

**Date:** 16/10/2020

**To:** Chair and Directors, Committee of the Whole

**And To:** John MacLean, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Stuart Larson, Manager of Protective Services

**Date of Meeting:** Committee of the Whole\_Oct22\_2020

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## **Short Summary:**

Fire Services Review

## **Background:**

In the spring of 2020, the Cariboo Regional District commissioned a review of the fourteen fire departments that fell under its jurisdiction as tax funded and governed under bylaw. The key areas to be reviewed were legislative requirements, governance, financial management, operations, and OH&S. A study like this had never been completed previously in this region and was able to shed light on numerous issues. While there were a number of issues that were identified to be corrected, it should be noted that there are numerous positive processes and actions currently underway.

It is the intent to immediately implement the recommendations contained within the report that deal with occupational health and safety, as well as legislative requirements that were identified in the report, as those are within the scope of staff to action without direction of the Board. With that being said, there will be concurrent activity related to other recommendations as a number of them have a degree of overlap. It will be a matter of staff identifying where these opportunities exist and exploiting the savings in time.

While a fair portion of the workload can be accomplished on the back end with administration, it will be mandatory for regional staff to engage with field level operations and provide competency-based training within the recognized legislation, standards, and industry best practices. It is imperative that organizational and cultural change occur, as the above noted requirements for emergency services have evolved to the point where there can no longer be individual interpretation of the standards that apply as this creates an environment for liability not only for the organization, but the members themselves whose intentions are only to help.

It would be reasonable to project completion of a number of items in the immediate/short-term range as they are relatively simple corrections. Additional information sharing will be necessary at the Board level to proceed on several venues, as there are financial impacts

associated with their implementation and/or completion. With the current economic climate affecting not only this region, but the world, some recommendations will have to either be shelved or discarded depending on the relative impact it would have to the organization.

For medium and long term aspects of this project, it will be the responsibility of staff to review and prioritize what that model could look from several aspects and again will need to be discussed with senior management and the Board, as there will be far reaching impacts to budget, staffing, and administrative burden at all levels within the applicable department(s). The changes being implemented will have a positive impact on the organization as a whole and will be recognized immediately. If done correctly, they will enhance member safety, enable cost savings, and reduce liability to the region.

The recommendations from the report have been further broken down into their projected timelines for completion (see attached). Items listed in immediate action can be completed with little or no budget impacts for this fiscal year. Additionally, items have been color coded to display the level of urgency for completion in comparison to competing priorities (red for high, yellow intermediate, and green for lower). It should also be recognized that aspects of these identified issues were also addressed in the B.A. Blackwell report and can be tied together to provide economy of effort.

#### **Attachments:**

Timeline Report