Paramedic Services Committee Minutes

Date: Wednesday, June 19, 2019

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: County of Brant Council Chambers, 7 Broadway Street West, Paris

Present: County of Brant: Mayor Bailey, Councillors Laferriere and Peirce
City of Brantford: Mayor Davis, Councillors Martin and Sless

Staff: Bradley, Stevenson, King, Vanderpost and Boyd

Councillor Laferriere in the Chair.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by – Councillor Peirce
Seconded by – Mayor Davis

That the Paramedic Services Committee agenda for June 19, 2019 be approved, with an amendment to consider the recommendation reports first due to time constraints.

Carried

PS-19-03 – 2020 Paramedic Services Budget

Cindy Stevenson, General Manager of Community and Protective Services, provided an overview of the draft 2020 budget, representing a 0.9% increase to the municipally-funded share of the base budget. She noted that the budget is based on the following assumptions:

- That Provincial funding will continue on a 50/50 basis, as per previous years.
- That there will be no change to the service delivery model for 2020.

Ms. Stevenson noted that Provincial direction on the assumptions will not likely be provided until the Fall. One identified challenge with this budget is that based on 2019 call volumes, capacity per vehicle is projecting over 100% for 2019 and approximately 112% for 2020.

Discussion was held on the following:

- Mayor Davis reviewed the current and projected Ambulance Vehicle Reserves. Questions were raised regarding the funding source for these reserves and what level of reserve funding is appropriate given the uncertainty in Provincial direction. In response to a question, Heather Mifflin, Treasurer, reviewed that the reserves are municipally-funded and increase because they are based on equipment replacement costs. The Province calculates their contribution based on the amortization and depreciation of assets.
In response to a question, Ms. Stevenson reviewed that the WSIB funding model and premiums will be changing in 2020 and it is uncertain at this time what the premium or surcharge amounts may be. As such, no surcharge was included in the draft budget. Direction on this is expected this fall.

In response to a question, Russ King, Director of Paramedic Services, outlined that under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, paramedics who miss a meal period are entitled to compensation. With the increasing call volume and off-load delays, this happens more frequently.

Committee reviewed the three (3) Decision Package Options, being:
1) Add staff for a 24-hour additional ambulance;
2) Add staff for a 12-hour additional ambulance; or
3) Add staff for a 12-hour additional ambulance, starting July 1, 2020.

Mayor Davis suggested that a 12-hour additional ambulance, starting in July could be partially funded through a reduction in the transfer to vehicle reserves. In discussion, concern was raised that the service is expected to operate at above 100% capacity in 2019 and that this level of enhancement would be insufficient to address the increasing call volume. In response to questions, Mr. King reviewed how capacity figures are calculated, how this impacts response times and cross-border calls and protocols which dictate how long ambulances spend at each call.

Moved by – Mayor Davis
Seconded by – Councillor Sless

That the Paramedic Services Draft 2020 Base Budget be increased to add staff for 12-hour additional ambulance, starting July 1, 2020, at a cost of $278,250;

And that the base budget be decreased by a reduction in the Vehicle Transfer to Reserve Operational Budget from $280,000 to $80,000, to offset funding the increased level of service.

Carried

In response to a question regarding next steps, Ms. Stevenson noted that if the Committee does not come to an agreement on the proposed budget, the current budget would be forwarded to both Councils for their consideration.

In response to questions, Mr. King and Ms. Stevenson reviewed the proposed allocations for Software Support and Licenses, Administrative Overhead, Fuel, Oxygen, Salaries and Training.

Moved by – Mayor Davis
Seconded by – Mayor Bailey

Whereas at the April 16, 2019 Paramedic Services Committee meeting, Committee passed a motion that correspondence be forwarded to the City of Brantford requesting an extension to the budget submission deadline to grant the Paramedic Services Committee until July 1, 2019 to finalize a submission for the 2020 budget;

And Whereas the City of Brantford responded and agreed to the Committee’s request;

And Whereas the paramedic industry is in a period of volatility given recent announcements by the provincial government regarding funding changes and review of the service delivery model;

That the Paramedic Services Committee approve the 2020 base budget as recommended in
principle, including the amendments to add staff for 12-hour additional ambulance, starting July 1, 2020, at a cost of $278,250 and to reduce the Vehicle Transfer to Reserve Operational Budget from $280,000 to $80,000, to offset funding the increased level of service.

And that the Paramedic Services Committee reconvene at a later date to review the 2020 budget following further direction from the Province regarding the 2020 funding model or update to the service delivery model.

.Carried

PS-19-04 – Influenza Program

In response to a question, Mr. King noted that this program would be fully funded through the LHIN.

Moved by – Councillor Perce
Seconded by – Councillor Martin

That the County of Brant submit an Influenza Immunization Program application to the Ministry of Health to allow for consideration of initiating an immunization, assessment and education program in the Fall of 2019, in cooperation with the LHIN and Brant/Brantford Paramedic Services (Community Paramedicine Program).

.Carried

PS-19-05 – eNotification

Moved by – Councillor Martin
Seconded by – Councillor Sless

That the County of Brant enter into an eNotification Participation Agreement for the purpose of sharing patient health pathways and working towards a LHIN mandate of “work towards improving transitions for patients between different health sectors”, between Health Shared Services Ontario, Local Health Integration Network and the County of Brant (Brant/Brantford Paramedic Services);

And that a by-law authorizing the execution of this agreement be prepared for Council’s consideration.

.Carried

Minutes

Moved by – Councillor Martin
Seconded by – Mayor Bailey

That the Paramedic Services Committee minutes of April 16, 2019 be approved.

.Carried

Consent Items to be Received as Information

Paramedic Statistics
Discussion was held regarding Code 0 incidents, off-load delays and cross-border calls and how these impact the overall service and call volume capacity. In response to a question, Mr. King reviewed how individual services can establish their own deployment plans, limiting the circumstances under which they will respond to cross-border calls for service. Critical calls are
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not impacted by these deployment plans. It was suggested that further discussion be held regarding the cross-border billing models.

Discussion was held regarding the number of calls for service that are responded to where an ambulance wasn’t necessary. It was suggested that public education efforts be increased, noting that the scarcity of family physicians and transportation limitations contribute towards this.

Moved by – Councillor Peirce
Seconded by – Councillor Sless

That the following Consent Items be received as information:
3. PS-19-03 – Paramedic Services Budget to Actual at March 31, 2019.

.Carried

Director’s Update

Russ King, Director of Paramedic Services, updated Committee on the following:
- Discussions are being held by paramedic associations across the Province regarding potential changes in funding and/or governance models.
- The Provincial funding cap for Community Paramedicine programs was reviewed, noting that the Province is not accepting new applications to the program. Mr. King commented on a presentation made on the Services’ initiative and its impact on community health.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

Committee adjourned at 2:35 p.m. to meet again on Wednesday, July 17, 2019, 1:30 p.m. at the County of Brant Council Chambers.

Secretary