

FIRE STAFF REPORT

FSR-005/2015

TO: Mayor Jeffs & Members of Council

FROM: H. Flagg, Fire Chief
R. Nan, Manager of Operations
M. Sullivan, Manager of Planning

DATE OF MEETING: January 26, 2016 (*deferred from November 17, 2015*)

SUBJECT: Options for the Location of a New Fire Hall – **AS AMENDED**

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT this report be received;

AND THAT ~~Council provide staff with direction regarding the Township's Fire Halls~~ *staff be directed to proceed with Option #1 (Points 1 and 2), being to build a new fire hall in Burnaby on the existing site and build a new fire hall in Wellandport on existing site. (Resolution No. C-033-2016)*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Fire Master Plan recommends closing Fire Hall #1 (Winger) and Fire Hall #2 (Wainfleet Village) and replacing both with a new Fire Hall in Chambers Corners. The Fire Master Plan Implementation Committee was established in 2015 to oversee the implementation of the Fire Master Plan. The Committee felt that due consideration of alternative options had not occurred and sought permission from Council to identify other options for the location of a new Fire Hall. FSR-005/2015 outlined alternative options for the location of the main Fire Hall but was deferred by Council at the November 17, 2015 meeting pending further consultation with the Volunteer Fire Fighters. This report has been amended as a result of the Committee's discussions and presents their recommendation (outlined as Option #1 below).

Staff from Fire & Emergency Services, Operations and Planning have collaborated on this report to ensure that it provides Council with a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the implementation of the master plan.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Township acquired a lot in the Hamlet of Chambers Corners fronting onto Highway #3 with the intention of using it for a new fire hall.

In 2013, Council adopted the Fire Master Plan for the Township which recommended the closure of the Fire Hall #1 (Winger) and Fire Hall #2 (Wainfleet Village) and replacing them with a new, larger station on the Township owned lands in Chambers Corners.

In 2014, the Asset Management Plan identified the need to replace a tanker in the fleet. The new truck will be larger than existing tankers and too large to fit into existing stations. The new fire station will take the increasing sizes of fire vehicles into consideration.

In 2015, Council appointed the Committee to prioritize the recommendations of the Fire Master Plan for implementation. Part of this process has involved considering new facilities on a 50 year timeline (ie. building new facilities to last for 50 years). In doing this, the Committee revisited the recommendation to build the main station at Chambers Corners and generated alternative options for its location. The original report FSR-005/2015 was presented to Council on November 17, 2015 and outlined these alternative locations. Council deferred the report pending further consultation with the Volunteer Fire Fighters which has resulted in this amended report.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Both of the options below outline a comprehensive plan to address all of the Township's fire halls. In July of 2015, Kalos Engineering Inc. prepared a building condition assessment report for all of the Township's buildings. A summary of the cost estimates for repairs needed at each of the fire halls is attached as Appendix "A". Council should consider the work that is required at each hall when making their decision.

The following criteria were considered when reviewing both options:

- Size of Facilities
 - Are the existing facilities large enough to accommodate current and future Township Fire & Emergency Services needs? Can the facility be renovated or expanded to meet these needs?
- Lands for Future Expansion
 - The Master Plan uses a 50 year time horizon for new facilities. In other words, a location must be chosen, in part on its ability to function efficiently for up to 50 years. This requires consideration of growth-related expansion, training needs, office space for staff & equipment, parking, Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) requirements and storage.
- Response Time
 - Must maintain and ideally improve Fire Department response times for emergencies.
- Impacts to Neighbours
 - Noise, dust, lighting and traffic are all potential impacts to neighbours. Site Plan approval will address this to a point, but these impacts must be resolved at the design stage.
- Approvals Required
 - Site Plan approval is required at a minimum. While public uses, including the Township, are permitted anywhere, it is appropriate to rezone the selected property "Institutional" in order to demonstrate transparency to the public.
- Cost
 - What is the most economical and fiscally responsible way to achieve Fire Department goals?

OPTION #1: Proceed with Committee's Recommendations

1. Build a new satellite station in Burnaby on existing site
2. Build a new satellite station in Wellandport on existing site
3. Build a new main station in Chambers Corners or the Village

The Committee recommends that the two satellite stations (beginning with Burnaby and then Wellandport) be replaced within the next couple of years. This will give Council time to decide where the main fire hall will be and potentially pursue the purchase of additional lands in either Chambers Corners or the Village (discussed below). The satellite stations will be basic structures containing laundry facilities, washrooms, a small office and two to three bays. The stations should be designed so that additional bays can be easily added to meet future demands. The main station would be larger and contain space for the alternate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) which is required for Emergency Management purposes.

In order to maintain fire service in Burnaby and Wellandport, the halls will need to be operational during the construction of the replacement hall. This may present some significant challenges and it may not be possible to build with the existing building on site. The existing halls may need to be demolished so that there is enough room to build the replacement hall. This will require detailed planning and alternate storage locations to ensure response times are maintained.

Options for the Location of the Main Station

The Committee has discussed in great detail the various options for the location a new main station and recommend that Council consider Chambers Corners and the Village. These locations are discussed below.

Chambers Corners:

This property is located along Highway 3 and close to Regional Road 24, so the nearby citizens are used to higher levels of noise, dust and lights from the travelling public. While this property is located at the edge of a Hamlet, there are fewer constraints to operation and expansion.

Only two residences are located adjacent to this property, which minimizes impacts from the use. Expansion is possible but would require the purchase of additional lands, a boundary adjustment or securing the option to purchase in the future. These options provide a way of expanding the fire hall, should Council agree to this location.

The Fire Master Plan Implementation Committee recommend pursuing this option however staff believes the existing parcel is large enough to meet current and future needs and therefore expansion is not necessary.

The Village:

The Committee identified two potential sites for a new fire hall in the Village. Both lots are relatively large in size and a severance would be required to separate a smaller parcel for Township use. This would be possible given that the identified lots are within the

Hamlet boundaries and that the severed lands would remain agricultural. However, this would also require a substantial investment from the Township initially as these lands are privately owned. In addition, pursuing a severance may complicate matters as the identified lots are still within the Hamlet and would require additional explanation for the Committee of Adjustment to consider. The agricultural lands contain a protected woodlot, which may make a severance difficult, since the insertion of a new lot line is considered “development” by provincial policy. This can likely be addressed by staff, but it is a constraint that Council should be aware of.

Council could authorize staff to approach the current owners for an “option” to purchase these lands. The Township would likely be expected to cover the costs of the severance, purchase, sale, surveying, and legal.

From a land use perspective, these lots are on the outside edge of the Hamlet which limits impacts to neighbouring properties and retains Highway 3 access. The key issues are cost of acquisition and complexity of the severance(s).

Scoring:

Each location was reviewed based on the criteria outlined above and scored on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = poor fit and 5 = best fit), so higher scores are better options:

Criteria	New in Village	New in Chambers Corners
Facilities large enough	5	5
Lands for future expansion	5	5
Response Time	5	5
Impacts to neighbours	3	3
Approvals needed	2	5
Cost	1	5
TOTALS	21	28

Overall, the two lots identified within Wainfleet village provide similar challenges: too large; not owned by the Township; and severances are needed. This will require a significant investment and additional challenges like negotiating the purchase, severing, and related real estate and legal fees. Scoring suggests that a new fire hall at Chambers Corners is the best fit for the Township.

An alternative would be to use the existing site in the Village. If a new facility was built in the Village the Library and Community Hall may need to be moved.

OPTION #2: Proceed with Fire Master Plan Recommendations

1. Build a new main station in Chambers Corners (closing Winger and the Village)
2. Complete renovations and upgrades to Station 3 (Burnaby) and Station 4 (Wellandport)

The Fire Master Plan adopted by Council in 2013 recommends closing Winger and the Village and replacing them with a station in Chambers Corners. The Fire Master Plan

also recommends that a financial plan to complete upgrades and renovations to Burnaby and Wellandport. The building condition assessment cost estimate summary is attached as Appendix “A” which highlights some of the work that is required for each hall.

Building a new fire hall at Chambers Corners addresses many factors: maintains response time; provides space for future expansion; and limits impacts to residential properties. This site would also house our Emergency Operations Centre, which is used by the Township during natural and manmade disasters. The current EOC is at the Township Hall, with the backup being the Fire Fighters Community Hall. No off-site location for the EOC is available, which may prove challenging if a disaster occurs in Wainfleet Village.

Building in Chambers Corners would also cause the least disruption to fire services as the new fire hall can be built while all four stations are operational. Once the hall is completed Winger and the Village can close and move to Chambers Corners. The existing site in the Village could then be used for storage while renovations are being completed at Burnaby and Wellandport.

FINANCIAL:

Since the adoption of the Fire Master Plan staff have been allocating funds to the Fire Reserve. To date \$356,000 has been set aside for fire capital projects and \$40,000 for a training facility.

The cost of borrowing is at a record low. The Region of Niagara’s capital market issue in July 2015 was 2.361% for a 10 year debenture. For planning purposes a rate of 3% should be used for debentures 10 years or less and 4% for debentures between 11 and 30 years. For example, if the Township were to borrow two million dollars at an interest rate of 4% with a 20 year repayment term the annual principal and interest payment would be \$145,020.

There are also grant opportunities that staff intend to apply for, however, many grant applications prefer municipalities to have a shovel ready project at the time of application. For the Township to be shovel ready an RFP for architectural design and drawings will need to be completed and brought back to Council for approval.

Once Council has approved architectural design and drawings staff can then solicit tenders for the construction of the fire hall(s). Staff have discussed this with a professional in the construction industry and it has been suggested that the Township tender out for the construction of two fire halls to be built in set years as the Township will likely receive a better price. It was also suggested that the Township solicit tenders in off peak construction season as this may also reduce the price.

OTHERS CONSULTED:

Robyn Madere, Acting CAO/Treasurer

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix "A" – Building Assessment Cost Estimates (Fire Station Summary) prepared by Kalos Engineering Inc. on July 31, 2015

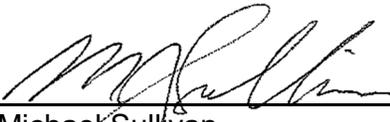
Respectfully submitted by,



Harry Flegg
Fire Chief

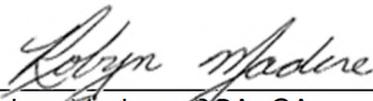


Richard Nan
Manager of Operations



Michael Sullivan
Manager of Planning

Approved by,



Robyn Madere, CPA, CA
Acting Chief Administrative Officer/Treasurer

APPENDIX "A"

Kalos Engineering Inc. Building Assessment Cost Estimates
Prepared July 31, 2015

Fire Station Summary

Building	Estimated Cost (present value) \$CDN			
	Now	<1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 10 years
Fire Station 1 (Winger)	\$22,000	\$39,350	\$27,250	\$21,800
Library/Fire Station 2 (Village)	\$91,000	\$137,000	\$335,720	\$42,500
Fire Station 3 (Burnaby)	\$24,500	\$23,900	\$26,500	\$0
Fire Station 4 (Wellandport)	\$24,000	\$22,500	\$21,000	\$0