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Ontario Regulation – Mandatory Firefighter Certification Information Report to Council

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Town of Newmarket Council of the Ontario Regulation to be enacted under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 (FPPA) covering Firefighter Certification. This new regulation would establish the mandatory minimum certification standards for specific fire protection services, as outlined in bylaw 2021-24, a by-law to Regulate Central York Fire Services and by-law 2021-25, a by-law Regulate the Continued Fire and Emergency Services, by Central York Fire Services

Background

Under the current FPPA, there are no regulations outlining the minimum standard of training required by firefighters and while the Occupational Health and Safety Act covers general training requirements that an employer must provide, there are large gaps in the level of training provided to firefighters across the province. The proposed regulation will establish a baseline for the training required by all firefighters within the province.

Currently in the approval process, the new regulation under the FPPA is proposing a firefighter certification model that outlines the mandatory certification and corresponding job performance requirements of firefighters delivering specific fire protection services, as approved through the departments Consolidated Fire and Emergency Services Agreement and the Regulating bylaw. The training required by the department will be based on the services levels outlined in the Regulating bylaw while ensuring the safety of firefighters and the public.

Provisions within the regulation allow certain firefighters to be exempt from the certification standards based on their prior knowledge, skills, and training. The proposed process would:

- Require municipalities to meet the certification standard that aligns with the level of fire protection service approved in their E&R bylaw.

- Include minimum certification requirements for identified fire protection services, based on specific job performance requirements from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) professional qualification standards.
- Require certification to full NFPA standards (rather than only specific job performance requirements) for certain fire protection services.
- Prevent the need for recertification of firefighters, if the requirements for obtaining a certification standard are subsequently updated or changed.
- Provide a “legacy” opportunity for fire departments to apply for a letter of compliance based on previously completed training and existing skills and knowledge for existing firefighters.

Discussion

Central York Fire Services have been training firefighters to meet the job performance requirements of various NFPA standards, and certifying to many of those currently available through the OFM and Academic Standards and Evaluations (AS&E).

Current Certifications held by CYFS Firefighters:

NFPA 1001 – Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications

NFPA 1021 – Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications

NFPA 1031 – Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator

NFPA 1035 – Standard on Fire and Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter, Program Manager Professional Qualification

NFPA 1041 – Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor Professional Qualifications

NFPA 1072 – Standard for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications – Operations

As outlined in the regulation and correlated to the level of service provided by CYFS, the following certifications will be required:

NFPA 1002 – Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications

NFPA 1006 – Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications:

Chapter 5 – Rope Rescue

Chapter 17 – Surface Water Rescue

Chapter 20 – Ice Rescue

NFPA 1033 – Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator

NFPA 1072 – Standard for Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Emergency Response Personnel Professional Qualifications – Mission Specific

When the regulation comes into effect on July 1, 2022, we will then have until July 1, 2026, to complete the required certification to NFPA 1002, NFPA 1033, and NFPA 1072. We will then have until July 1, 2028, to complete the certification requirements for the required NFPA 1006 Chapters.

Training will occur through a mix of online training, on-shift training, and off-shift training.

Since presenting to the JCC in March 2022, there have been several changes to the Regulation that has been submitted to the Minister for approval.

The change that will carry the most impact on CYFS is the removal of the Vehicle Extrication and Heavy Vehicle Extrication Certifications. The OFM staff will continue to develop these courses and provide the ability to certify firefighters to both standards, but the current regulation will not mandate certification. At this time, we will continue to train our firefighters to meet the Vehicle Extrication requirements established in NFPA 1001 – Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications and will evaluate the benefits of the advanced Vehicle Extrication training as we near completion of the mandatory certification.

Conclusion

While this regulation is a great direction for the fire service, there are still many questions left to be answered as to how the OFM will implement the regulation and meet the increased demands of the new training requirements. As more information becomes available and CYFS staff work through the training plan, we will be able to provide a clearer picture of the logistical and financial impact this regulation will have on CYFS.

As of April 11, 2022 the regulation is awaiting approval by the Minister.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report is consistent with the methodology set out in the Joint Services Agreement.

As CYFS is currently in the process of updating our Fire Master Plan, Dillon Consulting staff are reviewing the FPPA regulation and will use this information to inform their recommendations within the Fire Master Plan.

Consultation

This report has been prepared by Central York Fire staff based on information provided in the FPPA Regulation, the Ontario Regulatory Registry Posting, and Ontario Fire Marshal Certification presentations and explanatory material.

Human Resource Considerations

As we move to a more robust training model to accommodate the new certification process, this will result in the addition of Shift Training Instructors (STI's) for each of the required disciplines to augment the delivery capability of our current Training Officers.

Training staff will also require additional training as exam proctors and evaluators in order to accommodate in-house written examinations and practical evaluations as a part of the certification process.

Budget Impact

CYFS staff are currently working through a training delivery plan to certify our current firefighters to the required standards, as approved in our E&R bylaw, listed in Table 1 of the attached copy of the FPPA Regulation. From this plan, we will identify costs related to training material, course fees, shift instructor premium, instructor fees, potential overtime costs, and other certification-related costs.

CYFS staff will continue to monitor for any grant or funding opportunities related to the delivery of training and certification.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - FPPA Regulation – Firefighter Certification

Attachment 2 - By-law 2021-24 – a by-law to Regulate Central York Fire Services

Attachment 3 - By-law 2021-25 – a by-law to Regulate the Continued Fire and Emergency Services, by Central York Fire Services

Contact

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Approval

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