



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

File #: 23-306, Version: 1

REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: June 19, 2023

Report No. FIRE-23-003

TO: Dan Horan, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Steve Serbic, Fire Chief

SUBJECT:

Reciprocal Fire Services Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement with the Township of Esquimalt, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, and the District of Oak Bay

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the Township's participation in the Amended Reciprocal Fire Services Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement between the Township of Esquimalt, District of Saanich, City of Victoria, and District of Oak Bay and authorize the Mayor and Corporate Officer to sign the agreement for a term of five years, commencing on the effective dates, which shall renew automatically for further one year terms.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Mutual Aid Agreements - Town of View Royal, City of Langford, City of Colwood
Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement with CFB Esquimalt
Community Charter: Part 3, Division 1, Section 23 (Agreements with other public authorities)
Fire Services Act of British Columbia, RSBC 1996, Chapter 144

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid Agreements are supported by the Township to promote opportunities to share services and to continue to build strong relationships and partnerships.

BACKGROUND:

Mutual aid agreements are essential tools that enable fire departments to provide aid to one another when circumstances warrant. They permit departments to share resources and specialty services (like technical high angle and confined space rescue) and enable them to obtain critical support for major incidents or other situations where a department's resources are overwhelmed by events.

Automatic aid agreements are a variant of mutual aid, under which the participating departments agree that they will be automatically dispatched to assist neighbouring departments. The principal benefit of automatic aid agreements is that they minimize the delay before additional resources begin responding from other departments.

The District of Saanich, the City of Victoria and the District of Oak Bay entered into a new Mutual and Automatic Aid agreement in 2021. All parties are currently seeking approval to have a new agreement that includes the Township of Esquimalt.

The Township currently has signed Mutual Aid Agreements with the Town of View Royal, the City of Langford, and the City of Colwood, as well as a Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement with CFB Esquimalt. The addition of Esquimalt as a party to the 4-core municipal Fire services enables all parties to obtain critical support for major incidents or other situations where other department's resources are overwhelmed by events which ensures a timely response to emergency incidents in the region and will minimize property loss and risk to firefighters and public safety.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

The sharing of resources as a result of this Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement between the four core municipalities in the Capital Regional District allows the communities to be fiscally responsible while providing excellent service.

2. Organizational Implications

The Mutual and Automatic Agreement will assist the four communities with access to additional Fire Department resources. This agreement may increase call volume at times; however, it will also improve the response capability and increase the department's access to resources at significant alarm calls.

3. Financial Implications

This Agreement may provide a step to an improved Fire Underwriters Rating. Further, this agreement provides for sharing of resources at no cost. Costs may only be billed to the requesting department for consumables. Costs may also be billed to a third party (Emergency Management British Columbia) if they are subject to cost recovery.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

There are no sustainability or environmental implications.

5. Communication & Engagement

This Agreement will be forwarded to the Fire Underwriters to receive recognition of services that relate to fire insurance rates. In addition, the Township will work with the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, and the District of Oak Bay to provide a coordinated approach to a news release.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Council authorize the attached Amended Reciprocal Fire Services Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreement between the four core municipalities: the Township of Esquimalt, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, and the District of Oak Bay for a term of five years, commencing on the effective dates, which shall renew automatically for further one year terms.

2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff.