



BARRIE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: C. MAINPRIZE, FIRE CHIEF AND DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

NOTED: D. MCALPINE, GENERAL MANAGER OF COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES
M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: BARRIE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICE 2020/21 FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning the 2020/2021 firefighter recruitment.

Background

Barrie Fire and Emergency Service (BFES) has an approved complement of 144 firefighters assigned to the operations branch to maintain adequate on duty staffing levels. The recruitment and training of new firefighters occurs when our operations complement is reduced by 6 or more firefighters. The recruitment and training process for new firefighters prior to being assigned to active service is approximately 6 months.

Recruitment Update

On September 28, 2020 BFES opened our current firefighter recruitment. Candidates were eligible to submit their applications during a four-week time period that closed on October 26, 2020. The projected start date for the new 5th class firefighters is March 29, 2021. After completing an extensive 13-week training program our new firefighters would be assigned to active service on June 28, 2021.

Currently BFES has seven (7) firefighter vacancies, with one (1) additional mandatory (age 60) retirement occurring in March of 2021 for a total of eight (8) firefighter vacancies prior to the scheduled start date of the new recruits. Three (3) additional mandatory (age 60) retirements (September, October and December) occur throughout 2021.

BFES is proactively recruiting to replace all the current and upcoming vacancies in 2021 for a total of 11 new 5th class firefighters. This proactive recruitment strategy will temporarily exceed the BFES approved complement by three (3) 5th class firefighters for approximately an 8-month period. The costs associated with the temporary complement increase will be offset by reduced overtime during summer months when scheduled leave is at higher levels.

The recruitment and training of new staff is a significant undertaking for our Human Resources Department and BFES' Administration, and Training branches. This recruitment process will require the commitment of a combined total of over 1800 staff hours, and an additional \$40,000.00 in recruit program training expenses. Maximizing the number of participants in each recruitment and training program will provide the most efficient and cost-effective program possible. Proactively recruiting and training the additional three (3) 5th class firefighters is anticipated to eliminate the need to conduct another recruitment until 2023.



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Recruitment Initiatives

BFES is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects our community. Our recruitment team consulted with and engaged our Human Resources Department, Access Barrie and the City's Diversity and Inclusion Specialist to assist with marketing our recruitment. BFES proactively reached out to over 100 different organizations who represent a broader ethnocultural, and gender diverse applicant group than we traditionally see participate in our firefighter recruitments. Two separate webinars were held with over 200+ attendees to provide information about the City of Barrie, BFES and the recruitment opportunity.

BFES received over 1100 applications in our current recruitment process. This represents more than a 250% increase in the traditional number of applicants received in previous firefighter recruits, and a 500% increase in the number of candidates that appear to be female (solely on the basis of traditional female names). It also appears from name alone, that the pool may represent a broader ethnic cultural background than has been seen in the past. Our team has completed the application review stage of the process and the top ranked candidates, on the basis of skills, qualifications and experience, are being scheduled for the first round of interviews in early December.