

November 14th, 2019

Mrs. Cheryl Robson
Chief Administrative Officer
Township of North Frontenac
6648 Road 506
Plevna ON, K0H 2M0

Re: Independent Study on Level of Fire Service in Ward 1, as compared to Wards 2 and 3.

Dear Mrs. Robson:

Please accept the following report on the comparison of the level of fire service in Ward 1 of the Townships of North Frontenac, as compared to Wards 2 and 3. The report has been developed based on the facts that have been provided to the Loomex Group.

I look forward to discussing the report with you, as well as presenting the findings to Council at a date of your choosing.

Yours truly,



Terry Gervais



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1. Executive Summary

Providing fire services for the residents of the Township of North Frontenac is a complex system within Ward 1 of the Municipality. In Wards 2 and 3, fire service is provided in a very traditional way. There is a fire department managed by a Fire Chief, overseen by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for day to day issues but makes recommendations to Council on financial and policy decisions for the department. Council takes those recommendations and make decisions for what is best for the Municipality.

In comparison, the fire service provided in Ward 1 has a Fire Chief, however, this Fire Chief is different than the Fire Chief in Wards 2 and 3. The Fire Chief in Ward 1 answers to a Joint Fire Committee who can endorse many of the recommendations set forth, however, the financial and policy recommendations must go to two different Councils for final decision and action. One of the challenges with this structure is that the majority of the North Frontenac Council seldom can ask questions or clarify recommendations of the Fire Chief from Ward 1 when making their decisions for their Municipality. This creates a strong disconnect between the Fire Chief making the recommendations and the Councilors having to make the decisions for what is best for their Wards and the remainder of the Municipality.

Additionally, this complex process in Ward 1 becomes time consuming and cumbersome for staff; many valuable hours by both Fire Chiefs are spent managing the two Fire Departments. For example, the Fire Chief in Ward 1 must manage several budgets and gain approval from the Joint Fire Committee and different Councils to proceed with many projects. This could be avoided if the department was managed using a more traditional model.

Another challenge with the current structure in providing fire service in North Frontenac and Addington Highlands, is that significant changes must work in Kaladar-Barrie (North Frontenac Ward 1 and Addington Highlands Ward 2), as well as in both North Frontenac and Addington Highlands other Fire Departments. A great deal of credit goes to Chief Korhonen and Chief Cuddy for working collaboratively to manage their respective fire services, with the challenges of having two different Councils and two varying community cultures.

1.1. Service Level Options

Below are the service level options that Council should consider for Ward 1 and for the entire Municipality. The Options are listed in ascending order from the least to the most effective way to ensure that the level of fire service is uniform among all the Wards. Each option brings unique challenges and different levels of support from Council.

1. Remain status quo
2. Ward 1 fire protection managed solely by North Frontenac

3. Purchase fire protection from Addington Highlands for Ward 1
4. Kaladar-Barrie fire department manages only emergency responses
5. Amalgamated fire department

1.2. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the current Joint Fire Committee model be reviewed, while considering either converting the Joint Fire Committee to a management-type board that can make decisions on behalf of their respective Councils, or, dissolve the Joint Fire Committee and have the applicable Fire Chief make recommendations directly to the Council(s) responsible for making the decisions for their residents.
2. It is recommended that a financial audit be completed to ensure that the current 50/50 cost sharing is correct, and, that in conjunction with both Municipalities financial staff, a review be completed to determine how to streamline the financial process for Ward 1.
3. It is recommended that the Ward 1 Fire Chief present the budget to North Frontenac and Addington Highlands, collectively, at a Joint Councils Meeting in order to allow the opportunity to create a direct two-way communications process.
4. It is recommended that administrative support be provided to assist the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief with his administrative duties, similarly to what is provided to the North Frontenac Fire Chief.
5. It is recommended that the North Frontenac Council review and consider the different Service Level Options, as outlined in Section 1.1.

1.3. Conclusion

The level of service that is being provided in Ward 1 as compared to Wards 2 and 3 is very similar in the way that they respond, the training standards that have been established, the challenges of recruitment and retention, the infrastructure and the daily operations of the department. There is difference, however, in how the departments and processes are being managed, as well as differences in public education, fire prevention and inspections.

Through a series of interviews, it became evident that there are many misperceptions from all stakeholders that set policy or provide life safety protection for Ward 1, and, by extension, Wards 2 and 3. Often, “**perception becomes reality**”; which is ultimately the fault of the process and systems that were put into place many years ago and the lack of opportunity for communications among all stakeholders.

Effective two-way communication can help solve most problems and would better assist in this case. While there are certainly issues that can and should be addressed, communications between North Frontenac's Council and the Fire Chief responsible for Ward 1, needs to improve. It is not reasonable, nor is it effective to have the Ward 1 Fire Chief go to the Joint Fire Committee, who cannot make the final decision in many instances, then expect the Joint Fire Committee to disseminate the information to their respective Councils. It is imperative that the North Frontenac Council hear from the Ward 1 Fire Chief face-to-face and for Council members to have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the Fire Chief. This change can improve the 'perception' as to how the service is being managed in Ward 1, in comparison to Wards 2 and 3.

The current system for providing fire protection in Ward 1 began in the 1990's with little to no change to the structure since then. While some changes have been made to some of the processes, the structure has remained unchanged, for the most part. Examining the entire structure for Ward 1, including the viability of the Joint Fire Committee is important. Additionally, it is important to review the entire structure of the Townships of Addington Highlands and North Frontenac fire departments. Reviewing the structure in its entirety can only be done with the support of both Councils; doing this will ensure that all Wards, including North Frontenac and Addington Highlands, have the same level of service. While this may not work in some Municipalities, the two Municipalities are already interconnected, allowing the opportunity to explore the viability of having one department providing service for the residents.

Due to the complexity of how the fire service is managed in Ward 1, and in fairness to both the Joint Fire Committee and Addington Highland Council, the Loomex Group recommends that this report be presented to them to allow the opportunity for any questions or concerns to be addressed and discussed directly with the Loomex Group team.

2. Acknowledgements

The key to the success in developing this document was with the support and input of the following groups and individuals:

- Mayor Ron Higgins
- Reeve Henry Hogg
- Joint Fire Committee Members:
 - Deputy Mayor Fred Perry
 - Councillor Wayne Good
 - Councillor Gerry Martin
 - Councillor David Miles
 - Councillor Kirby Thompson
- North Frontenac CAO Cheryl Robson
- Addington Highlands CAO/Clerk-Treasurer Christine Reed
- North Frontenac Fire Chief Eric Korhonen
- Addington-Highlands Fire Chief Casey Cuddy
- North Frontenac Treasurer Kelly Watkins
- Addington-Highlands Deputy Treasurer Natalie Tryon
- Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters
- Retired Fire Chief John Bolton

3. Terms of Reference

3.1. Council Resolutions

The Terms of Reference for the report was based on a series of North Frontenac Council and the Joint Fire Committee resolutions.

1. *North Frontenac Council Resolution 262-18 (Section 15 of the Fire Master Plan)*
Directing the CAO to initiate an independent Study in 2019 on Fire Services in Ward 1, 2 and 3.
2. *North Frontenac Council Resolution 15-19*
Directing the CAO to initiate an independent Study on the Fire Service in Wards 1, 2 and 3, and request permission from the Kaladar-Barrie Joint Fire Committee for the Consultant to interview the members of the Joint Fire Committee, the Fire Chief and Firefighters from Kaladar-Barrie.
3. *Kaladar-Barrie Joint Fire Committee Resolution 15-19*
The Joint Fire Committee approved the request for the Consultant to conduct the interviews.
4. *North Frontenac Council Resolution 53-19*
Council received the approved Resolution from the Joint Fire Committee to conduct the interviews.
5. *North Frontenac CAO Actioned the Resolution*
July 2019 – The Loomex Group was contracted to complete the Fire Service Review for Wards 1, 2 and 3.

4. History

To understand the current structure of providing fire protection in North Frontenac's Ward 1, it is imperative to understand the history as to how it was developed. One important thing to note is that all decisions made in the past were decisions best suited during that time and there were several factors for the decision makers to consider before they set the direction of providing fire protection for the residents.

Prior to the early 1970's, there was no fire protection provided in Ward 1, formally the Township of Barrie. Around 1972, the Township of Barrie began buying fire protection from the Land O' Lakes Fire Department, which operated out of a fire station in the village of Northbrook. The Land O' Lakes Fire Department was established by by-law on March 18th, 1970 which served the Townships of Kaladar, Anglesea and Effingham.

In 1990, the Office of the Fire Marshal conducted a Municipal Fire Protection Survey of the Townships of Kaladar, Anglesea and Effingham. Included in the survey was the Fire Protection Agreement for the Township of Barrie. Some of the recommendations in that report remain in effect today and influence how fire protection in Ward 1 is managed. These recommendations include:

1. The Township of Barrie establish a fire department
2. Both Townships pass a by-law to enter into an agreement for a jointly managed and operated fire department
3. To construct a 2-bay fire station in Cloyne
4. To purchase a 4-wheel drive, light attack vehicle, complete with a portable pump
5. To relocate one tanker to the Cloyne Station
6. Recruit enough Firefighters for the Cloyne Station

As a result of the report, the Townships worked over several years towards formalizing the recommendations and established a new fire department known as the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Department. The name was chosen to ease any conflicts with the new jointly managed department. The Chief of the department, John Bolton, and his officers began working on the remainder of the recommendations from the Fire Marshal's report as well as managing the newly formed joint department.

In 1994, a new mini pumper (see Figure 1) was bought by the Township of Barrie and placed into service. Because the Cloyne station was not built yet, the vehicle was housed at Smart's Marine until 1996 when the Cloyne station was completed. Once the station was completed, a tanker was also moved from the Northbrook station.

This newly formed jointly managed department worked well and provided the residents of the Townships with adequate fire protection. It wasn't until 1998 with the provincial government's restructuring of Municipalities, that the Townships of Barrie, Clarendon & Miller and Palmerston, North and South Canonto formed into the new Township of North Frontenac, which made the management of the department more complex.

Prior to the 1998 amalgamation in North Frontenac, there were three fire departments each managed by a Chief, and Barrie Township had a Chief for two Townships. After amalgamation, there were two fire departments for the Township of North Frontenac Ward 1, managed by two Municipalities. Due to the increasing complexity to the structure of fire protection over the years, many challenges and frustrations to both Councils and staff have evolved.



Figure 1. 1994 Mini Pumper bought by Township of Barrie.

5. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

The process for reviewing the level of fire protection for Ward 1 included a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT analysis was conducted with the Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters.

The definition of a SWOT analysis is as follows: a structured planning method that evaluates an organizations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which are defined as the following:

- Strengths: characteristics of the organization that give it an advantage over others
- Weaknesses: characteristics that place the organization at a disadvantage relative to others
- Opportunities: elements that the organization could exploit to its advantage
- Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the organization

This analysis was used to look at an organization as it pertains to the management and delivery of service to Ward 1.

5.1. Firefighter SWOT Analysis

During the 2018 North Frontenac Fire Department Fire Master Plan, a SWOT analysis was completed with Council and the Firefighters who provide protection to Wards 2 and 3. Due to the inability to conduct the SWOT analysis with the Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters at the time, a complete analysis could not be obtained for the entire Municipality. With the passing of North Frontenac's Resolution #15-19 and the Joint Fire Committee Resolution #15-19, it allowed this process to take place with the Firefighters who protect Ward 1. The questions and process used to conduct the analysis was the same that was used with the North Frontenac Firefighters.

The Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters were engaged in the following methods:

1. Group session with firefighters
2. One-on-one interview as requested
3. Questionnaire upon request

There was good participation from the Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters that included all ranks and years of service. The following are the general observations from the Kaladar-Barrie SWOT analysis and the North Frontenac Firefighters SWOT that was conducted in 2018 during the Fire Master Plan process. There are many observations between the two departments SWOT analysis that remain the same.

Table 1 - Firefighter SWOT Analysis Comparison

Kaladar-Barrie Firefighters	North Frontenac Firefighters
<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the firefighters are proud of what they do and to serve the residents. Overall the firefighters feel that they do a good job for the residents. The Kaladar-Barrie firefighters are a close group. The equipment is good and up to date. Good maintenance program. Good staffing for larger calls like structure fires. Good driver training program. Good Communications internally. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The firefighters feel they are doing a good job serving the community. The members work well together no matter what stations respond. Training is improving and they are happy with the opportunities they are given right now. General feeling, they are fairly compensated. Firefighters feel they have a good knowledge of the health and safety requirements.
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate staffing for small calls like medicals. Year-round training that is engaging and applicable. Knowledge of health and safety requirements and standards with firefighters. Overall communications externally, including residents. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Internal communications within the department. Water/Ice rescue needs to be more consistent.
<p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a more structured Public Education Program including Smoke/CO Alarm. 	<p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General feeling that more can be done to increase Public Educations Programs
<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Radio Communications for the fire ground. Compensation for firefighters. Better promotion of fire department at all levels including Council. 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Additional pressures that are being placed on the fire department and the firefighters by the community for increases to the level of service provided and by increasing legislative and liability requirements.

6. Joint Fire Committee Structure

Like the firefighter SWOT analysis, a similar process was conducted with the members of the Joint Fire Committee. A series of questions were developed that highlighted the workings of the Joint Fire Committee, the strengths and weaknesses of jointly managing a fire service and how the committee believed the department was being managed. Furthermore, each member was asked what they believed would assist in providing a more effective level of service to the residents of not only Ward 1, but the rest of both Municipalities. Individual interviews were requested with all members and alternates of the committee and the following interviews were conducted:

North Frontenac Members

Mayor Ron Higgins
Deputy Mayor Fred Perry
Councillor Wayne Good
Councillor Gerry Martin (Alternate)

Addington Highland Members

Reeve Henry Hogg
Councillor Kirby Thompson
Councillor David Miles

Note: Addington Highlands Councilor Helen Yanch (Alternate) was not interviewed at her request.

Table 2 illustrates some of the common observations that resulted from the interviews. The table is organized into categories that show both the different perspectives of the members of each of the Municipalities, as well as some of the common themes from both.

Table 2. Joint Fire Committee SWOT Analysis Comparison

North Frontenac Members Perspective	Addington Highlands Members Perspective	Committee Perspective
<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the Joint Fire Committee members work well together. Generally, there is the belief that the level of service is the same in all Wards of North Frontenac. Generally, the Chiefs work well together. Better having both Treasurers involved in the budget process. Chief Cuddy does not have the same pressure put on him as Chief Korhonen does, but there is a general feeling he is doing a good job. <p>Weakness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There was little or no knowledge as to how the current fire protection for Ward 1 was established. The budget and decision-making process is a challenge because of the multiple approval levels. Increasing service levels in Ward 1 affect Addington Highlands Wards. Either Council can turn down a recommendation from the Joint Fire Committee. <p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall there is a general feeling there should be one Fire Chief to manage the fire service. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the Joint Fire Committee members work well together. Generally, the Chiefs work well together and handle a lot of issues on their own. General feeling that Chief Cuddy is doing a good job and is an asset to the Fire Department. <p>Weakness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There was little or no knowledge as to how the current fire protection for Ward 1 was established. The budget and decision-making process is a challenge because of the multiple approvals Because of the process and multiple layers, it is slower to make any decisions. Risk of either Council turning down an approved recommendation from the Joint Fire Committee. <p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, belief that the level of service is better in Ward 1 as compared to Wards 2 and 3 in North Frontenac. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the Joint Fire Committee members work well together. Overall there is the belief that the Fire Chiefs are working well together. Generally Chief Cuddy is doing a good Job as Fire Chief. <p>Weakness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There was little or no knowledge as to how the current fire protection for Ward 1 was established. The budget and decision-making process is a challenge because of the multiple approvals. Risk of either Council turning down an approved recommendation from the Joint Fire Committee <p>Opportunity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General feeling that one department would simplify process and ensure there is one level of service provided to all

<p>2. Generally, there is a belief that there should either be one department for all Wards in North Frontenac or one department for both Municipalities.</p> <p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Different Council cultures sometimes are a challenge. 2. Unbalanced representation on the Joint Fire Committee compared to the respective Councils causes challenges. 3. Challenges from having two Councils, CAO's and Fire Chiefs setting level of services and making decision for Ward 1. 	<p>2. There is a feeling that one department would ensure all the services are the same</p> <p>Threat</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fire Protection could not be provided by just having one station. It is important that firefighters can respond to both stations. 2. There is a belief that the Kaladar-Barrie firefighters should be better compensated and be provide better benefits. 	<p>residents of both Municipalities.</p> <p>Threats</p> <p>There were no common threats between Addington Highlands and North Frontenac Committee members.</p>
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Overall, the Joint Fire Committee believes that the Committee is working well and that both Fire Chiefs are doing a good job and working well together. However, the general feeling of the Committee is that the current process for decision making is both cumbersome and slow. There is also a general feeling that either one department for North Frontenac or a newly formed department for both North Frontenac and Addington Highlands, could simplify the fire service and ensure that residents in both Municipalities are getting the same level of service.

7. Level of Service Comparison Between Wards

7.1. Core Services

While reviewing the 'Establishing and Regulating' by-law, as well as the 'Core Services,' it appeared that the by-laws were very similar. The only significant difference that was found between the two was "enhance public education program" for North Frontenac's Wards 2 & 3.

7.2. Response

A 3-year review and comparison on responses and average number of responders for the Kaladar-Barrie and North Frontenac Departments was completed. The statistics were obtained from the Standard Incident Reports that are filed with the office of the Ontario Fire Marshal & Emergency Management (OFMEM). The 2018 data is still being consolidated by the OFMEM and is subject to a slight variation.

Response times were not reviewed, as they are very dependent on several factors, including proper time stamping, good radio communications and the distance that each department must travel to the location of the emergency (time travel). In both department cases, travel time is occasionally long due to poor radio communications and the geography of the areas, including the road network, bush and cottage roads, as well as rivers or lakes. Therefore, it is not a reliable statistic to compare the two departments.

Table 3 demonstrates the total number of calls that both North Frontenac and Kaladar-Barrie responded to for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Table 3. Number of Responses Comparison for the Years 2016-2018

2016		
Kaladar-Barrie	Total Calls	165 Responses
	Mutual Aid	6 Responses
	Denbigh Assist	5 Responses
	North Frontenac Ward One	41 Responses
	Addington Highlands	113 Responses
North Frontenac	Total Calls	128 Responses
	Mutual Aid	2 Responses
2017		
Kaladar-Barrie	Total Calls	128 Responses
	Mutual Aid	4 Responses
	Denbigh Assist	9 Responses
	North Frontenac Ward One	38 Responses
	Addington Highlands	76 Responses
North Frontenac	Total Calls	114 Responses
	Mutual Aid	0 Responses
2018		
Kaladar-Barrie	Total Calls	144 Responses
	Mutual Aid	6 Responses
	Denbigh Assist	4 Responses
	North Frontenac Ward One	29 Responses
	Addington Highlands	105 Responses
North Frontenac	Total Calls	103 Responses
	Mutual Aid	2 Responses

The 3-year average shows that Kaladar-Barrie responds to approximately 145 calls a year, in comparison to North Frontenac's 115 calls per year average. These numbers reflect approximately 25% more calls per year in Kaladar-Barrie. Of the 145 calls for service per year that the Kaladar-Barrie department responds to, approximately 25% of the responses are to Ward 1.

Table 4 displays the average number of firefighters that responded to the calls from the sample responses. These sample call types were selected because they are a standard for comparing different stations or departments.

Table 4. Average Number of Responders Comparison

Kaladar-Barrie

Year	Medicals	MVC's	Single Family Dwelling Fires
2016	5	11	20
2017	6	10	16
2018	5	9	18

North Frontenac Fire Department

Year	Medicals	MVC's	Single Family Dwelling Fires
2016	5	8	15
2017	6	8	12
2018	6	7	16.5

Note. Due to lack of utilizing a Standard Records Management Program, there is the possibility of a slight variance in the statistics.

A review of the numbers demonstrates that both departments are responding to a similar number of these call types.

7.3. Training

While reviewing the training that is being completed in both departments, it was found that both departments have similar strengths and weaknesses. Both departments are attempting to use the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for training, however, both departments have the same challenges as many others across Ontario do in meeting the standards due to the time commitment that is now required under the new standards.

Table 5 displays the standards that each of the departments are striving to achieve at each level for the department. There are a few minor differences in department results, however, these discrepancies are not significant to the overall analysis of the results. The frequency, planning and delivery of the training program is also similar between the two departments.

Table 5. Standards for Training

	Ward 1	Wards 2 and 3
Recruit Firefighter	NFPA Firefighter Level 1 Certified	NFPA Firefighter Level 1 Fire and Life Safety Educator
Interior Firefighters	NFPA Firefighter Level II	NFPA Firefighter Level II
Officers	Fire Officer Level 1	Fire Officer Level 1
Instructor	Fire Instructor Level 1	Fire Instructor Level 1
Public Education	No standard set currently	Fire and Life Safety Educator
Fire Investigations	No standard set currently	No standard set currently
Inspections	3 rd Party Contract	Fire Inspector Level 2

7.4. Public Education

The public education program for Ward 1 is established under by-law #76-18. In this by-law, Fire Prevention and Education is defined under the ‘Core Services’ provided by the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Department. The following are the components of the program:

1. Shall include the distribution of fire and life safety information and public education programs in accordance with the FPPA and the Township’s Fire Prevention Policy.
2. A residential home fire safety and smoke and carbon monoxide alarm awareness programs shall be on-going.
3. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms for residential occupancies shall be provided to those in need.
4. Fire and life safety communications shall be distributed using media tools and other outlets as appropriate.
5. The Ontario Fire Service Standards, the NFPA 1031, the NFPA 1035 and other applicable NFPA codes and standards and the Township’s Fire Prevention Policy shall be used as a reference guide for fire prevention training and public education.

To meet the objectives, the Chief and firefighters attend municipal and community events to distribute public education material. Other programs, such as the ‘alarm for life’ program, is managed by the firefighters during down time. The firefighters will often pick an area and complete door to door inspections. In addition, the department aims to have each of the firefighters do a Smoke and CO alarm inspection within their neighborhood each year, consisting of 4 or 5 residents.

In Wards 2 and 3, the North Frontenac Fire Department follows the same “Core Services” for fire prevention as that being delivered in Ward 1, however, the program is further enhanced by by-law #05-17. This by-law establishes a more in-depth fire prevention program for the residents of Wards 2 and 3.

Additionally, the North Frontenac Fire Department has taken a pro-active approach that consists of having all firefighters receive the NFPA Fire and Life Safety 1 program. This approach enhances the public education program by having all members able to deliver public education messages either during events or while attending responses. This enhancement highlights a difference in the level of service that is being provided between Ward 1 and Wards 2 and 3.

7.5. Fire Inspection Programs

The fire inspection program is managed differently in Ward 1 and Wards 2 and 3. In Ward 1, the inspection program is done either by request or complaint, which meets the minimum standard for the Province of Ontario as set out in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. The inspection program is managed by a service level agreement with the Town of Greater Napanee.

For Wards 2 and 3, inspections are done by the Fire Chief who has completed the NFPA Fire Inspector Level II. The standard that is set forth for Wards 2 and 3 is a proactive approach, as indicated in by-law #05-17. This by-law sets clear standards on the frequency of the inspections based on the type of occupancy and risk, in addition to the request or complaint for an inspection.

The difference in how the inspection program is performed demonstrates a different level of service being received in Ward 1, as compared to Wards 2 and 3. While the program in Ward 1 is meeting the minimum standards after the switch of the fire service from the traditional priorities to Public Education, Code Enforcement and Response, Wards 2 and 3 are still receiving a higher level of service.

7.6. Fleet and Equipment

Generally, fleet and equipment are similar between all Wards based on the requirements of the types of responses. One method to enhance the level of service and conceivably find financial savings, is to look at the fleet from the perspective of both departments instead of separate departments.

8. Financial

A meeting was held with the Treasurer from North Frontenac as well as the CAO/Clerk/Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer from Addington Highlands to review how the finances are managed within Ward 1. The meeting resulted in valuable dialogue that helped to clarify some of the “perceptions” between the two Municipalities. It would be beneficial if the financial staff had regular meetings to review the joint budget.

Staff are doing a remarkable job managing the budgets, however, there are barriers that are created as a result of having two Municipalities managing one budget. Likely, there will remain questions and concerns from the Municipality who is not managing the budget completely; by no means is this a matter of mistrust, rather, it is the nature of the process and lack of communications when one Council cannot question the administrator of the budget, as in the case of the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief.

Furthermore, there is a difference in the timeline of budget approvals, as well as how the budgets are managed between the two Municipalities. Although strides have been made by the Joint Fire Committee to improve this process, there are still many challenges. Therefore, these differences create variances in the level of service offered between the three Wards.

9. Challenges of Providing Current Level of Service

While reviewing the operations in Ward 1, it was evident that one of the biggest challenges is how both the North Frontenac and Kaladar-Barrie Fire Departments are interwoven. As displayed in Figure 2, it is evident that many decisions and proposals put forth to Council or the Joint Fire Committee will affect the other departments given their overlapping structure. Many recommendations that are proposed to either the respective Councils or the Joint Fire Committee become stalled or turned down because of how it might affect the other departments. If either Chief wants to make changes to Ward 1, they must consider or “negotiate” the opposite Municipality through the Fire Chief, in order to accomplish what they are trying to propose. The Chiefs deserve a great deal of credit for working collaboratively and accomplishing all that they have, considering the challenges with the current structure.

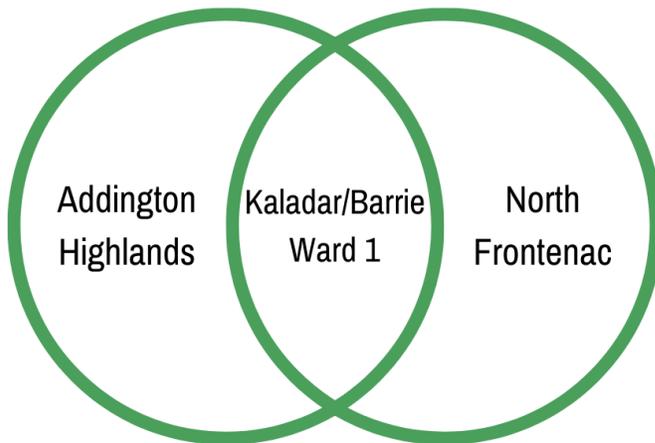


Figure 2. Interconnected fire department structure – A demonstration of how one decision may affect the other departments.

Figure 3 illustrates the different processes that the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief must complete to manage the various aspects of the department. While on the surface these processes might appear to be working without issues, the separate processes create many challenges. By extension, this increases the likelihood for errors, as well as creates the risk of offering different levels of services. The following are some of the issues with the current structure:

1. The separate processes are very time consuming for not only the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief, but also for the financial staff. The Fire Chief must keep separate spreadsheets or budgets to manage each of the different pathways. This has the potential for errors being made and creates a time management issue by not providing enough time for the Fire Chief to perform other more critical requirements of his job.

2. The current process does not allow the entire North Frontenac Council to ask questions or to receive complete information from the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief. The process of presenting to the Joint Fire Committee for financial and policy decisions, when they can only make recommendations to their respective Council, creates opportunity for misinterpretation. As a result, this creates more work for the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief if recommendations from the Joint Fire Committee are turned down by either Council.

In order to streamline this particular process, consideration should be given to either shifting the Joint Fire Committee into a management board that has the ability to make decisions without going back to their respective Councils, or, dissolving the Joint Fire Committee and having all financial and policy decisions that are required for Ward 1 be presented to the entire North Frontenac and Addington Highlands Councils, collectively at a Joint Councils Meeting, by the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief for discussion and approval.

3. The current process generates a fundamental difference of opinion when it comes to the employment of the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief. It is believed that the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief is a joint employee of both Addington Highlands for Ward 2, and North Frontenac for Ward 1 from the North Frontenac Council; however, it is the belief due to the current Joint Fire Committee, from the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief that he is the employee of the Joint Fire Committee.

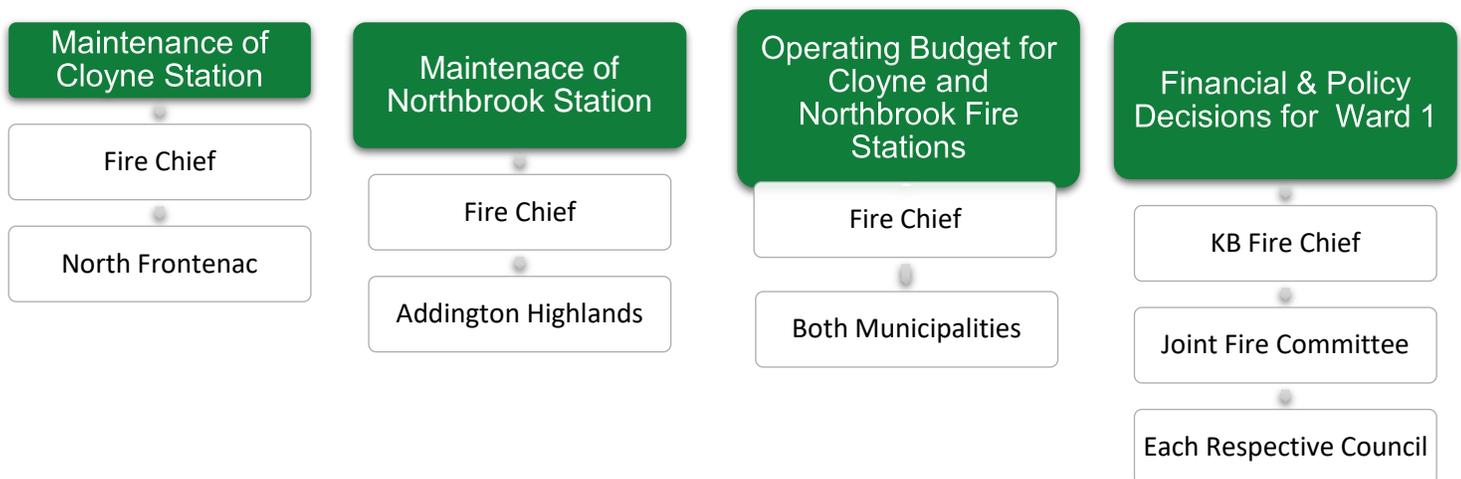


Figure 3. Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief Decision-Making Process

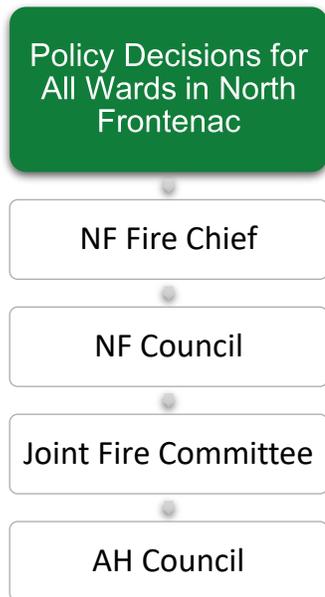


Figure 4. North Frontenac Chief Decision-Making Process

Figure 4 displays the North Frontenac Chief’s decision-making process. The current structure of the Joint Fire Committee also has some challenges for the North Frontenac Fire Chief when making recommendations for levels of service outside the scope of the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief for Ward 1. When presenting a recommendation for their Municipality, the North Frontenac Fire Chief presents to his own Council for discussion and adoption. If it is an item that must go to the Joint Fire Committee, it is then put on their agenda. However, it is not presented by the North Frontenac Fire Chief, but rather by the members of the Joint Fire Committee. From there it might have to go back to the Addington Highland Council for discussion and approval once again because of the integration of both departments. The same issues occur with the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief.

10. Recommendations

10.1. Joint Fire Committee

While the Joint Fire Committee has worked for many years, it is important to now review the effectiveness of the committee. Through the review and interviews, it is apparent that the current model and structure creates additional workload for staff, which takes them away from their other duties. In addition, the Joint Fire Committee model creates communication gaps between the Fire Chiefs who must make the recommendations and the Councils who must make the decisions.

It is recommended that the current Joint Fire Committee model be reviewed; in particular, to either convert the Joint Fire Committee to more of a management type board that can make decisions on behalf of their respective Councils, or, to dissolve the Joint Fire Committee and have the applicable Fire Chief make recommendations directly to the Council(s) who are responsible for making the decisions for their residents.

10.2. Financial Audit Review

Over time, the finances between the Municipalities of Addington Highlands and North Frontenac have been managed and developed based on day-to-day discussions or when questions or problems arise. Staff are doing a remarkable job managing the budgets, however, there are barriers that are created with having two Municipalities managing one budget. There will continually be questions and concerns raised by the Municipality who is not managing the budget completely. This by no means a matter of mistrust, rather, a result of the process and lack of communications when one Council cannot question the administrator of the budget, as in the case of the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief. In addition, there is a difference in how budgets are managed between the two Municipalities.

Furthermore, the method of how the costs are shared will always be in question if no cost analysis has been completed. While sharing costs 50/50 appears to be fair and is certainly easier for staff, the question must be raised “can this cost sharing be justified?”.

It is recommended that a financial audit be completed to ensure that the current 50/50 cost sharing is accurate, and, in conjunction with both Municipalities financial staff, a review be completed as to how to streamline the financial process for Ward 1 to be more effective.

It is recommended that the Ward 1 Fire Chief present the budget to North Frontenac and Addington Highlands Councils, collectively, at a Joint Councils Meeting, in order to allow the opportunity to create a direct two-way communications process.

10.3. Administrative Support

One of the different level of services that was identified during the review of North Frontenac's Ward 1 and Wards 2 and 3 was how the departments differ for administrative support. The Fire Chief in Ward 1 has a firefighter who assists with administrative support; however, this is a significant task, with most record keeping including payroll and budgets being done manually. The review has demonstrated that there were some issues in doing the record keeping, including issues with payroll not journaled to the right budgets. As in the case with other issues in Ward 1, this is not the fault of the firefighting staff, rather, it is the process that they are working with.

In contrast, in North Frontenac's Wards 2 and 3, most of the record keeping is performed by the various departments within the Municipality, to assist the Chief with his administrative duties.

It is recommended that administrative support be provided to assist the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief with his administrative duties and that the support is like what is provided to the North Frontenac Fire Chief.

10.4. Service Level Options

There are several options that can be looked at as a level of service model to ensure that Ward 1 residents are receiving the same level of service as the residents in Wards 2 and 3. Each of the options below comprise their own unique challenges for both Councils and Staff, however, the same level of service model has remained in place for over twenty years and it is important to examine whether the model has grown with the expectations of both the residents and Council. The following are the options for Councils considerations:

10.4.1. Remain Status Quo

While remaining status quo would be considered the 'easiest' route, it will not solve the continual question as to whether the residents of Ward 1 are getting the same level of service as in Wards 2 and 3. Additionally, there will continue to be the "perception" that North Frontenac may not be paying the appropriate share of the finances for the operation of the fire department that protects Ward 1. One significant negative aspect with remaining status quo is the lack of communications for the entire North Frontenac Council with the Fire Chief and staff managing Ward 1.

10.4.2. Ward One Fire Protection Managed Solely by North Frontenac

Initially, this would appear to be a quick and easy option to ensure that all North Frontenac residents are provided the same level of service. There is a Fire Station already in Ward 1, and with negotiations, there could be fire trucks for the station as they are cost shared.

The North Frontenac Fire Chief could manage the area for response, public education and inspections. While this appears to be a quick solution, a major shortcoming is the lack of firefighters.

While some of the Kaladar-Barrie firefighters reside in the Municipality of North Frontenac but they are not solely assigned to the Cloyne station. In fact, the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Department is one department responding out of two stations. When there is a call for an emergency response, the firefighters can respond to either station based on their location or what equipment is required.

This option could be feasible; however, it would take time and a carefully thought out strategic plan to recruit and train enough firefighters to ensure there was no reduction in the level of service for the residents in Ward 1.

10.4.3. Purchase Fire Protection from Addington Highlands for Ward 1

This option does work in many areas of the Province of Ontario. The Fire Protection and Prevention Act allows for Automatic Aid agreements to be established between two Municipalities, which enables one fire department to service an area of a Municipality that has no way to provide an adequate level of service to the residents in that area.

This approach makes it easier for budget purposes by setting a 'fee for service,' either by number of calls or an annual fee. In this model, the department providing the service would be responsible for the management of costs associated with providing the service such as the personnel, equipment and fire trucks.

Due to the current cost sharing of the buildings, equipment and fire trucks, the two Municipalities would have to negotiate as to how to divide the assets. Additionally, there would be a considerable amount of work on all the stakeholders' parts to ensure the level of service is the same as the rest of the Municipality.

Another issue to consider with this model is the Cloyne Fire Station. If all services are being provided by Addington Highlands, then it would be up to Addington Highlands to decide if they wanted to use the building or not to provide fire protection to Ward 1. Several scenarios could be looked at, including renting the facility to Addington Highlands to house equipment and vehicles.

10.4.4. Kaladar-Barrie Fire Department Manages Only Emergency Responses.

This option would be closest to ensuring the same level of service is provided to all the Wards in North Frontenac without amalgamating the two departments. In this option, the North Frontenac Fire Chief would take over sole management and finances for Ward 1, including the Cloyne Station, providing public education, fire inspections, by-laws and dry hydrant programs. The Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief would continue to manage the firefighters, the vehicles and the emergency responses.

The review has shown that for the most part, emergency response is similar in all Wards, so having Kaladar-Barrie Fire Department continue to remain managing the responses is not an issue.

If this option was chosen by Council, a review and re-alignment of budgets would have to take place in order to ensure the funding model is correct and fair for both Municipalities.

Additionally, with this model, the Joint Fire Committee could be dissolved, and direct communications could take place between the Kaladar-Barrie Fire Chief and North Frontenac Council.

10.4.5. Amalgamated Fire Department

If Council believes in providing the best possible service to the residents and wants to make sure that all Wards in North Frontenac receive the same level of service in regards to the fire service, then the only approach that guarantees this service is to amalgamate the North Frontenac, Kaladar-Barrie and Denbigh fire departments into one department.

This option does come with its own set of challenges. First, both the North Frontenac and Addington Highlands Councils must agree to look at this option and move it forward. History has shown with previous amalgamations that this is sometimes not popular with the people who is affected the most, and that is the firefighters. Notwithstanding this, history has also shown that amalgamating fire departments has truly provided a better level of service for the residents.

In addition to the human issues there is the financial issues that go with any amalgamation. How will the budgets be managed? Who will manage the department? Who will the management team answer to? These are a small sample of the questions that will be answered. As previously stated, many fire department amalgamations have taken place with success and there is an opportunity to learn for their success stories.

If Council considers this option, Council must understand that this will not be accomplished in the short-term. This option will take years, perhaps generations to see a cohesive department working together as one.

It is recommended that the North Frontenac Council review and consider the different service level options, as outlined in this report.