

**Item No. 1**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**December 6, 2011**

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

Original Signed by



**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** 21 November 2011

**SUBJECT:** Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services  
Career Firefighter Recruitment

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### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Deputy Mayor Smith that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to return to Council in six (6) months to present the new recruitment process that is inclusive of the principles outlined in the In Camera presentation of March 8, 2011.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On March 8, 2011 Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services (HRFE) staff provided Halifax Regional Council with an Information Report on the 2007 Career Firefighter Recruitment process. The report outlined the background and rationale for the decision that HRFE Management took to expire the 2007 career firefighter candidate eligibility list as of December 31, 2011. As a result, staff were directed to return to Council to present a new recruitment process that is inclusive of the following principles:

- Fairness, Transparency, Equity & Respect
- 1997 Employment Equity Policy Followed
- Observations of NS Ombudsman Considered
- Community, Operational, Human & Financial Needs Reflected
- Interests of Current/New General Candidate & Volunteers Considered

## **DISCUSSION**

Following the presentation to Halifax Regional Council, HRFE staff scheduled information sessions for firefighter candidates who were on the current eligibility list (2007) to provide an update on the status of the eligibility list as well as an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the process.

As a result of additional information gathered over the past seven months and key stakeholder feedback, HRFE staff have reconsidered their decision to expire the 2007 Candidate Eligibility List on December 31, 2011 and will now retain the List until it has been exhausted. Job offers will be made in order of rank and category (general candidates and volunteer candidates). For example, if ten positions are to be filled, five positions will be filled by general candidates and five will be filled by volunteer candidates. Further screening will be conducted on candidates who are being considered for hire to ensure they continue to meet medical, physical fitness and security clearance standards. Fees associated with the additional testing administration will be covered by HRFE.

Based on forecasted staffing requirements and previous trends, staff estimate it could take approximately three to four years to exhaust this Eligibility List.

### **New Recruitment Process**

As Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services does not have an immediate need to recruit firefighters, HRFE staff with the support of Human Resources and a new Chief Director will conduct a thorough analysis of operational requirements, forecasted hiring needs and industry best practices to develop a comprehensive recruitment process. This process will occur over the next 12-18 months and will consider:

- Fairness and transparency of the process, requirements and standards against which candidates will be measured.
- An outreach strategy aimed at attracting candidates from the various communities within HRM, including the protected groups (Aboriginal Persons, Females, Racially Visible Persons, Persons with Disabilities).
- Developing an option to assess HRFE Volunteer candidates to recognize the training and experience acquired through time served as a volunteer firefighter.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

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

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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