in principle the concept of Centralized Fire Dispatch for York Region. All area municipalities were in turn requested to consider the proposal and provide their endorsement.

At the April 20th meeting of the Fire Services Committee, a report was brought forward summarizing the responses from the area municipalities. The report indicated that resolutions of support for Centralized Fire Dispatch had been received from eight of the

nine area municipalities. At the meeting it was also confirmed that the response from the ninth municipality, The Town of Markham, had been received subsequent to the preparation of the report, which outlined their support for pursuing the concept of centralized dispatch.

In light of the unanimous endorsement of area municipalities, the report to the Fire Services Committee included the following recommendations.

1. Regional Council set a process in place for the implementation of centralized fire dispatch service for York Region.
2. The Chief Administrative Office be authorized to engage a project manager to assist in the implementation of the centralized fire dispatch.
3. Staff be authorized to form a working group composed of area municipal staff experienced in fire communication to provide ongoing advice to the fire dispatch service.

Following Council approval, the CAO engaged the services of Ms. Maureen McCauley, P.Eng, of McCauley Nichols to fulfill the role of Project Manager. A draft Work Plan for the project was prepared proposing that a number of working committees be established with representation from all area municipalities. Subsequently an information meeting for all interested parties was arranged for May 24th at which time the draft Work Plan was put forward for comment and feedback.

The agenda for the information meeting included an overview of the Bales Drive Master Plan, elaborating on all proposed uses. As well, highlights of the draft Work Plan were presented which included:

- A list of desired outputs of the process and related target dates for delivery
- The proposed establishment of 6 working committees focused on each of the following areas:
 - 1) Labour Relations
 - 2) Governance
 - 3) Operations
 - 4) Technical
 - 5) Support (Finance and Legal)
 - 6) Implementation
- A description of committee mandates and proposed representation
- Formation of a Steering Committee to provide overall guidance and direction for the working committees
- A suggested communications program for participating municipalities

Feedback on the proposed Work Plan was encouraged from those in attendance at the May 24th meeting, as well as, an invitation was extended to all interested parties to submit written comments by June 3rd. In addition, a discussion regarding the draft Work Plan was held at an area CAO's meeting on May 31st, at which time comments were also received.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Comments from the Area Municipalities

All comments received, at each of the meetings mentioned above and via written correspondence have been carefully recorded and considered. A summary chart has been prepared identifying all comments and issues raised and is included in Appendix B. Responses to each point are also noted.

In total 52 comments for suggested improvements and recommended changes have been received. All but 4 of these comments have been incorporated into the revised Work Plan. Where it was felt that the Region could not accommodate a suggested change, an explanation has been provided in the response section of the summary chart.

4.2 Revised Work Plan

Appendix A of this report is a copy of the revised Centralized Fire Dispatch Work Plan. This document is a modified version of the material handed out at the May 24th and May 31st meetings. All comments provided by the area municipalities have been incorporated with the exception of those noted above in section 4.1.

Changes of most significance include:

i) a revised timetable that clearly identifies the various phases of the project and forecasts completion of the project in May 2003, as opposed to, January 2003. Numerous comments were provided indicating that the target dates proposed within the schedule were too aggressive. The original schedule was intentionally concentrated and was based on having the process bring information for design and construction purposes to meet a January 1st 2004 start up deadline for the Centralized Fire Dispatch service. However it was always intended that the proposed schedule would be flexible and reactive to work progress. Regional staff acknowledge the discomfort expressed by the area municipalities and have adjusted the target dates accordingly, but take the opportunity to re emphasize that the schedule will continue to be monitored and modified further if required.

The start up deadline of January 1st 2004 is still achievable with the revised timeframe, but it will create a challenge for the designers of the Communications Centre and therefore staff will continue to report to Regional Council on an ongoing basis regarding the ability to meet this date.

ii) Fire Chief Representation – the original Work Plan proposed less representation on the part of the Fire Chiefs from Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham, then currently noted in order not to place an undue burden on this group. Nonetheless, a number of shifts in the Fire Chief representation for each of the committees has been suggested and it is believed that what is currently proposed provides a balance and appropriate representation from all areas.

iii) “Deal Breaker” Issues – a number of individuals have expressed concern regarding wasting time participating in a process knowing that certain key issues are as of that point unresolved. In light of this, proposals have been made to identify “deal breakers” up-front and determine whether a resolution (or not) can be found before proceeding with other work. Others have pointed out that addressing these “deal breakers” in isolation may place too much focus on singular matters thereby losing sight of the overall benefits of the project.

Regional staff feel both points have merit and propose the following. Three of the committees namely the Steering Committee, the Labour Relations Committee and the Governance Committee were identified for early start up in Phase 1 due to the controversial and comprehensive nature of their mandates. These committees should begin their discussions by the identification of issues related to their mandates i.e. the Steering Committee should list all concerns put forward by the area municipalities, the Labour Relations Committee should list all issues raised by the PFFA’s and Management representatives and the Governance Committee should identify points of concern related to governance matters.

Each group should in turn work toward resolution of the issues tabled, however it is suggested that any matter not resolved in the early stages, is carefully documented to be brought forward at a latter point in the process, when additional information is available from the work of other committees. Wherever possible, the work of the committees will be directed such that they will prioritize their work to bring forward information related to these unresolved matters.

By implementing this approach it is suggested that a balance can be struck whereby “deal breakers” are intentionally brought forward in the early stages, given proper attention, and yet not be allowed to stop the process in the early stages before all related information is available. It is suggested that as the work of each committee proceeds and more facts and decisions are evident, matters that may not be resolvable in the early stages, may become resolvable over time. And should resolutions not be found after all information is taken into consideration, then and only then would Regional Council be assured that all avenues had been explored.

Through careful monitoring, time should not be wasted and controversial issues should be given the best chance for mutual agreement.

4.3 Project Reporting

Monthly reports will be forwarded to the Fire Services Committee providing updates on the progress being made by each committee and the project as a whole. These reports will also be distributed to all area CAO's, all project participants and any other parties expressing interest.

These reports may form the basis upon which information will be brought to the attention of local Councils, at the discretion of each municipality. Representatives from the area municipalities requested that the process accommodate opportunities for review and input from local Councils, and allowance for these "reality checks" has now been included in the revised schedule.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Coverage of PFFA Participation

A number of Professional Fire Fighter Association representatives and area municipalities have indicated a concern regarding payment for the time of the PFFA representatives to be involved in this project. As this project is not part of the regular duties required for municipal fire protection, the expectation is that the extra time for the Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill Fire Fighter Association Executive members to participate as active representatives on the working committees, should be paid for. In turn, requests have been made to the Region to cover these costs.

Regional staff recognize that there may be expenses in this regard and that this would be an unbudgeted burden on the 3 area municipalities whose PFFA's will be participating in this process.

As such, it would appear that any additional expenses for appropriate PFFA representation should be considered as a process cost and therefore covered by the Region. It is recommended that a special meeting(s) be arranged by the Region in early July, whereby terms for fair coverage can be worked out with each of the three PFFA's and municipalities.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Work Plan for this project will rely on a number of representatives from each of the area municipalities participating on working committees over the course of the next year. Initial concerns regarding the potential strain on local staff resources, has been addressed within the revised schedule. In addition, wherever possible, meeting schedules will be set to accommodate area municipal staff attendance.

7. CONCLUSION

The Centralized Fire Dispatch Work Plan presented in this report has been prepared to maximize area municipality participation, focus on key areas, prioritize decision making and meet a start up target date of January 1st, 2004. All comments received on the Work Plan from area municipality representatives were given careful consideration and the vast majority have been incorporated.

Upon Regional Council approval, the process can commence and in turn monthly update reports will be brought forward to Fire Services Committee meetings to keep Council informed of the project progress.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)

2 UPDATE - COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Fire Services Committee advises Council of the following matters having been considered by the Fire Services Committee with the action as noted:

PRESENTATION

1. Centralized Fire Dispatch and Work Plan - Maureen McCauley, P. Eng.,
McCauley Nichols
See Clause 1.

COMMUNICATIONS

2. Diane Barnes, Acting Clerk, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, June 7, 2002,
concerning the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.
Received and endorsed.

The following communications are in response to a meeting held on May 24, 2002 and are concerned with Centralized Fire Dispatch issues:

3. Phil Dawson, President, Markham Professional Fire Fighters Association, IAFF,
Local 2727, June 11, 2002 to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
4. Mr. Steven Kraft, President, Richmond Hill Professional Fire Fighters
Association, IAFF Local 1957, June 11, 2002 to Maureen McCauley, Project
Manager.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.

5. John B. Sutton, Fire Chief, City of Vaughan, June 7, 2002 to Meg West, Manager, Corporate Policy and Special Projects.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
6. Jim Schneider, President, Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association, via EMail, June 3, 2002 to Meg West, Manager, Corporate Policy and Special Projects.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
7. C.D. Weldon, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Richmond Hill, June 3, 2002 to Meg West, Manager, Corporate Policy and Special Projects.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
8. S.N. Armstrong, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Administrative Services and Treasurer, Town of Georgina, May 30, 2002 to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.
9. D. McClean, Fire Chief, Town of Markham, May 30, 2002 to A. Wells, Chief Administrative Officer.
Received and referred to Maureen McCauley, Project Manager.

The Fire Services Committee adjourned at 10.50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**June 20, 2002
Newmarket, Ontario**

**W. Emmerson
Chair**

(Report No. 3 of the FireServices Committee was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting on June 27, 2002.)