

**Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Minutes of a Fire & Emergency Services Committee Meeting**

Held in Council Chambers, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS, and virtually via Teams
Monday, 08 March 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Brian Keizer, District 1 & 2 Fire Commission, Chair
Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9, Vice Chair
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7
Chief Tom Lockwood, Indian Point Fire Department
Retired Chief Steve Patterson, Cornwall Fire Department
Deputy Chief Dean Schmeisser, Dayspring & District Volunteer Fire Department
Herbert Seymour, Member-At-Large
Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Ex-Officio

Staff:

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy C.A.O. (Via Teams)
Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator
Sandra Challis, Administrative Assistant

Guest:

Ed Nix, BFL (via Teams)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Chief Lockwood, seconded by Councillor Whynot, that the agenda be approved as circulated. Carried Unanimously.

3. PRESENTATION – OFFICERS & DIRECTORS LIABILITY INSURANCE

Mr. Nix from BFL gave a presentation on Officers and Directors Liability Insurance in relation to Fire Commissions and other entities not treated as societies. Neither the *Rural Fire District Act* nor *Municipal Government Act* provide protections to Commissioners. One of the main differences highlighted was that Commissions have powers to set tax rates, independent of a

municipality, and as such the commissioners/officers have greater fiscal accountability. He outlined the typical types of claims and noted that in each case, the Insurer would be engaged to defend the commissioners.

Mr. Nix agreed to create a simple questionnaire that could be circulated to the respective Commissions. They would need to submit specific information; the legislation that enables the Commission, structural composition and financial information, and then a price could be quoted for liability coverage for the Commissioners. It was hoped that Departments would see this as an extension to the existing department insurance coverage and keep everything under one provider. Mr. Keizer agreed to make a presentation to LRFES to inform Departments.

Mr. Nix left the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 11, 2021

Moved by Deputy Chief Schmeisser, seconded by Retired Chief Patterson, that the minutes of the January 10, 2021 Fire & Emergency Services Committee meeting be approved as circulated.

Carried unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

5.1 Member at Large

An application for the member at large vacancy had been received. Two committee members informed they had people interested in applying also and were advised to get the applications in as soon as possible. The Nominating Committee, Councillors Greek and Whynot, Chief Lockwood and Deputy Chief Schmeisser, would then review the applications and report back to the FESC.

5.2 Strategic Priorities/Fire Scene Security

Mr. Kennedy reported that Fire Scene Security had been on the agenda for some time, although it was not one of the Strategic Priorities set by the FESC. He advised that the Municipality of

Chester (MODC) had something in place to cover this, which is currently under review. Mr. Kennedy had approached MODC to see if there is a way for MODL to become part of their agreement with the Commissionaires and is waiting to hear. If joining the agreement is not possible, using MODC's agreement as a framework would be useful. Mr. Kennedy would report back to the FESC when he had more information.

5.3 Mutual Aid Agreement Revisions

Mr. Kennedy reported that the Solicitor had advised that the revisions were under review and should be ready for the next meeting.

5.4 Power & Communications Providers

It was reported that Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Dumaresq and the Remo Coordinator, Ms. Henhoeffler had attended a virtual meeting with Nova Scotia Power (NSP) and were encouraged to be informed of the steps NSP were taking to mitigate problems resulting from major weather events. NSP is developing a Critical Customer policy which will provide include Fire Departments are part of critical infrastructure. It is necessary for Departments to provide either their metre number or account number to Ms. Henhoeffler in order to be added to the Critical Customer list, and although there is no guarantee of immediate repair, it will enable NSP to prioritize when repairs are necessary. Mr. Kennedy had contacted Departments and requested this information and Ms. Henhoeffler was intending to make presentation at FESC's AGM to explain what this means. It was also reported that there was increased collaboration and communication between NSP and the telecommunications companies, identifying where the backbones of their networks were. Both Eastlink and Bell had reported that they had been improving their back-up power ability also.

It was noted that LRFES had appointed two members to work with the REMO Planning Committee but had not yet had any contact with the REMO Coordinator. It was suggested that perhaps the RCMP and EHS should be part of this group also. Mr. Kennedy would discuss further with Ms. Henhoeffler.

5.5 Changes to Policy MDL-36

Mr. Keizer reviewed the proposed amendments to Policy MDL-36, circulated with agenda. A discussion took place, raising the following points:

- Section 1.8 – change language to include meeting Manufacturer’s requirements for apparatus that does not have a UCL plate.
- Section 4.1.2 – some Departments have portable pumps that are permanently mounted, does this clause capture the need for testing? It was agreed there was no desire to create loopholes and if a piece of apparatus was to be used for fire suppression on an active call, it should meet standards regardless of if there is a line out to a firefighter or supplying a pumper – the safety of firefighters was paramount. It was agreed to leave the Section as presented and this item would be reviewed and discussed further.
- 4.1.8 Change “the total” to “a total”.

Moved by Deputy Chief Schmeisser, seconded by Chief Lockwood, that the FESC recommend that Municipal Council approve amendments to Policy MDL-36 Fire and Emergency Services as presented and amended. Carried.

5.6 Recruitment & Retention Strategy

Circulated with the agenda was a memo advising that Council accepted the recommendation of the FESC to approve the revised Fire and Recruitment and Retention Strategy Motion and referred the annual budget amounts to the Finance Committee for consideration during budget discussion.

5.7 2021/22 Grants

Circulated with the agenda was a memo advising that Council referred the recommendation of the FESC to approve 2% increase over the 2020/21 grant amounts to the Finance Committee for consideration during budget discussion.

5.8 AGM Options

It was agreed to hold the FESC’s AGM at the Best Western, Bridgewater, subject to Covid-19 restrictions. The facility could accommodate a group of fifty persons, socially distanced; this

number would allow for one representative per Department, Council, FESC and Staff. A hybrid virtual/in-person meeting was considered, but remote voting would need to be organized for this to happen. It was discussed that a commitment would be needed in advance from Departments of their intent to attend, to ensure quorum was met and Mr. Kennedy agreed to contact the Departments.

6. L.R.F.E.S. Report

Mr. Keizer reported that no meeting had been held, it was hoped to hold one next week and he would provide a subsequent report.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Rate Payers Meetings 2021

The Request for Decision regarding extending emergency services ratepayers meeting, circulated with the agenda, was discussed. It was noted that this situation had arisen in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 and restrictions for Spring/Summer 2021 are not known. It was further noted that Departments may still choose to hold a Ratepayers meeting, even if not increasing fire rates. The recommended motion provided Departments with options and prevents meetings from being mandatory.

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Greek, that the FESC recommend that Municipal Council waive the requirement that Fire and Emergency Services Providers hold a rate payers 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 rate. Carried.

7.2 Air Pack Certification

7.3 Turn Out Gear/Safety

Mr. Keizer had requested items 7.2 and 7.3 to be added to the agenda in order to begin the discussion regarding making provision of this information mandatory as part of the annual registration process. Health and safety of Firefighters was the most important item of the strategic priorities set by the FESC. It was noted that information was already collected at

registration, but departments were not mandated to provide it, so the overall view is incomplete. Following discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Keizer would raise the subject at the next LRFES meeting and report back to the FESC.

8. IN CAMERA (If Required)

Not required.

9. NEXT MEETING – Monday, May 10, 2021 or Monday, July 12th, 2021 dependent on need.

Proposed Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, April 14, 2021 7:00 p.m. Best Western, Bridgewater

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business at 8:31 p.m., it was moved by Chief Lockwood, seconded by Councillor Whynot, that the meeting adjourn. Carried unanimously.