



May 6, 2013

Statement from Thomas Webster, CAO

- I want to take this opportunity to provide you some further updates on our Emergency Services.
- Last Tuesday the Fire Chief, Deputy, and myself met with over 60 of our fire fighters, over two sessions. The purpose of the meetings was to have an open discussion on the Town's Emergency Services.
- We received a lot of good feedback from the fire fighters and in turn provided them with some context on where we are potentially going with Emergency Services.
- We began the meeting by reconfirming what the CAO, the Chief, and the Deputy, along with the Mayor and Council are 100% committed to ensuring that we continue to have a strong Emergency Service in East Gwillimbury and that to a person, they are an extremely valued and critical component of this.
- We then had a discussion related to the review of potential automatic aid arrangements with other Area Municipalities to potentially augment our existing emergency services.
- We had a very good discussion on this, and the Chief, Deputy and myself left the meeting feeling that we needed to communicate with Council about what we heard and what we can do to ensure that these discussions are the most productive for the Town and for our Emergency Services department.
- In terms of potential automatic aid discussion with neighboring municipalities, we believe that we also need to further investigate and review options regarding provision of emergency services.
- The review should include considering geographic areas, response type criteria, time of day response, resource location, use of current resources, and importantly, costs.
- Town of East Gwillimbury staff will also review other options to augment existing Town emergency services, including: a substation model housing vehicles/equipment, stand-by model to ensure adequate personnel resources, and the consideration of advancing full-time fire fighter hiring.



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- A number of these options have been and will be considered not only as part of the discussion of the Emergency Services but in preparing the draft of the Master Fire Plan that will be brought to Council for discussion and consideration.
- The most difficult discussions at the meetings came around the issue of communications. Our fire fighters say they feel like they didn't get a fair shake in some of the media. They didn't.
- Unfortunately there are few factors, including what makes news and how it is reported, which we cannot do anything about.
- The other issue that has limited our communications is that we have respected the investigation by the Office of the Fire Marshal. We will continue to do this until the Fire Marshal provides his report in the next couple of months.
- We are also committed to work with and communicate with our fire fighters
- In the meantime, I believe it is critical that all of us continue to reinforce the important work that our fire fighter and Emergency Services do every day providing education, prevention and suppression services to all of our residents.