

**SUBJECT: Ottawa Fire Services 2020 Annual Report**

**File Number: ACS2021-EPS-OFS-0001**

**Report to Community and Protective Services Committee on 21 October 2021**

**and Council 27 October 2021**

**Submitted on October 12, 2021 by Paul Hutt, Acting Fire Chief, Ottawa Fire Services**

**Contact Person: Erin Bell, Program Manager, Operational Support Services**

**613-580-2424 ext. 29462, Erin.Bell@ottawa.ca**

**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE**

**OBJET : Rapport Annuel de 2020 du Service des Incendies**

**Dossier : ACS2021-EPS-OFS-0001**

**Rapport au Comité des services communautaires et de protection**

**le 21 octobre 2021**

**et au Conseil le 27 octobre 2021**

**Soumis le 12 octobre, 2021 par Paul Hutt, directeur et chef des pompiers intérimaire, Service des incendies d'Ottawa**

**Personne ressource : Erin Bell, gestionnaire de programme, Services du soutien opérationnel**

**613-580-2424 poste 29462, Erin.Bell@ottawa.ca**

**Quartier : CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE**

#### **REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend that Council receive this report for information.

#### **RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT**

Que le comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil de recevoir le rapport aux fins d'information.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

City Council approved the enactment of a Fire Services Establishing By-law (ACS2009-COS-EPS-0049) on September 23, 2009. Sections 15 and 16 of the Ottawa Fire Services Establishing By-law (No. 2009-319) require the preparation of an annual report, which shall include, but not be limited to the following items:

1. The goals and objectives of Ottawa Fire Services
2. A description of the organization of Ottawa Fire Services
3. The fire protection services provided by Ottawa Fire Services
4. The level of service to be provided by Ottawa Fire Services

This report fulfills the legislative requirements, as outlined in the Fire Services Establishing By-law (No. 2009-319).

In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services responded to 22,582 incidents which represents a difference of -13.24 per cent in incidents from 2019. This decrease can be attributed to the pandemic where many residents of Ottawa are spending more time at home. While Ottawa Fire Services experienced a decrease in calls, there was a significant increase in the severity of the incidents being responded to. In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services responded to 176 water/ice rescues that represents an increase of 28 per cent compared to 2019. Ottawa Fire Services also responded to 14 fatal fires, when the annual average is three fatal fires per year. Additionally, Ottawa Fire Services completed 2,716 inspections and participated in 49 public education events.

This report will include 2020 performance measurements, the impacts of COVID-19 on the service, the continued focus on mental health strategies along with planned activities for 2021.

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Le Conseil municipal a approuvé le 23 septembre 2009 l'adoption d'un règlement créant un service des incendies (ACS2009-COS-EPS-0049), l'Ottawa Fire Services Establishment By-law (n° 2009-319). Les articles 15 et 16 de ce règlement exigent la préparation d'un rapport annuel qui doit notamment comporter les éléments suivants :

1. Buts et objectifs du Service des incendies d'Ottawa (SIO);
2. Description de l'organisation;
3. Services de protection contre les incendies offerts;
4. Niveau de service offert.

Le présent document satisfait aux exigences législatives que prévoit l'Ottawa Fire Services Establishment By-law (n° 2009-319).

En 2020, le SIO a répondu à 22 582 incidents, soit une diminution de 13,24 % par rapport à 2019. Celle-ci peut être attribuée à la pandémie, pendant laquelle beaucoup de résidents d'Ottawa passent plus de temps chez eux. Bien que le volume d'appels ait diminué, il y a eu une augmentation considérable de la gravité des incidents signalés. En 2020, le SIO est intervenu lors de 176 incidents nautiques ou sur glace, ce qui représente une augmentation de 28 % par rapport à 2019, ainsi que lors de 14 incendies mortels, alors qu'on en recense en moyenne 3 par année. En outre, il a effectué 2 716 inspections et a participé à 49 événements de sensibilisation du public.

Le présent rapport portera sur les mesures de rendement de 2020, les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur les services, le travail continu sur les stratégies de santé mentale et les activités prévues pour 2021.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Ottawa Fire Services 2017-2020 Strategic Priorities**

The Ottawa Fire Services 2017-2020 Strategic Plan establishes four key priorities for the service which enable Ottawa Fire Services to continue serving the community in the most effective and meaningful way.

- Priority 1 – Service Excellence: engaging with community members as well as key stakeholders while performing daily tasks by demonstrating outcomes that provide value to residents and meet or excel service delivery standards.
- Priority 2 - Employee Engagement: building employee engagement and wellness initiatives that foster a healthy, committed workforce that delivers on branch services and programs.
- Priority 3 – Succession Planning: move from reactive to proactive management of employees allowing for improved knowledge sharing, continuity and staff development.
- Priority 4 – Financial Sustainability: becoming financially responsible by effectively managing existing resources and by making sustainable long-term decisions that encourage core service and program improvement now and into the future.

## Description of the Organization of Ottawa Fire Services

Ottawa Fire Services protects the lives, property and environment for the citizens of and visitors to the City of Ottawa. Ottawa Fire Services provides service from 45 stations located across the City of Ottawa. The Ottawa Fire Services team is comprised of career firefighters, volunteer firefighters, as well as inspection, education, safety, training, communications, maintenance and operational support personnel. A total of 1,458 Ottawa Fire Services personnel work within these divisions. Of these, 58.9 per cent are within the Urban and Special Operations Division and 32.2 per cent are volunteers within the Rural Division. The remaining 8.9 per cent are dispersed amongst the other divisions.

Ottawa Fire Services personnel provide many valuable services to the community beyond fighting fires, including:

- Fire Prevention and Public Fire Safety Education services which include fire prevention inspections, code enforcement, determination of cause and origin of fires, attendance at public events, fire safety presentations and dissemination of public fire safety educational materials
- Fire Suppression services which include fire rescue, tiered medical response, training, communications and incident management
- Special Operations includes Vehicle and Machinery Extrication, Rope and Confined Space Rescue, Trench/Collapse and Urban Search and Rescue, Fire Support Unit - Rescue Task Force, Hazmat/Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive, Wildland Fires, Light Rail Transit Rescue, Water/Ice Rescue, Specialized Form Suppression
- Provincial deployment response model for Hazmat/Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive and USAR (Urban Search and Rescue)

Ottawa Fire Services first completed the process to receive accredited agency status with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) in 2014 and was re-accredited in 2019. Ottawa Fire Services has maintained its annual accreditation by demonstrating continuous improvement through the annual compliance reporting process. The accreditation process required Ottawa Fire Services to complete an in-depth analysis of all its divisions, programs and involvement with other areas of the city. The process included a Self-Assessment Manual and a Standards of Cover, which takes an in-depth analysis of station response times and the deployment of resources across the City of Ottawa. These documents provided a comprehensive look at each

division and its deployment strategies to ensure they were operating efficiently and effectively.

CFAI accreditation allows Ottawa Fire Services the opportunity to learn alongside the best in the industry and it is a commitment to continuous improvement by Ottawa Fire Services. Since being accredited, Ottawa Fire Services has implemented the Commission's accreditation model and recommendations by strengthening its internal culture and labour relations, building positive relationships within the community and by being at the forefront of innovation and improvement. CFAI accreditation is an important pledge to the community that Ottawa Fire Services is committed to offering the best services possible. It is also a confirmation that the service is accountable for keeping Ottawa safe and secure.

## **Fire Protection Services Provided by Ottawa Fire Services**

Ottawa Fire Services takes a proactive approach to protecting our community and recognizes the importance of implementing the three lines of defence and optimizes this philosophy in all its programs. In accordance with the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, the three lines of defence are:

- Line 1: Public Fire Safety Education
- Line 2: Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement
- Line 3: Emergency Response

To meet these objectives, Ottawa Fire Services implements the three lines of defense through programs that support the following priorities:

- Public Education
- Fire Prevention
- Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement
- Emergency Response

## **Level of Service Provided by Ottawa Fire Services**

Ottawa Fire Services has adopted a risk-based deployment model to protect the lives and property of the residents of Ottawa. As part of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) process, Ottawa Fire Services response standards were developed through the Standards of Cover. The Standards of Cover assists Ottawa Fire Services in ensuring a safe and effective response force for fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical response and specialty response situations

and to establish response times that are in line with industry standards.

To effectively respond to any emergency, a critical task analysis is completed which includes the number and type of resources required for each unique event based on level of risk. First on Scene is the first unit to arrive at the scene of an emergency. Effective Response Force is the minimum number of firefighters and equipment that must reach a specific emergency incident location within a maximum prescribed travel (driving) time. Ottawa Fire Services uses critical tasking to determine its Effective Response Force requirements, and how those requirements feed into the creation of our incident classifications and benchmark calculations, which are prerequisites for determining our overall response standards.

Details on 2020 incident volume and total response time are described further in this report and in Document 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Ottawa Fire Services 2020 Annual Report highlights key accomplishments from 2020. Four key priorities were identified within the Ottawa Fire Services 2017-2020 Strategic Plan including service excellence, employee engagement, succession planning and financial sustainability. 2020 initiatives and accomplishments demonstrating commitment to each priority are outlined below.

2020 was a challenging year for Ottawa Fire Services given the State of Emergency and other obstacles the COVID-19 pandemic presented. Despite this, Ottawa Fire Services personnel came together and executed plans, maintained service levels, and adapted to the needs of our community. Our 2020 objectives and accomplishments demonstrated our continued commitment to the priorities identified in the strategic plan.

### **Priority 1 – Service Excellence**

Key goals under the Service Excellence priority involve demonstrating the value of the Ottawa Fire Services by engaging the community through everyday work, strengthening communications, remaining a leader in the industry, and cultivating client facing initiatives.

#### ***Performance***

In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services recorded 63,784 vehicle responses to 22,582 incidents which represents a difference of -13.24 per cent in incidents and -12.18 per cent in apparatus responses from 2019. This decrease can be directly tied to the COVID-19

pandemic as many residents of Ottawa spent more time at home. As outlined in Document 1, Table 1 shows the volume of incidents from 2015 through to 2020 that Ottawa Fire Services responded to and Table 2 shows the number of apparatus responses for the same time period. There are a number of factors that may affect response times from year to year, including construction zones, time of year (weather), time of day, traffic flow, traffic intensification and station cover off as resources are directed to an ongoing incident.

Benchmarks are commonly referred to as the targets or goals an organization strives to obtain in an effort to achieve excellence in service delivery. Municipal fire services are mandated by the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* to provide fire protection services in accordance with local needs and circumstances. As such, through the CFAI accreditation process, Ottawa Fire Services adopted NFPA standards of performance benchmarks in compliance with the Provincial legislation. Those benchmarks were then used in conjunction with our baseline data from 2014-2018 to identify areas for improvement, measure performance, and create minimum standards for the current five-year accreditation period (2019-2024).

Public education, inspection and code enforcement are mitigation strategies that can be used to reduce the volume of fire-related incidents. Ottawa Fire Services continues to monitor trends and adapts accordingly in order to develop new mitigation strategies. Further details on these strategies can be found later in this report. Ottawa Fire Services remains diligent in ensuring that the proper apparatus and equipment are deployed to each call for service.

Tables 3 and 4, as outlined in Document 1, shows the first on scene total response time performance at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile to each type of Fire incident between 2015 and 2020 using the new performance measurement standards, as compared to the performance from our baseline reporting period (2014-2018). Response time standards were met in all available categories.

Tables 5 and 6, as outlined in Document 1, shows the effective response force total response time performance at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile to each emergency incident classification group between 2015 and 2020 using the new performance measurement standards, as compared to the performance from our baseline reporting period (2014-2018). Response time standards were met in all available categories.

Table 7, as outlined in Document 1, shows the Ottawa Fire Services Communications Center's annual call volume for the past six years. While call volumes tend to fluctuate,

the Communications Center did experience a decrease in call volume in 2020 which can be directly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Communications Division enables Ottawa Fire Services to provide effective fire protection and timely emergency responses across the City of Ottawa. The Communications Division contributes to reducing intervention time (total time from the moment a call for service is received to the moment personnel arrive on scene), injuries and loss of life and property due to fires and other emergencies. The Communications Division creates a safer working environment for emergency responders through the transfer of information from bystanders/witness to responding personnel.

In 2020, the Public Education Team participated in 49 public education events, including the annual “Wake Up: Get a Working Smoke Alarm” campaign. In response to public health restrictions, the team created a virtual social media campaign encouraging and tagging others to post a picture of themselves testing their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and tag their friends to do the same. The weeklong campaign made 166,000 impressions on Twitter.

Due to the state of emergency throughout the majority of 2020, fire prevention officers conducted immediate threat to life inspections and paid or complaint inspections on a case-by-case basis. In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services completed 2,716 inspections.

In 2020, fire prevention officers completed inspections of all vulnerable occupancies in Ottawa, 185 in total, to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities are living in buildings that are safe and free of Fire Code violations. This was completed by a mix of in-person inspections where possible as well as virtual inspections.

Throughout 2020, Ottawa Fire Services continued their partnership with Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) for providing annual inspections to all OCH properties. In person and virtual inspections were conducted in order to ensure that all fire and life safety systems within each OCH building were being properly maintained in accordance with Ontario Fire Code standards. This collaborative partnership has resulted in safer homes for residents of OCH buildings. Ottawa Fire Services will continue to inspect OCH buildings in 2021 to ensure compliance.

Despite a challenging year, Ottawa Fire Services was able to meet National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and Council-directed response time performance standards.

### ***Impact of COVID-19***

In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services apparatus response volume decreased by 12.18 per cent

from 2019. This is the first time since 2014 that Ottawa Fire Services has experienced this level of response volume. This decrease is a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic along with the implementation and enforcement of various emergency orders which resulted in the closure of non-essential workplaces and more residents spending more time at home.

While Ottawa Fire Services experienced a decrease in calls, there was a significant increase in the severity of the incidents being responded to. In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services responded to 176 water/ice rescues that represents an increase of 28 per cent compared to 2019. Ottawa Fire Services worked as part of the Ottawa Drowning Prevention Coalition (ODPC) to increase awareness around the importance of water safety through social media campaigns, media events, handouts, and colouring books for children. Ottawa Fire Services also worked with the ODPC to identify high risk areas on our waterways to install signage and ring buoy lifesaving stations.

Ottawa Fire Services responded to record high number of 14 fatal fires in 2020, when Ottawa's annual average is three fatal fires per year. Investigators from our Fire Prevention Division worked with the Office of the Fire Marshall to investigate the cause of all fatal fires. This information was used to develop targeted safety messaging through social media, public education sessions in impacted neighbourhoods, and targeted Public Service Announcements.

Ottawa Fire Services experienced significant challenges with supply chain interruptions, leading to limited Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability, in particular N95 masks, which are the standard face mask used by firefighters when attending medical calls. In order to support our partners and ensure the most effective use of limited N95s, a decision was made for Firefighters to use a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for medical response calls. This ensured N95 respirator masks were available for other health care professionals. This quickly became a standard practice for other fire services.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ottawa Fire Services Decontamination team immediately started researching different products, processes and best practice for decontaminating personnel, facilities and apparatuses should anyone come into contact with a positive COVID-19 case. The team shared their decontamination procedures with colleagues in the city and across the nation, which have since been implemented and adapted by fire services across the country and in other parts of the world. The team provided decontamination assistance to the City's Long-Term Care homes with thorough disinfection for the residences several times post outbreak. The

team also helped the Long-Term Care team with developing their own decontamination procedures based on their experience and best practice which has since been adapted and used.

Ottawa Fire Services quickly adapted several programs to be delivered in line with evolving public health guidelines, to eliminate any gaps in service where possible. The Ottawa Fire Services Training Division changed theory courses to online instructor-led programs, converted recruit training to online for the initial weeks and managed small group, distanced, PPE protected in person training on site for skills development and reinforcement. Outdoor training was also provided with tents for spacing and washroom and hand cleaning stations for all activities. The Ottawa Fire Services Prevention Division had to shift community engagement to a virtual platform and focus almost exclusively on social media to communicate fire safety messaging. With varying levels of COVID restrictions, fire prevention focused on in-person inspections for threats to immediate life safety and adapted to virtual inspections where possible to continue meeting the obligations under the Fire Code. The Ottawa Fire Services Communications Division installed barriers between workstations and implemented multiple daily cleanings of workstations in order to prevent an outbreak within the division.

In addition to the continuation of normal operations Ottawa Fire Services supported the City's pandemic response in other areas, including in the Emergency Operations Centre and the vaccine distribution process.

## **Priority 2 – Employee Engagement**

Key goals under the Employee Engagement priority involve promoting a health focused work environment for all Ottawa Fire Services employees.

On January 21, 2020, Ottawa Fire Services held the second annual Fire Chiefs Commendations and Awards ceremony recognizing personnel for outstanding service in 2019, for different acts of heroism and innovative ideas and programs, such as response to the Spring Floods of 2019.

Ottawa Fire Services management continues to engage and recognize staff through station visits, quarterly newsletters, briefing reports, weekly information bulletins and 'Ask the Chief' inbox which allows for members to share their thoughts and concerns with the Chief. The inbox was heavily utilized throughout the pandemic for Ottawa Fire Services staff to ask questions and share their concerns or innovative ideas with regards to working through the pandemic. All questions and answers were shared

anonymously on the Ottawa Fire Service's SharePoint site for reference. Throughout 2020, the Fire Leadership Team responded to 250 questions from staff concerning COVID-19.

### ***Mental Health and Peer Support Program***

Ottawa Fire Services is committed to the physical and mental health of all personnel. The Ottawa Fire Services Mental Health Peer Support Program is a key component of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) prevention plan. The "peers" are volunteers who have been trained to provide their colleagues with confidential, emotional and social support in a safe, non-judgmental environment and the "peers" are representatives from within each division of Ottawa Fire Services. In 2020, two training sessions were provided to peer supporters, which gave them the skills and tools required to offer support to their peers. There were approximately 300 requests for assistance from peer support members or Ottawa Fire Services personnel in 2020. Ottawa Fire Services continues to train and educate its peer support team so they are prepared to provide support at the highest level. Additionally, ongoing training opportunities are provided to all staff to raise awareness and encourage them to reach out for support when required.

Ottawa Fire Services also continued to support its mental health peer support team by implementing the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) training to personnel.

### ***First Responder Mental Health Study***

Ottawa Fire Services secured \$650,000 in funding from Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) to complete a two-year study with the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute on the mental health of first responders which commenced in Q4 2018. The First Responder Mental Health Study looks into preferences for mental health support services and includes a small-scale randomized control trial to evaluate methods of providing these services. The Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Fire Services and the Ottawa Paramedic Service are all participating in the study managed by Ottawa Fire Services and championed by the General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work on this study was delayed until Q2 2021.

### ***Wellness and Fitness Initiative***

Ottawa Fire Services established the Wellness and Fitness Initiative (WFI) in 2017. WFI aims to provide Ottawa Fire Services personnel with training and support to improve their overall health and well-being. All peer fitness trainers maintained their certification through American Council on Exercise (ACE). Gym equipment in stations is maintained

to allow personnel to work on physical health in order to be fit to respond, work a long and healthy career and also minimize injuries. All new recruits are led through wellness coaching sessions by peer fitness representatives as part of their learning in order to establish healthy practices at the start of their careers.

### **Priority 3 – Succession Planning**

Key goals under the Succession Planning priority include enhancing recruitment and succession planning efforts, while placing an emphasis on the importance of employee development and developing ongoing organizational stability.

#### ***Recruitment***

In 2020, 24 candidates were hired in career firefighter positions in order to fill vacancies. Ottawa Fire Services is currently undertaking a thorough evaluation of the recruitment process and framework and anticipates that the next Ottawa Fire Services recruitment campaign will launch in Q1 2022. This review includes finding efficiencies within the recruitment process as well as placing more of an emphasis on outreach activities to attract a diverse workforce.

In 2020, the Rural Operations Division hired 43 volunteer firefighters that filled a number of vacancies in the West Carleton, Rideau-Goulbourn, Osgoode, and Cumberland wards. Rural Operations accepts applications on an ongoing basis and traditionally holds a recruit class in the fall of each year pending availability.

#### **Camp FFIT**

Ottawa Fire Services first implemented the innovative Camp FFIT (Female Firefighters in Training) in 2010 in recognition of the benefits of diverse workforce that is representative of the community it serves. The weeklong camp provides female youth between the ages of 15 to 19 years old the opportunity to gain first-hand exposure to the duties of a firefighter including auto extrication, hydrant catching, search and rescue and firefighter simulated kitchen and vehicle fires.

Since 2010, Ottawa Fire Services has hosted 240 total participants. In the fall recruit class of 2019, Ottawa Fire Services celebrated the hiring of its first Camp FFIT member as a career firefighter, who was part of the very first summer of Camp FFIT. In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services hired two more women who had attended Camp FFIT. Other Camp FFIT graduates are now volunteer firefighters with Ottawa Fire Services and surrounding communities, attending pre-service programs in post-secondary institutions or applying for full-time positions within Ottawa Fire Services and fire services across the nation.

The successful implementation of the Camp FFIT program in Ottawa has been modelled by several other fire services across Canada, and Ottawa Fire Services is regarded as a source of guidance and a model for best practices by municipalities who have begun coordinating their own programs.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Camp FFIT was cancelled in 2020. Camp FFIT will continue to be offered in coming years aiming to increase confidence and empower young women to pursue careers in Fire Services.

### **Ottawa Fire Services Fire Ventures Program**

In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services continued their collaboration with Scouts Canada and their Ventures Program to create an opportunity for Ottawa's youth between the ages of 14 and 17 to get a sense of the day-to-day life involved in being a firefighter and gain some important perspectives on this incredible career option.

The inaugural program commenced on September 25, 2019 and ran until June 7, 2020. This program's 12 participants met approximately twice a month and were given the opportunity to learn important firefighter knowledge, such as basic fire chemistry, fireground tactics and learn about Fire Prevention. Participants also gained hands on skills including firefighter drags, lifts and carries, ladder drills, forcible entry, ventilation and have the opportunity to practice rappelling with some Ottawa Fire Services rope rescue team personnel.

During the pandemic this program was adapted to meet virtually during peak COVID periods and smaller groups were managed in person at the training center for outdoor activities such as auto extrication and firefighting tasks. Strict COVID-19 procedures were followed and this successful program has continued with new participants through summer 2021.

### ***Diversity***

In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services continued to see an increase of personnel that have self-identified as being part of a diverse group. Ottawa Fire Services recognizes that sustained outreach efforts are required in order to attract a more diverse workforce that represents the communities it serves. Creating new outreach programs and activities with a target of underrepresented community groups and youth will be captured as part of the new Recruitment Strategy project that is currently underway along with the creation of an Ottawa Fire Services Ambassador Working Group that will work connect into the corporate EPS Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Currently the percentage of new recruits for women in 2020 is 8.33 per cent for career firefighters and 23.3 per cent

for rural firefighters. Ottawa Fire Services is making continued efforts to engage women in applying for firefighter positions including highlighting existing female firefighters and encouraging young women to participate in Camp FFIT.

## **Priority 4 – Financial Sustainability**

Key goals under the Financial Sustainability priority include maintaining innovative and quality facilities, equipment and technology to meet the strategic and operational needs of the service and to improve resource management.

### ***New Fire Training Centre Project***

The current Ottawa Fire Services training centre was built pre-amalgamation and no longer meets the needs of a modern fire service. The centre is unsuitable for live fires and many other task and scenario training evolutions as a result of the demolition of the burn building as well as the increased number and proximity to resident and commercial properties surrounding the site, posing significant safety risks. On May 22, 2019, the Development Charges By-law was approved at Council where Ottawa Fire Services was allotted \$84M for the replacement of the current Fire Training Centre for 2023-2026. The net capital cost of \$21M will be capital project costs, both growth-related and recoverable from development charges while the remaining 75 per cent (\$63M) of the facility funding is required to be provided from Grants, Subsidies and/or other recoveries. In 2020, Ottawa Fire Services has been networking with potential partners in developing a strategic vision for a shared training facility.

### ***Station Alerting and Paging Project***

The Station Alerting and Paging project aims to enhance station call-out and paging abilities in urban and rural areas through the implementation of new technology. In 2017, Ottawa Fire Services issued a Request for Information and developed a project implementation plan. Ottawa Fire Services has since begun the replacement of the station paging component of the project and will commence the station alerting portion once the paging component is completed.

### ***Automatic Vehicle Routing Recommendation Project***

The Automatic Vehicle Routing Recommendation (AVRR) project utilizes electronic mapping technology, real data road speeds, GPS, and in-vehicle Mobile Data Terminals to ensure that the closest Ottawa Fire Services vehicle is dispatched to an emergency, ensuring faster response times. In 2017, Ottawa Fire Services began piloting the new AVRR system in several first responding vehicles and through testing worked with the vendor in 2018 to implement improvements. An updated road network was recently

loaded and in 2019, Phase 2 of AVRR was implemented. This phase works on expanding the project to include Ladders/Towers and Heavy Rescues. In 2020, Phase 3 was implemented which included all other Ottawa Fire Services vehicles equipped with Mobile Data Terminals. Computer Aided Dispatch CAD 7.5 Upgrade was also completed which introduced many new features/improvements.

### **Direction to Staff: Dispatch**

The Communications Division currently provides bilingual dispatch services to the City of Ottawa as well as surrounding areas, including the City of Clarence-Rockland and Township of North Dundas. In 2015, the United Counties of Prescott Russell (UCPR) Emergency Services approached Ottawa Fire Services to inquire if there would be interest in providing dispatch services to their county. The Ottawa Fire Services – Provision of Dispatch Services to other Municipalities report recommendations presented to CPSC October 15, 2015 (ACS2015-COS-EPS-0032) included:

1. Delegate authority to the Chief of Ottawa Fire Services to negotiate and execute agreements on behalf of the City with the municipalities of the United Counties of Prescott-Russell, Township of North Glengarry and the Township of North Stormont for the provision of fire dispatch services.
2. Direct staff to include a provision in the City's Delegation of Authority By-law under with the Deputy City Manager, City Operations, General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services and the Chief of Ottawa Fire Services individually are delegated the authority to approve, amend, execute and extend agreements with other municipalities and townships in relation to fire dispatch services and other agreements related to the operation of the Ottawa Fire Services branch as part of the Mid-Term Governance Review.

The Committee carried the item as presented with a direction to staff to report back to committee following successful negotiations.

Upon further analysis and discussions with UCPR, their infrastructure required significant upgrading in order for Ottawa Fire Services to provide dispatching services to them. Since 2015, Ottawa Fire Services call volumes continue to increase along with city population and zones of intensification. Ottawa Fire Services would have to increase staff in the Communications Division to effectively manage the increase in call volume and the additional pressure from UCPR. Ottawa Fire Services' priority is to serve the residents of Ottawa first and foremost along with our existing municipal partners of the City of Clarence-Rockland and Township of North Dundas.

The City of Clarence-Rockland and Township of North Dundas will continue to receive dispatch services from Ottawa Fire Services and the municipalities of UCPR will remain with Hawkesbury Fire Dispatch. In the future if UCPR is considering assessing their dispatching options, Ottawa Fire Services will partake in these discussions, but at this time UCPR dispatch services will remain status quo.

## **Planned Activities for 2021**

Some short-term priorities and projects were highlighted as focus areas for the department going into 2021, in order to continue to fulfill the objectives of the Ottawa Fire Services Strategic Plan in its last year. These include:

- Promoting of the three lines of defense: Public Education, Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement, and Emergency Response
- Improving health and safety by continuing the Wellness and Fitness Initiatives and Mental Health programs
- Improving technology and communications to provide every officer with easily accessible data to help manage their teams and plan effective response as well as the new station alerting and paging system
- Supporting the Training division with additional resources for implementing the Officer Development and Regulations programs
- Promoting interoperability with Ottawa Fire Services' allied partners
- Enhancing the Fire Chief's Commendation Awards event in celebration for Ottawa Fire Services personnel and family
- Developing 2021-2022 Ottawa Fire Services Strategic Priorities to ensure Ottawa Fire Services to continue serving the community in the most effective and meaningful way

### ***Kanata North Station***

Ottawa Fire Services has procured land for a new station in Kanata North, which is projected to be complete in 2023 to respond to the growing population density throughout the city. In accordance with CFAI, Ottawa Fire Services continuously reviews response time data and continues to perform further research on the current stations and how to best serve residents. Operational costs and increased staffing will be captured as part of the 2023 Budget.

### ***Electronic Rostering***

Ottawa Fire Services initiated a large-scale IT project in Q4 2017 to implement an electronic rostersing solution. This solution will revolutionize how fire personnel are

scheduled to work, called back for shifts and how they book leave entitlements. Ottawa Fire Services is anticipating time and process efficiencies once this solution is in place that will enhance the overall administration of the suppression and communication divisions. The implementation of the rostering solution is set for Q1 2022.

### ***New Fire Training Centre***

Ottawa Fire Services will continue to seek partnerships for a new fire training centre. In 2021, Ottawa Fire Services will put forward a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) to solidify partnerships in the fall of 2021. This REOI is designed to seek out interested organizations that can bring collaboration and cooperation to a campus style facility.

### ***Recruitment Review Project***

Ottawa Fire Services current Recruitment and Hiring Strategy attracts many applicants, which requires a considerable investment of time and resources (staff, financial) for applicant screening, testing and interviews. It is the objective of the service to ensure that recruitment and hiring practices attract qualified, diverse, high-performing, adaptive and productive recruits who are a good fit for the service and its changing culture. Ottawa Fire Services is undertaking a thorough review of the current Recruitment and Hiring Strategy to identify any major issues/concerns with its effectiveness as well as opportunities for improvement. The goal of the revised recruitment process is to create a streamlined recruitment process that is aligned with other city and provincial processes. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the recruitment review process experienced delays but is planning to announce the revised recruitment strategy in Q3 2021 and have the first recruit class gone through Phase 1 of the new recruitment process in Q1 2022 with a goal of launching the finalized recruitment process in Q3 2022.

### ***Station 81 - Stittsville***

Our initial Accreditation with CFAI (2013-2018) identified urban and rural density as a risk and Ottawa Fire Services has been monitoring and analyzing deployment data and growth patterns to meet our minimum Effective Response Force (ERF). The 2019 Standards of Cover (SOC) document, utilized for Ottawa Fire Services latest Accreditation, clearly illustrates intensification in several urban and rural communities at a rate that is growing beyond our current capacity to meet our minimum standards (ERF) and is now requiring more careful consideration. Ottawa Fire Services is proudly a composite fire service, which consists of volunteer firefighters, career firefighters, and support divisions. This hybrid model allows flexibility when intensification changes the dynamics of a community. Fire stations that operate solely with volunteer firefighters are

referred to as a “volunteer” station. When certain criteria and triggers occur, mainly intensification, both volunteer and career firefighters operate together, which is referred to as a “composite” station. Fire Stations that operate solely with career firefighters, most densely populated areas, are referred to as “career” stations. Although there are a number sprawling urban and rural communities, most pressing for Ottawa Fire Service is the community of Stittsville. Thoughtful consideration will be given to convert Fire Station 81 in Stittsville from a fully volunteer station to a composite station. A conversion to a composite station will enhance Ottawa Fire Services deployment model and resources in this community by ensuring that the station has a compliment of firefighters in station ready to respond at all times.

### ***Credentialing of Personnel***

Ottawa Fire Services has taken a lead role in the development of the provincial curriculum and certification processes for a broad range of internationally recognized NFPA standards. These programs identify the requisite knowledge and skill sets that personnel must possess to ensure the highest level of fire service delivery.

The certification process is one of continuous learning and improvement as each individual move through their career. New recruits to Chief Officers, Fire Prevention and specialized rescue personnel are equipped with the most current knowledge and understanding of best practices to provide the citizens and visitors to the nation’s capital with exceptional service.

Throughout 2021, Ottawa Fire Services will be credentialing staff in the following areas:

- Fire Explosion Investigators (NFPA 1033)
- Fire and Life Safety Educators (NFPA 1035)
- Fire Inspectors (NFPA 1031)
- Company Officers (NFPA 1021)
- Training Officers (NFPA 1041)
- Firefighters (NFPA 1001, 1&2)
- Safety Officers (NFPA 1521)
- Pump Operations (NFPA 1002)
- Hazmat Technicians (NFPA 1072)
- Technical Rescue Technicians (NFPA 1006) which includes Surface water, Ice, Swiftwater, Vehicle and Machinery, Rope, Confined Space, Structural Collapse

## **Conclusion**

While 2020 was an unprecedented year, Ottawa Fire Services continued to protect the nation's capital with pride.

Ottawa Fire Services continued to focus on fire prevention, code enforcement and education outreach to reduce the number of fires and ensure residents and property owners are implementing the proper measures to stay safe.

Continued investments in mental health initiatives, including the wellness and fitness program, will ensure that Ottawa Fire Services personnel are provided the necessary skills and tools to be successful.

Overall, Ottawa Fire Services is well positioned to continue to provide effective, efficient emergency services to the residents of Ottawa, while focusing on continued improvement. Ottawa Fire Services remains a versatile, innovative force and a leader amongst fire services in Canada.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report for information purposes.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impediments to Committee and Council's receipt of this report for information.

## **COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)**

This is a City-wide report.

## **CONSULTATION**

Public consultations were not undertaken as this report is administrative in nature.

## **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

The Ottawa Fire Services provides emergency response for people with disabilities inline with the obligations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, 191/11.

## **CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no climate implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

## **INDIGENOUS GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS**

Ottawa Fire Services remains committed to developing a diverse workforce and continues to work on programs to help. Camp FFIT (Female Firefighter in Training) and the Ottawa Fire Services Fire Ventures Program in collaboration with Scouts Canada, allows youth to gain first-hand exposure to the duties of a firefighter. The development of the new Recruitment Strategy Project, along with the creation of an Ottawa Fire Services Ambassador Working Group, Ottawa Fire Services will be creating new outreach programs and activities with a target of underrepresented community groups and youth.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk implications associated with receiving this report for information.

## **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

## **TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

There are no impacts on the Term of Council Priorities associated with this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

Document 1 – Incident Volume Data

## **DISPOSITION**

The Ottawa Fire Service will action any direction received as part of consideration of this report.