



## BARRIE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

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**TO:** COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

**PREPARED BY AND KEY COMMUNITY CONTACT:** J. WEBER, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF OF FIRE PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**SUBMITTED BY:** C. MAINPRIZE, FIRE CHIEF

**GENERAL MANAGER:** D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:** M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**DATE:** APRIL 9, 2018

**SUBJECT:** OPTIONS FOR WASTE REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL - HOARDING SITUATIONS

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### **RECOMMENDED MOTION**

1. That the Report to the Community Services Committee dated March 28, 2018 concerning Options for Waste Removal and Disposal - Hoarding Situations be received for information purposes.

### **PURPOSE & BACKGROUND**

2. On January 14, 2013, City Council adopted motion 13-G-016 regarding the evaluation of options for waste removal and disposal in hoarding situations, as follows:

*That the Barrie and Emergency Service and the Environmental Services Department work together to evaluate options for waste removal and disposal in hoarding situations where the health and safety of our community and fire service staff is at risk and report back to the Community Services Committee with potential solutions that mitigate the cost barrier faced by some individuals by March 2013.*

3. At the time the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) was working towards establishing a position through a Provincial Trillium grant. The grant was denied and the hoarding coalition ceased to meet.
4. In the spring of 2015 the Barrie Police Service established Collaborate Barrie. This multi-agency situation table focuses on individuals and family situations in which an escalated on-set of criminal, anti-social behaviors, or personal risk are developing or imminent. Collaborate Barrie provides the forum for 27 primary agencies to collaborate on interventions and other opportunities before behaviors escalate. Their focus is on acutely elevating risk focusing on imminent personal peril within 48 hours and does not typically look at lower levels of risk. That is left to individual agencies. Only the most severe cases of hoarding are currently reaching this table. The problem is that once it reaches that point there are significant and more complex concerns for housing, personal safety and financial issues that are realized by the individual or family.

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5. Recognizing that the Collaborate Barrie Hub only deals with the most extreme cases the original Hoarding Coalition started to meet again in the summer of 2017 to discuss the current situation in the City of Barrie regarding hoarding. The Coalition also discussed what can be done proactively to avert hoarding issues before they escalate to the level that would engage action from the Collaborate Barrie Hub. The Coalition has met 3 times since then. The Coalition concluded that hoarding remains an issue and more importantly, the cost to the individual to deal with hoarding is still the most significant concern.
  6. The Coalition delved into several issues, with specific action items emerging as follows:
    - a) The first issue brought to light in front of the Coalition was the realization that no one agency has a full picture of the hoarding issue within the City of Barrie. Each agency potentially deals with hoarding in isolation of each other and the Coalition. Multiple agencies are aware of hoarding situations but not aware of the magnitude of the hoarding. Gathering basic statistics about hoarding issues that each member agency experiences became a priority. The Coalition is collecting and analyzing basic data about hoarding. This information will reveal the status of the hoarding situations the Coalition is aware of.
    - b) Secondly, the Coalition is working on developing a framework to assist agencies. There is not a strict legislated direction for dealing with hoards. Each agency has some authority, and some capability to deal with different aspects of hoarding issues, but no one agency has full authority. The Coalition did a review of each other's legislated authority. It found that a number of agencies depend on the consent of the individual to be permitted to provide assistance in any form. A basic framework helps agencies determine a path for an individual situation and provides a measuring tool to consistently measure hoards. That framework will also help to identify each agencies role, authority, and potential relationships to each other.
    - c) The Coalition is developing a public education tool kit that can to help agencies educate the public, guide concerned family members to potential resources.
  7. The Hoarding Coalition will continue to meet to further discuss issues that arise. Barrie Fire and Emergency Service will continue to participate as a member of the Hoarding Coalition.

### **ANALYSIS**

8. This report considered the financial barriers incurred by an individual when dealing with hoarding. As each situation is different, there is no formula for determining how much a hoard will cost to clean up.
9. Agencies take the approach that the financial responsibility of the clean-up remains with the owner of the property.
10. Hoards in rentals often end in eviction and usually results in the cost of clean-up being borne by the owner. Persuasion of the owner to assist tenants has had some success and is a viable method of keeping the individual in housing. However, eviction is often seen as the easier solution for owners.

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11. Costs associated with clean-up vary and include the following.
- a) Assistance with removals: If an individual is unable to clear materials themselves they may be forced to count on assistance. At times volunteers can be acquired to assist, but if not, the individual may need to hire help or a junk removal company.
  - b) Trucking and tipping fees: In many cases, the largest portion of the clean-up is the actual transportation and tipping of garbage at the landfill. At current rates and the potential volumes of a hoard, the tipping of waste is a significant cost. The best strategy is to divert into an appropriate recycling program where possible.
  - c) Pest removal or fumigation: Unfortunately, a number of hoards become an attraction to vermin. During the remediation of a hoard it may be necessary to eliminate vermin through pest control.
  - d) Managing domesticated animals: Hoarding can include domesticated animals such as dogs, cats, and small rodents. This may result in a cost to manage the situations around reducing the number of pets to a reasonable number.
  - e) Assessment and repairs to the structure: There may be damage to the structure that may need to be assessed and repaired to ensure the continued safe occupancy of the dwelling unit. This may be extremely costly and is a significant result of the impact of hoarding.
12. During recent hoarding and squalor situations a few unique resources have been accessed to assist with gaining a successful outcome. A number of avenues need to be investigated and promoted to help reduce or defer cost for the future. Some of these would include:
- a) Recycling of materials in a hoarding situation is an effective way to diminish the cost of cleaning up the actual hoard. The dumping of recyclable materials and green bin waste is free and it may constitute a significant portion of the actual materials and waste found in a dwelling.
  - b) There could be potential to redirect furniture, materials, small appliances, and other items back into service further reducing the financial burden of the individual.
  - c) In a lot of cases hoarding piles can be reduced over time instead of in an immediate dramatic cleanout. As long as the individual is working with agencies to trend in the appropriate direction to reduce piles and eliminate the hoarding, agencies can support a long slow removal of the problem. The result of a slow reduction is the spreading of cost to the individual over a long period of time, which may make the removal more affordable. This strategy may be achievable and doesn't place a significant burden on other support systems. There are some limitations to consider though, as there may need to immediately remove materials from ignition and heating sources to ensure the safety of the individual.
  - d) Potential partnerships with corporate and volunteer agency such as Habitat for Humanity and Simcoe County Home Builders Association have not been fully investigated to date. There may be other agencies that can provide services that may assist in many different ways with hoarding at relatively low or no cost to the individual.
  - e) In rental situations there may be potential to work with owner/landlords to assist with the cost of the reducing waste.
  - f) Education on hoarding as a behaviour needs to be promoted by all agencies. The recognition and intervention of hoarding behaviour encourages the early reduction of piles within a manageable range. This also ensures that the health and safety of the individual and others is not put at risk.



13. Hoarding is a personal issue, and as noted above, consent is required to provide assistance. Unless the hoarding is impacting the safety of other residents in a multitenant structure, the individual's personal safety is addressed through the maintenance of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. If hoarding is not impacting the appearance of the exterior of the property, an individual has a right to live the way they wish. In this case, there is little that can be accomplished other than to continue to monitor the conditions and ensure the individual is aware of the personal risk.
14. Agencies have been working together effectively to assist one another with hoarding issues that do come to our awareness. All agencies have been aware of the hoarding/squalor scale and are able to assess and communicate in common terms to help each other effectively. This has led to numerous hoards being effectively eliminated and individuals getting the help they need from the community.

### **ALTERNATIVE**

15. As this Staff Report is being presented for information purposes only, no alternatives are being presented.

### **FINANCIAL**

16. There are no financial implications for the Corporation resulting from the proposed recommendation.