

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**



George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 12, 2002

**SUBJECT:** Herring Cove Fire Department Review

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## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service requested the resignations of the Herring Cove Composite Fire Chief, the Deputy Fire Chief and a volunteer fire fighter. The decision and actions of the Fire Chief, HRF&ES was discussed at an In-Camera session of Council on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002. At the April 9<sup>th</sup> Halifax Regional Council meeting, a motion was passed that the CAO be directed to conduct an internal review with a report coming back to Council and the Community; and further, that the Terms of Reference come back to Council for consideration.

### **BACKGROUND**

As the Fire Chief, HRF&ES, reports to the CAO, Council directed that the CAO conduct an internal review of the situation surrounding the events of February 26, 2002. The need for an objective, constructive review is paramount given the significance of the events and the impact on the community. In light of the criminal investigation currently underway in the community, it is recognized that there may be limitations around the reporting of the events of February 26.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose to the review is to identify the key issues and to ensure that policies and processes are amended or established to better deal with similar circumstances, should they arise again. Specifically, the objectives of the review are:

1. To review and assess the process used or not used by Fire & Emergency Services culminating in the actions taken on February 26, 2002 which resulted in the removal of the Composite Fire Chief, Assistant Deputy Chief and a Volunteer Firefighter; and securing the facility.
2. To review and assess the affect(s) of securing the community facility on the Herring Cove community.
3. To make recommendations regarding processes and policies in the event of similar situations.

An independent consultant will undertake interviews with the key stakeholders to gather information and fact around the events of February 26. The consultant will identify key issues or concerns as a result of these interviews. The consultant will report to the CAO.

Business Systems and Controls unit , within Financial Services, is in the process of completing a financial review, and has been tasked with the analysis of processes and policies. Their work will be directed by the CAO. The Business Systems and Controls Unit is skilled in the areas of internal investigation.

The CAO has also instructed Fire & Emergency Services to work with the Herring Cove community to further develop/enhance the presence of a composite/volunteer service in Herring Cove.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Funding for this project is to be determined. Two sources being explored are the Chief Administrative Officer's budget or the Operations Stabilization Reserve.

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**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Terms of reference for the Herring Cove Fire Department Review.

**INFORMATION BLOCK**

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Betty MacDonald, Financial Services

April 12, 2002

## **Herring Cove Fire Department Review Terms of Reference**

### **Objectives:**

1. To review and assess the process used or not used by Fire & Emergency Services that culminated in the actions taken on February 26, 2002 which resulted in the removal of the Composite Fire Chief, Assistant Deputy Chief and a Volunteer Firefighter and securing the facility.
2. To review and assess the affect(s) of securing the community facility on the Herring Cove community.
3. To make recommendations regarding processes and policies in the event of similar situations.

### **Approach:**

The review will encompass the use of both an external consultant and internal HRM staff resources, reporting to the CAO.

### **External Consultant:**

2. Undertake independent interviews to gather information and facts from a variety of sources directly related to the events of February 26.
3. Report findings to the CAO, identifying key issues or concerns as a result of the interviews.  
Sources could/should include, but not be limited to:
  1. Composite Fire Chief Andy Sullivan, Deputy Fire Chief David Crowe, Assistant Deputy Chief Tom Cooper and Volunteer Firefighter Tony Boyd
  2. RCMP - Sgt Sean Smith - to obtain direction on issues relating to the criminal investigation.
  3. Groups that use the facility (e.g. COPS, Ladies Auxiliary, Recreation Centre).
  4. President/Chair Ratepayers Associations in Herring Cove and Ketch Harbour.
  5. Chief Mike Eddy, Deputy Chief Bill Mosher, District Chief Roy Hollett and Acting Safety Manger Wayne Chapdelaine, and Deputy Sandi Vidito
  6. Councillor Adams
  7. Human Resources professional for Fire and Emergency Services
  8. A composite Fire Chief from another district.
  9. Fire Marshall
  10. Other HRM Business Units that might have had or been affected by decision. IE Real Property Services (facility), Parks and Recreation (community involvement)
  11. Composite Fire Chiefs Committee

**Staff Resources:**

1. Staff from Business Systems and Control, Financial Services, would assess whether there are established processes to deal with similar situations and, if established, were they followed.
2. Drawing from the interview process and internal staff reviews, the CAO would identify areas where policies, procedures or guidelines need to be developed or changed.
3. Business Systems and Control will propose changes in policies or processes to address key areas of concern or issue. Staff may draw from a comparison of other composite model departments within HRM, and may examine policies in place in other jurisdictions.
4. Recommended changes in policies or processes will be discussed at the Fire Advisory Committee.
5. Prepare final report for CAO.

**Estimated Time Frame:**

one month

**Estimated Contract Costs**

\$ 20,000 maximum