

Staff Report

Presented By: Ed Melanson, Fire Chief
Meeting Date: September 22, 2025
Subject: Volunteer Firefighter Wages Update
Attachment(s): None

Recommendation

That Council receive the Volunteer Firefighter Wages Update report for information.

Report Summary

2025 has seen an increase in call volume and training demands which has led to a projected volunteer firefighter wage of approximately \$500,000 versus a budgeted amount of approximately \$360,000. As it is anticipated this trend will continue, a proposed solution will be brought forward in the 2026 Business Plan for Council's consideration.

Background/Analysis

The 2024 Business Plan saw both a budgeted and actual expense for volunteer firefighter wages of approximately \$300,000. Council supported the Fire Service's ask in 2025 for an increase to \$360,000 to support an increase in training due to recruitment and a call volume increase. This budget line at the time of writing of this report has been exceeded by approximately \$60,000 and the projected 2025 call volume is 360 emergency responses versus 305 in 2024 leading to a projected volunteer wages at year end of \$500,000. The following are also contributors to this increase:

- Increase in structure fires (14 to date vs 4 in 2024).
- Increase to multi station calls (Mutual aid, water rescue, Motor Vehicle Collisions).
- Full compliment of 50 firefighters.
- Excellent morale leading to outstanding attendance.
- Tracking and reporting of attendance per Human Resources Policy.
- Increase to NFPA certification training (Water rescue technician, Firefighter 1 & 2).

As the Town of Saugeen Shores continues to grow, incidents will also grow leading to demands on the operational budget pressuring repair and maintenance, equipment replacement, wages, personal protective equipment, training and cancer protection initiatives. Fire Services will

present a proposed financial increase in the 2026 Business Plan for consideration as these pressures mount.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: Fire Services Business as Usual

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

Prepared By: Ed Melanson, Fire Chief

Reviewed By: Jim Bundschuh, Director, Corporate Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer