



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee

Date: April 23, 2019

From: Tim Wilkinson
Fire Chief

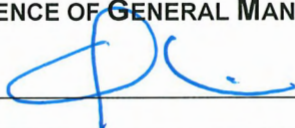

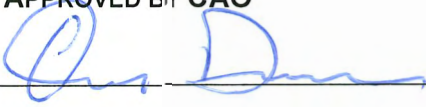
File: 99-Fire Rescue/2019-
Vol 01

Re: Potential for Richmond Fire-Rescue Personnel to Perform Basic Paramedic Duties

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled "Potential for Richmond Fire-Rescue Personnel to Perform Basic Paramedic Duties" dated April 23, 2019 be received for information.

Tim Wilkinson
Fire Chief
(604-303-2701)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this memo is to provide pertinent information to Mayor and Council regarding the resolution of Council, adopted on February 25, 2019 stating:

“That a letter be written to the Minister of Health enquiring about the potential to grant Fire-Rescue personnel the ability to perform basic paramedic duties to support BC Ambulance Service, and to seek funding from the provincial government to train Richmond Fire-Rescue personnel and for the City’s additional operating costs, with copies to the Premier of BC and the Federal Minister of Health.”

A letter was sent as described in the February 25, 2019, resolution of Council on March 18, 2019, from Mayor and Council.

This report speaks to the current state within the Province of BC for fire departments to provide paramedic duties and, further, the ability of Richmond Fire-Rescue to perform basic paramedic duties.

Analysis

The legislation that governs pre-hospital care in British Columbia is as follows:

- Emergency Health Service Act (RSBC 1996) Chapter 182;
- Emergency Medical Assistants Regulation.

The legislation establishes BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) as having jurisdiction over ambulance and emergency health services as such RFR staff are designated as Emergency Medical Assistants (EMA) “First Responder”.

The legislation allows BCEHS to collaborate with municipalities in the planning and coordination of the provision of integrated ambulance services, emergency health services, and urgent health services along with the training of emergency medical assistants.

Richmond Fire-Rescue (RFR) can bridge the current First Responder certification to Emergency Medical Responder (basic paramedic duties) for approximately \$850.00 per student through the Canadian Red Cross. This bridging course is five days in duration. RFR employs two hundred and one front line firefighters who would all need to have their training upgraded. The estimated cost of enhanced training is approximately \$170,000 in tuition and a further \$426,000 in staff time to complete the training. Currently there is no structure to fund municipalities.

While staff can be trained to higher levels of medical training without a written agreement with the BCEHS, the fire department would not be allowed to practice the enhanced skills, nor would RFR be dispatched to additional medical events over the current First Responder event types.

Only one fire department (Kitimat Fire Department) within British Columbia operates an ambulance service and three fire departments (Prince George, Delta and West Vancouver) whose staff is trained to Emergency Medical Responder levels.

In February 2019, the provincial Auditor General, Ms. Carol Bellinger, completed an audit regarding “Access to Emergency Health Services within the Province of British Columbia” (Executive Summary Attachment 2). Through this audit, four recommendations were made to improve access to Emergency Health Services:¹

1. BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) review its performance management framework to identify additional indicators for timeliness and clinical quality.
2. BCEHS determine an appropriate level of pre-hospital advanced care coverage that considers patient need, and implementation strategies to achieve that level.
3. BCEHS improve transparency and accountability by publicly reporting on its targets and performance.
4. The Ministry of Health work with local governments and BCEHS to ensure that BCEHS can implement a co-ordinated approach to pre-hospital care that results in:
 - Medical oversight, to the extent appropriate, across agencies to ensure that patient care meets acceptable medical standards.
 - Data sharing between agencies to better understand whether patients are getting the right medical interventions at the right time.
 - Signed agreements outlining the roles and responsibilities of fire department, including the level of care provided.
 - Confirmation that first responders are being notified of events where they can best contribute to patient care.

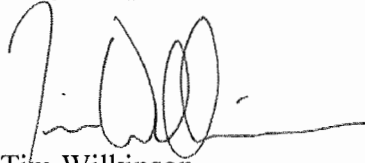
Financial Impact

None.

¹ www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/publications/reports/OAGBC_EHS_RPT.pdf

Conclusion

It is staff's opinion that the Auditor General's audit and recommendations may enhance the environment in regards to fire departments providing higher levels of medical care and that a letter could be sent to BC Emergency Health Services requesting Richmond Fire-Rescue be able to upgrade their medical skills and further that the Province fund the training and operating budget impacts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Wilkinson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Wilkinson
Fire Chief
(604-303-2701)

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