

**Fire & Emergency Services Committee Meeting AGENDA**  
**Monday, 08 March 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (as circulated)
3. PRESENTATION - OFFICERS & DIRECTORS LIABILITY INSURANCE
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 11 January 2021
5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES
  - 5.1. Member at Large
  - 5.2. Strategic Priorities/Fire Scene Security..... 2
  - 5.3. Mutual Aid Agreement Revisions
  - 5.4. Power & Communications Providers..... 3-5
  - 5.5. Changes to Policy MDL-36 ..... 6-13
  - 5.6. Recruitment & Retention Strategy ..... 14
  - 5.7. 2021/22 Grants ..... 15
  - 5.8. AGM Options..... 16
6. L.R.F.E.S. Report
7. NEW BUSINESS
  - 7.1. Rate Payers Meetings 2021.....17-19
  - 7.2. Air Pack Certification (B.Keizer)
  - 7.3. Turn out Gear/Safety (B.Keizer)
8. IN CAMERA (if required)
9. NEXT MEETING – Monday, May 10th, 2021 or Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Proposed Annual General Meeting – Weds, April 14, 2020 7:00 p.m. LOCATION T.B.A.
10. ADJOURNMENT

Item: 5.2

Authorization: Alex Dumaresq

**Next Steps:**

For the FESC to give direction to the Fire Services Coordinator regarding the next tasks and areas to work on then create some of these standards as requested. These will then be reviewed by the FESC and fire services.

Items further down the list will be revisited once the new priority list from FESC has been dealt with to their satisfaction.

**“Appendix “A”**

Topic	TOTAL	RANK
Maintenance & Testing Standards	17	1
Training	35	2
Mental Health	38	3
Bulk Purchasing	40	4
Coordination with REMO	43	5
Financial Capacity	52	6
Governance	64	7
Assessment Coding	71	8

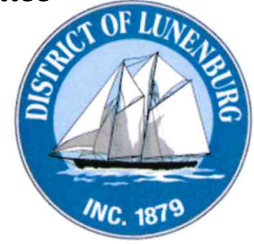
Chris Kennedy  
 Fire Services Coordinator

Fire & Emergency Services Committee

Date: March 08, 2021

Item: 5.4

Authorization: Alex Dumaresq



## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, Nova Scotia, Canada, B4V 9E4

### Administration

Phone: 902.543.8181 Fax: 902.543.7123 Web Site: [www.modl.ca](http://www.modl.ca)

January 18, 2021

Eastlink

PO Box 8660, Station "A"

Halifax, NS B3K 5M3

Dear Sir/Madame:

The Council for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg received concerns from its Fire & Emergency Services Committee regarding loss of communication services during storms and the impact this has on their service delivery. Fire Departments rely on communication systems such as cell phones, telephones, and other communication devices to receive calls for fire and emergency situations and to contact other fire departments and emergency service providers to assist in dealing with the fire or emergency. This service is critical to Fire Departments and residents as the impact of not being able to contact fire and emergency service providers when a situation arises can have serious consequences.

The Municipality would like to work with a representative(s) from Eastlink to ensure critical emergency infrastructure has power sources such as continuous generator backup. If this is something you would like to discuss further, please contact our Fire Services Coordinator, Chris Kennedy. His contact information is [chris.kennedy@modl.ca](mailto:chris.kennedy@modl.ca) or telephone 902-541-5309.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, E.C.N.S.

Mayor

cc Municipal Council  
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator



## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, Nova Scotia, Canada, B4V 9E4

### Administration

Phone: 902.543.8181 Fax: 902.543.7123 Web Site: [www.modl.ca](http://www.modl.ca)

January 18, 2021

e-mail: [matthew.drover@nspower.ca](mailto:matthew.drover@nspower.ca)

Mr. Matt Drover, Director of Regional Operations  
Nova Scotia Power Corporation  
1223 Lower Water Street Halifax, NS B3J 3S8

Dear Mr. Drover:

The Council for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg received concerns from its Fire & Emergency Services Committee regarding power outages during storms and the impact this has on their service delivery. The main concern expressed was the impact that power interruptions and long power outages have on their critical paging and communication systems. Most Departments operate using the Provinces Emergency Trunk Radio System and this can be taken off-line during outages. This service is critical to Fire Departments in addressing fire and emergency situations.

The Municipality was very appreciative of your presentation to Council in January 2020 at which time you provided us with Nova Scotia Power's Storm Restoration Process and the six phases contained therein and advised of the work that is involved in keeping up with the damage created by the numerous storms. At that meeting, you extended an offer to work with the Municipality in addressing concerns.

The Municipality would like to work with Nova Scotia Power to identify critical emergency infrastructure and determine possible solutions. If this is something you would like to discuss further, please contact our Fire Services Coordinator, Chris Kennedy. His contact information is [chris.kennedy@modl.ca](mailto:chris.kennedy@modl.ca) or telephone 902-541-5309.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, E.C.N.S.  
Mayor

cc Municipal Council  
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator



## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, Nova Scotia, Canada, B4V 9E4

### Administration

Phone: 902.543.8181 Fax: 902.543.7123 Web Site: [www.modl.ca](http://www.modl.ca)

February 18, 2021

Bell Aliant Regional Communications

Attn: Barry McGuigan

314 Main Street

Kentville NS

B4N 1K6

Dear Mr. McGuigan:

The Council for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg received concerns from its Fire & Emergency Services Committee regarding loss of communication services during storms and the impact this has on their service delivery. Fire Departments rely on communication systems such as cell phones, telephones, and other communication devices to receive calls for fire and emergency situations and to contact other fire departments and emergency service providers to assist in dealing with the fire or emergency. This service is critical to Fire Departments and residents as the impact of not being able to contact fire and emergency service providers when a situation arises can have serious consequences.

The Municipality would like to work with a representative(s) from Bell to ensure critical emergency infrastructure has power sources such as continuous generator backup. If this is something you would like to discuss further, please contact our Fire Services Coordinator, Chris Kennedy. His contact information is [chris.kennedy@modl.ca](mailto:chris.kennedy@modl.ca) or telephone 902-541-5309.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, E.C.N.S.

Mayor

cc Municipal Council  
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator



## Memorandum

**To: Fire & Emergency Services Committee (FESC) Members**

**From: Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator**

**Date: March 08, 2021**

**Re: Mandatory Pump Testing and MDL-36 Policy, Fire and Emergency Services Amendments**

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## Recommendation

**“Move that the FESC recommend that Municipal Council approve amendments to Policy MDL-36 Fire and Emergency Services as presented”**

## Background

Fire Apparatus pump testing has been a topic of discussion amongst fire services in our county for many years and has been discussed at the County level and FESC meetings. Pump testing in prior years was done voluntarily by fire and emergency services. At the September 19, 2019, Lunenburg Fire and Emergency Services (LRFRES) meeting held at the Lunenburg fire station, a vote was held unanimously passing a motion by its membership to have annual pump testing performed as part of the annual registration and be mandatory starting in June of 2021. This was also in conjunction with Municipal cost sharing for half the cost of the new pump testing facility with the Town of Bridgewater and the Bridgewater FD, allowing for all departments to gain access to the new testing area without any additional cost.

Prior to pump testing being performed, a certified Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) will do pump and related maintenance to get all pump related parts ready for the pump test. The cost of this varies depending on the work required. Typically, if an apparatus is having this done annually the cost for this maintenance reduces. The first time an apparatus has this maintenance performed that has not been maintained on an annual basis usually has a higher cost, due to wear of parts and lack of this type of regular maintenance. Cost estimate could be \$300 to \$2000.00 or higher depending on work done. A typical pump test can run between \$300- \$500.00 on average. Several departments who never did pump testing in the past saw initial costing around the \$2000.00 mark.

Wiles Lake Depot has been used for pump testing purposes and those departments using this MODL park have signed agreements for the use of the area. (OP-16 Wile’s Lake Park – Fire

Department Usage) The park is shut down during these activities to limit interaction with the public and keep them safe allowing firefighters to conduct their testing unimpeded. Although they still need to be vigilant of their surroundings and anyone who may wander into the park or test area. The area that is used for testing is small, and care needs to be taken when driving apparatus and setting up for the test. This is a very labour-intensive exercise getting out suction lines and putting them safely into the lake along with lines run for testing.

### **Current Pump Testing Rates & Standards Estimates**

There are 3<sup>rd</sup> party standards for pump testing. NFPA 1911 Standard for the Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Emergency Vehicles states that: "Pump tests shall be conducted at least annually or whenever repairs to major components or modifications are carried out to an emergency vehicle that is used in pumping operations."

The standard goes on to say all the other requirements are checked by a certified (EVT) who will put the apparatus through the required testing. Vacuum leak test, primer operation, verify pump panel plate showing ULC certification in Canada. pump pressure, flow and time to meet the ULC rating for any given apparatus etc. Any new apparatus in Canada must meet ULC S515-13.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of pump testing is to ensure that any given apparatus meets the ULC requirements and can operate at the different pressures and flow rates with all lighting/emergency lighting operating. The annual results can be compared year to year for consistency, if any of the data shows a downward trend in any of the pumping capacities during the test this could indicate issues with the pump or associated devices. This allows apparatus to be checked by a Certified EVT who can then troubleshoot cause, correct any deficiencies, and bring the truck up to the necessary requirements or recommend required action and cost of repairs. Annual pump testing shows due diligence on behalf of the fire department and these records are very important to show historical data on pump and apparatus maintenance.

Apparatus not subjected to an annual pump test are in an unknown state as to ULC requirements and if the apparatus can still meet them. Even though the pumping capacity may seem normal to operators the pump may or may not perform as required when high demands are put on them at active fire scenes. Pump failure or reduced capacity could occur leaving interior or exterior firefighters on hose lines in danger due to loss of water flow and pressure.

## **BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS**

None, cost contribution to the pump testing facility has already been made.

## CONCLUSION

Pump testing is a basic part of ensuring firefighter safety while engaging in firefighting activities using apparatus supplied hose lines. The new test area has been used by several departments and that number is expected to grow each year. It is safer to work around, no interruptions and private. However, some departments may decide not to utilize the new test area and that is their alternative. Travel distance from their respective community may play a factor in their decision.

# Municipality of the District of Lunenburg POLICY

Title: <b>Fire and Emergency Services</b>	
Policy No. <b>036</b>	
Effective Date: September 11, 2007	Amended Date: Feb. 12, 2008, Oct. 13, 2009, Feb. 8, 2011, Jan. 28, 2014, May 9, 2017, Feb. 27, 2018

Council of the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg hereby adopts the following policy respecting fire and emergency services in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg:

## 1.0 Definitions:

- 1.1 “Fire Department” means the incorporated entity that provides the service, assists others in providing the service, or works with others to provide the service or a combination of means to properties in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.
- 1.2 “Municipality” means the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.
- 1.3 “Rate Payer” means the name(s) of the person assessed for the property.
- 1.4 “Registration” means the acceptance of the Municipality to permit a “Fire Department” to provide fire and emergency services to a prescribed area within the Municipality.
- 1.5 “Body Corporate” refers to the incorporated organization requesting to be registered as a fire and emergency services provider.
- 1.6 Incorporated organization refers to those organizations that are set up to provide Fire Protection and are incorporated by way of: an Act of Legislature, The Rural District Fire Act, or the Societies Act.
- 1.7 Acts of Incorporation refer to the organization’s Memorandum of Association and/or articles of incorporation and/or by-laws.
- 1.8 “Pump Testing” means testing to assess that apparatus pump pressure and flows meet the ULC plate requirement for the pump being tested.

## 2.0 Form of Request

Requests for registration as a fire and/or emergency services provider shall be made through the completion of the Fire and Emergency Services Provider Registration package. The registration package can be found on the Municipality’s website [amended Feb. 27, 2018]. Requests must be accompanied with the organization’s Act of Incorporation and a description of the area of coverage. The application must be signed by the individual(s) as assigned with signing authority under the incorporation document.

### 3.0 Considerations for Approval

- 3.1 The Municipality must be satisfied that the body corporate is capable of providing the services it has applied to provide and has to meet the requirements outlined in Section 4-5 of this Policy.
- 3.2 The Municipality will pay the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) premiums for all registered volunteer fire department firefighters and junior firefighters. This will be at the minimum yearly salary used by WCB and set by the Municipality to calculate premiums for all registered volunteer firefighters.
- ~~3.2~~ 3.3 The Body Corporate carries group liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$10,000,000.00 [amended Jan.28, 2014]
- ~~3.3~~ 3.4 The Body Corporate does not provide the fire and or emergency services for profit.
- ~~3.4~~ 3.5 The Municipality does not provide the same service for the same area.
- ~~3.5~~ 3.6 The Body Corporate carries a group personnel (accident and sickness insurance) policy for active volunteer firefighters and for volunteers assisting during non-firefighting activities ~~or workers' compensation coverage for all its members.~~ [amended Feb. 8, 2011]

### 4.0 Department Requirements

#### 4.1 Pump Testing

- 4.1.1 Fire Apparatus pump testing results are required starting on the June 15, 2021, registration cycle and continuing each fiscal year after.
- 4.1.2 Apparatus mounted pumps shall be tested annually, portable pumps may be tested although not a requirement for registration.
- 4.1.3 Pump maintenance and testing shall be performed by a certified Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT).
- 4.1.4 The Fire Services Coordinator will work with any Fire Department towards a plan if issues arise from pump testing.
- 4.1.5 In the event a pump fails its annual pump testing, registration may remain in effect if the registered fire department does the following:
- 4.1.5.1 The Department provides the Fire Services Coordinator with a written plan for repairs required to the pump(s); or
- 4.1.5.2 A temporary replacement apparatus in good standing can be found and is in place.
- 4.1.6 If repairs are extensive and the fire department is unable to afford repairs or, on the advice of the EVT, repairs are not cost justifiable due to the condition of said apparatus pump, the fire department shall put a neighbouring department(s) on automatic callout for any/all emergency calls requiring the use of a pumper/pumper tanker including, but not limited to, structure fires of any kind, motor vehicle fires, wildland fires, emergencies, etc.

4.1.7 Failure to complete a pump test in advance of the registration deadline may result in the Municipality withholding grants to the department until a successful pump test is completed.

4.1.8 Where the total disregard for pump testing occurs, the Fire Services Coordinator will notify Council and recommend the de-registration of the department and options for alternative fire service coverage.

4.1.9 Council may de-register the department on recommendation of the Fire Services Coordinator. Council shall not consider re-registration of the department until the department re-applies for registration with a satisfactory pump test.

#### **4.0 5.0 Registration**

The Municipality, if satisfied by all categories of Sections 3 and 4, shall register the Body Corporate as a fire and emergency services provider. This registration shall continue in force until withdrawn by the Municipality for cause or the fire department requests that the registration be revoked.

4.15.1 Annual updates of the registration form shall be submitted to the Municipality no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

4.25.2 Any changes to the services provided by the body corporate shall be filed immediately with the Municipality throughout the year. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

4.35.3 All other required forms and documentation, including the annual registration form updates, financial statements, officer, rate and grant forms shall be submitted to the Municipality no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, in order to receive collected fire taxes and grant monies. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

4.45.4 All fire tax payments shall be made available to approved fire and emergency service providers 30 days from the due date of municipal taxes. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

#### **5.0 6.0 Notification**

The Municipality shall advise any new Body Corporate, by providing a letter stating approval as a registered Fire and Emergency Services provider as per sec 5. [amended Feb. 27, 2018]

#### **6.0 7.0 Rate Payers Meeting**

Every registered fire and emergency services provider must have an annual ratepayer meeting. Minutes of these meetings [amended Feb. 27, 2018] must be maintained in the minute books of the organization.

6.17.1 Fire Service providers shall have proposed budget documents available to the public seven (7) days prior to their ratepayer meeting and the budget shall be linked to the service levels being provided. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

6.27.2 Fire Service providers may conduct an information session on the proposed budget seven (7) days prior to the ratepayers meeting to assist the ratepayers in understanding the fire service levels being provided and any costs associated with providing such service. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

~~6.3~~7.3 All proposed fire tax rates shall be supported by the service provider's budget, which is to be presented to the ratepayers at the annual ratepayers meeting. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

~~6.4~~7.4 Ratepayers shall have the opportunity to discuss service level expectations during a ratepayer meeting. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

~~6.5~~7.5 Ratepayers shall not request a reduction in the proposed fire rate that diminishes the overall operation of the fire service provision. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

~~6.6~~7.6 The notice of the annual ratepayers meeting must be advertised in the local paper (a weekly circular) for a minimum of (2) two weeks prior to the annual meeting date. This advertisement shall include the following:

- fire service provider name;
- date of meeting;
- location of meeting;
- contact name and phone number; and
- where proposed budget documents may be viewed. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]

For the departments that are required to have an annual ratepayer's meeting to set the fire tax rate that must be specified as well.

~~6.7~~7.7 All annual ratepayer's meetings must be conducted before June 15<sup>th</sup> of the following fiscal year.

~~6.8~~7.8 Requests shall be made to the Municipality for appropriate rate payer's list a minimum of (2) weeks prior to the meeting date.

- This list will provide the chair of the meeting with information to confirm that only those who are ratepayers may vote on motions that are made at the meeting. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]
- The Municipality will also provide upon request a property civic report to help the department locate properties. [amended Jan. 28, 2014]
- Since fire departments members do not need to be a ratepayer or a resident of the area, a member of the fire department can move motions but the seconder shall be a ratepayer.
- Once the question has been called, only ratepayers can vote on the motion. 50 % + one of the ratepayers in attendance at the meeting in favor of the motion shall be required to pass a motion.
- Voting may be done by secret ballot. [amended Oct. 13, 2009]

~~6.9~~7.9 All fire tax requests by a registered fire and emergency services provider shall be provided to the Municipality on the approved registration package forms found on the Municipal website no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> of the current year. [amended Jan. 28, 2014 & Feb. 27, 2018]

~~6.10~~7.10 For all registered fire and emergency services providers who do not have fire taxing power provided by their Act of Incorporation, the Municipality shall approve the rates.

For those providers that have taxing power for fire tax, these approved rates will be added to the fire tax schedule for inclusion with approved rates for that fiscal year.

### Annotation for Official Policy Book

<p>Date of Adoption:</p> <p>Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider: (7 days minimum)</p> <p>Date of Passage of Amendments:</p> <p>Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider: (7 days minimum)</p> <p>Date of Passage of Amendments:</p> <p>Date of Notice to Council Members of Intent to Consider:</p> <p>Date of Passage of Amendments:</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">September 11, 2007</p> <p style="text-align: right;">January 21, 2014</p> <p style="text-align: right;">January 28, 2014</p> <p style="text-align: right;">April 27, 2017</p> <p style="text-align: right;">May 9, 2017</p> <p style="text-align: right;">February 13, 2018</p> <p style="text-align: right;">February 29, 2018</p>
<p>I certify that the amendments to this the <i>"Fire and Emergency Services Policy"</i> was adopted by Council as indicated above.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Sherry A. Conrad, Municipal Clerk</p>	<p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p>

MDL-36

Fire & Emergency Services Committee  
Date: March 08, 2021  
Item: 5.6  
Authorization: Alex Dumaresq



## Memorandum

**To:** Sarah Kucharski, Communications Officer  
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator

**cc:** Fire & Emergency Services Committee  
Sandra Challis, FESC Recording Secretary  
Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance

**From:** Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** January 26, 2021

**Re:** 2021-014 Recruitment & Retention Strategy

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Please be advised that, Municipal Council, in session on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, made the following motion:

**“that Municipal Council accept the recommendation of the Fire & Emergency Services Committee and approve the revised Fire Recruitment and Retention Strategy, as discussed, and further that Council refer the annual budget amounts to Finance Committee for consideration during budget discussions”.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Dumaresq". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

---

Alex Dumaresq  
Deputy CAO

/trb

Fire & Emergency Services Committee  
Date: March 08, 2021  
Item: 5.7  
Authorization: Alex Dumaresq



## Memorandum

**To:** Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator

**cc:** Fire & Emergency Services Committee  
Sandra Challis, FESC Recording Secretary

**From:** Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** January 26, 2021

**Re:** 2021-013 2021/2022 Fire Services Municipal Grants Budget

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Please be advised that, Municipal Council, in session on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, made the following motion:

**“that Municipal Council refer the recommendation of the Fire & Emergency Services Committee to approve a 2% increase over the 2020/21 grant amounts (which totals \$3,670) with the 2021/2022 fiscal year grants being:**

Matching Grant	\$43, 250.00
Municipal Grant	\$65,390.00
Training Grant	\$11,120.00
Insurance Grant	\$55,190.00
Personnel Insurance Grant	\$11,120.00

**for a total grant amount of \$186,070.00 to the Finance Committee for consideration during the 2021/22 budget deliberations”.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Dumaresq", written over a horizontal line.

Alex Dumaresq  
Deputy CAO

/trb

**From:** [Tina Grace](#)  
**To:** [Sandra Challis](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Fire & Emergency Services AGM - Wed 14th April 7-9pm  
**Date:** February 25, 2021 3:42:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)  
[image011.jpg](#)

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**CAUTION: This email originated from an external sender.**

Hi Sandra

Than you for emailing – we certainly did have a problem connecting via phone – were just too busy!!

I would love to accommodate your ask for the Fire & Emergency Services AGM this year that is scheduled for April 14<sup>th</sup>. I can certainly accommodate the 25 persons and could also accommodate up to 50, staying within Covid19 guidelines. I assume this would be seating only or are you wanting to have quests at tables?

The Convention Centre would be the room to accommodate the numbers. Cost would be \$425.00 plus tax and if any catering would be required, additional fees would apply.

Look forward to confirming Sandra and if any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cheers

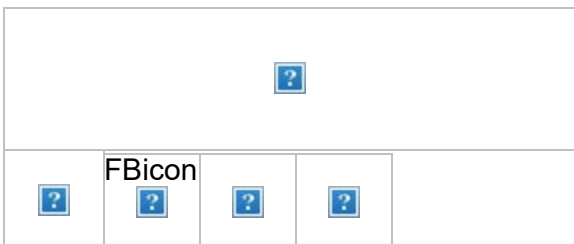
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## Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

### Request for Decision

**REPORT TO:** FESC and Council  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator,  
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO  
**DATE:** March 08, 2021  
**RE:** Extending Emergency Services Ratepayer Meetings

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### RECOMMENDED MOTION

**Move that FESC recommend that Municipal Council waive the requirement that Fire and Emergency Services Providers hold a ratepayers meeting, as outlined in section 6 of Policy MDL 36, for the fiscal year 2021/22 for all departments not proposing an increase to their fire tax rate.**

### BACKGROUND

MODL policy MODL-36- Fire and Emergency Services, requires all fire departments to register annually with the municipality. As part of the registration requirements, all fire departments wishing to provide fire or emergency services must:

- Hold a ratepayer meeting before June 15 annually (S. 6.7)
- 6.9 – Request a fire tax rate through MODL registration form by June 15 (6.9)
- Submit all registration forms by June 15 (s. 4.1)

Due to the notification requirements associated with recommending a fire tax rate, these annual meetings normally take place in early April. The Province has issued a Ministerial Order covering a broad range of associations, including fire departments incorporated under the *Rural Fire District Act* (or via special legislation). The Order provided two options for statutorily required meetings. First, the organization could elect to hold the meeting using a virtual platform (i.e. video or telephone) that otherwise followed the meeting requirements set out in their legislation. Second, the organization could elect to delay their meeting. Under this scenario, the meeting must

still be held within 90 days of the lifting of the provincial state of emergency.

## **ISSUE**

Public, in person meetings have been permitted since the issuance of the Ministerial Order, however there are still restrictions under the current public health guidelines. In general, MODL should be discouraging large gatherings of individuals, especially given the status of vaccine delivery, and the threat posed by newer COVID-19 variants. Virtual meetings will also be challenging for some of MODL's fire departments. High speed internet is not sufficiently widespread to ensure that eligible ratepayers can reliably connect to a video meeting. While teleconference meetings are still possible, this would pose a challenge for departments attempting to verify if call participants were eligible voters and would create logistical difficulties for departments who use secret ballots for ratepayer meeting votes.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend that MODL waive the *municipal* requirement for ratepayers' meetings, provided that departments are not seeking an increase in their fire tax rate. Registrations will be required by the June 15 deadline as this provides valuable information to the Municipality. Fire department budgets will still be available upon request by a ratepayer in their respective fire districts. Waiving the municipal meeting requirement will address concerns around ratepayer meetings for more than half of the departments.

A department may hold a ratepayer meeting if they wish and have the ability to hold one under the Public Health Restrictions.

MODL is not capable of fully waiving the requirement for ratepayer meetings, because some departments are incorporated through provincial legislation. As a result, the recommendation will impact the two classes of departments differently.

### **Societies Act Departments**

- 1) If the department is incorporated as a society under the *Societies Act*, not via provincial legislation and is not increasing their rate, then no ratepayer meeting is required for this fiscal year.
- 2) If the department is incorporated as a society but is proposing a rate increase, then the department must hold a virtual, or socially distanced ratepayers' meeting prior to the municipal registration deadline of June 15, and generally complying with the requirements of Policy MDL- 36.

### **Departments Incorporated via Other Provincial Legislation**

- 1) If the department is incorporated via provincial legislation and is not considering a rate increase, then MODL will not require a ratepayers' meeting in advance of

the June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for registration. These departments should still comply with the provincial requirements for statutory meetings (i.e. hold a virtual meeting, or hold an in-person meeting within 90 days of the lifting of the provincial state of emergency), however, MODL will not be involved in ensuring compliance, which is a provincial matter.

- 2) If the department is a) incorporated via provincial legislation and b) is proposing a rate increase, then the department must hold a virtual or socially-distanced ratepayers' meeting prior to the municipal registration deadline of June 15 and generally complying with the requirements of Policy MODL-36.

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Department:

Report Prepared By: Chris Kennedy

Date: 2021

Report Approved By:

Date:

Reviewed By CAO:

Date: