

For Information Only

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention

Presented To:	Emergency Services Committee
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Resolution

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Background

Fire Services has received inquiries into the Volunteer Recruitment process from members of Council. As is normative each year during a 4 week period, applications for Volunteer Recruitment occur across the entire City of Greater Sudbury. From the applications received, a minimum of one recruitment class of up to 25 individuals is selected. Since 2014, and the introduction of the Volunteer union, the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), Fire Services administration and City of Greater Sudbury Human Resources Department staff receive, evaluate, score and interview the applicants for the positions of Volunteer Firefighter.

The Chief of Fire and Paramedic Services selects the stations of greatest need for recruits through data and statistics collected by the Firehouse records management system and by evaluating current station staffing levels against the Fire Services Volunteer Station Staffing Policy. Stations that meet Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) thresholds, for minimum Volunteer Staffing of 15, have meaningful participating members as measured by the Firehouse records management system and meet minimum staffing levels as defined by the Volunteer Station Staffing Policy are not viewed as priority stations for the current recruitment.

By engaging CLAC, under the collective bargaining agreement Letter of Understanding #1, in discussions on recruitment and bringing forth options from Fire Services administration to CLAC that would see increased investment into the process, Fire Services continues towards a goal of more recruits each year with greater participation and enhanced training.

Volunteer Recruitment Committee

Under the CLAC Collective Agreement, Letter of Understanding #1 - Various matters to be referred to the Labour Management Committee - Attraction / Retention (2. Recruitment)

"The parties will consider a strategic, planned and effective recruitment strategy. The committee shall

Signed By

Recommended by the Department
Trevor Bain
Chief of Fire and Paramedic Services
Digitally Signed Nov 10, 16

Recommended by the C.A.O.
Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Nov 21, 16

review the Recruitment and Retention program endorsed by the OFM. The parties will consider how to enable each station to play a bigger role in attracting new recruits and advertising for same in their respective communities. The parties will evaluate whether future potential applicants can participate in weekly station training events, and generally, become familiar with the work of firefighting in advance of recruitment drives. The parties shall also evaluate whether hiring could take place twice per year, not just once.

End – The parties shall introduce a recruitment and hiring program with a view to reducing the overall turnover of new volunteers, and that will identify best practices for the attraction and selection of best candidates."

In 2015 and 2016, Fire Services engaged the volunteer stations in the recruitment process by providing application packages, information guides, recruitment posters and direction to the stations requesting their assistance with posting the information in strategic locations within their local community. Additional resources, information packages and Green Light informational posters were made available to all volunteer stations as well as any administrative support they required.

Volunteer Recruitment Resources

In 2015, and in collaboration with CLAC, Fire Services engaged CTV (Bell Media) to create a professional Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment video campaign that would air during prime time for a period of two weeks of the recruitment process. This successful video campaign and recruitment process was made available on all social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). For 2016, this process was duplicated and the video extended to run before the campaign and for the entire duration of the recruitment in all prime time spots.

Also in 2015, Fire Services created a new Volunteer Recruitment poster and provided both laminated and loose copies of the media to all stations. Direct examples of where to post the document for greatest exposure to the local community accompanied the posters and an option for current volunteer firefighters to post it at their discretion was also given. Additional copies of the poster were made available at any time to any station that required more resources. In addition, an informational poster, educating the public on the use of "Green Lights" in personal vehicles of volunteers, was also provided for community posting and engagement.

Radio news interviews and advertisements were posted on all major radio outlets in 2015 and 2016 throughout the entire duration of the recruitment process.

Volunteers were encouraged and welcomed to solicit applications from possible candidates they may know in their local community and approvals were given to stations that requested to perform community engagement by way of site visits or door to door campaigning.

Recruitment Rating Scale

The volunteer application package is scored against the Volunteer Recruitment Application Rating Scale. Points are assigned to the following categories:

- Availability – 10 points
- Driving Experience – 4 points
- Education and Additional Initiatives – 23 points
- Employment Experience – 12 points
- Community Volunteer Experience – 8 points
- Other Experience (Previous FF / Military or Police / MNR / Mine Rescue) – 33 points
- Home distance from Fire Station – 10 points

Total Score out of 100 points

The volunteer candidate verbal interview is scored against the Volunteer Recruitment Interview Rating Scale. Points are assigned to the following categories:

- Experience and Assets – 10 points
- Understanding of Commitments – 10 points
- Examples of Teams or Committees – 10 points
- Understanding Work Weakness – 10 points
- Conflict in the Workplace – 10 points
- Bonus Question – Attended a Station? Spoken to any current Volunteer Firefighters? – 5 points

Total Score out of 50 points

The volunteer candidate physical fitness test is scored against the Volunteer Firefighter Physical Test. Pass or Fail to the following categories:

- Blood Pressure before and after the testing
- Hose Carry
- Ladder Lift
- Height test and Ladder Task at heights
- Dummy Drag
- Claustrophobic confined space test

Recruitment 2016 by the numbers

One class of 25 recruits available

174 Application packages received

111 Application packages scored by Fire Administration for stations determined by the Fire Chief to be those of greatest need based on the Volunteer Station Staffing policy

58 Applicants granted an interview based on the scoring tool passing mark of 30% or better (30 out of 100 points)

52 Applicants successfully pass the interview based on the scoring tool passing mark of 50% (25 out of 50 points) and sent to physical testing

4 Applicants FAIL physical fitness testing

2 Applicants voluntarily withdraw from the process

46 Applicants successfully pass physical fitness testing based on the scoring tool

25 Applicants are offered employment as Volunteer Firefighters with Greater Sudbury Fire Services based on their combined overall score

1 Applicant withdrew immediately before training began

20 Remaining applicants were not offered employment

13 of **20** Remaining applicants are in stations that are now at or over capacity

7 of **20** Remaining applicants are in stations that do have capacity based on the Volunteer Station Staffing Policy

Volunteer Attendance

Fire Services Records Management System (RMS) was a 2014 / 2015 project to purchase and implement the Firehouse software solution to formally track and audit fire data throughout the department. Full implementation across the department was completed on May 1, 2015.

Using the Firehouse RMS, all firefighter attendance at training and incidents is tracked and recorded. Up to date percentages for all firefighters are available at any time and quarterly calculations are done for all

volunteer stations.

Firehouse is used to track all incidents, training, activities, payroll, occupancies, inspections and equipment checks for the entire Fire Services department.

Prior to the CLAC labour agreement, the Volunteer Accord was in existence. Under the heading Call Out:

“In order to remain on the active call out list, Volunteer Firefighters are required to attend a minimum of 50% of emergency calls. Failure to meet this standard will result in a review of the Firefighter’s commitment to volunteer.”

Under the CLAC Collective Agreement, Letter of Understanding #1 - Various matters to be referred to the Labour Management Committee – Attendance Requirements:

“The parties shall endeavor to determine the average attendance to weekly training nights and to emergency events for each firefighter. The information shall be used by the parties to jointly establish reasonable attendance expectations for all volunteers.”

During the term of the current Collective Bargaining agreement, CLAC and Fire Services administration attempted to agree on drafting a Letter of Understanding regarding minimum attendance and participation at incidents and training. Unable to agree on such terms of attendance at training and emergency responses, the parties have agreed to revisit the matter during bargaining in December 2016.

Current average attendance at incidents for Volunteer Firefighters is **29%**

Current average attendance at training for Volunteer Firefighters is **35%**

Volunteer Staffing

Total number of active volunteer firefighters per year.

(Firefighters who attended at least one paid incident / Data provided by CGS HR)

Year	Total FF	Terminations / Resignations
2007	142	(28)
2008	165	(47)
2009	159	(29)
2010	194	(45)
2011	209	(37)
2012	211	(23)
2013	257	(53)
2014	277	(40)
2015	305	(51)
2016	317	(42)

Fire Beat Demographics

Using the April 2015 Community Profiles provided by the Community and Strategic Planning Section of the City of Greater Sudbury, the most appropriate demographic age group for possible volunteer firefighter candidates of 25 to 40, male and female individuals, was calculated. This demographic age group best represents our past and current successes in recruiting and retaining candidates for volunteer firefighter positions; however, Fire Services accepts applications from candidates who are at least 18 years of age. It is recognized that based on the qualification criteria, age is only one of the many key variables for identifying qualified applicants.

Location	Population age 25-40
Vermillion Lake	24
Whitefish	65
Beaver Lake	44
Skead	33
Val Caron	1730
Hanmer	1520
Val Therese	1110
Capreol	565
Coniston	525
Wahnapiatae	260
Falconbridge	150
Garson	1680
Waters	1435
Copper Cliff	525
Dowling	340
Levack	260
Azilda	820
Chelmsford	1235

Current Volunteer Station Staffing

Station	Current Firefighters	Station Staffing Policy Capacity
Copper Cliff	10	16
Waters	22	20

Lively	16	18
Whitefish	16	20
Beaver Lake	5	10
Azilda	18	18
Chelmsford	23	20
Dowling	13	20
Vermillion Lake	8	10
Levack	13	20
Val Caron	12	18
Val Therese	13	18
Hanmer	15	18
Capreol	16	20
Garson	19	20
Falconbridge	10	16
Skead	11	20
Coniston	16	20
Wahnapiatae / Red Deer	19	28
Current Total VFF	275	350