

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAR FALLS

MINUTES of the Special Meeting of Ear Falls Council
Ear Falls Municipal Council Chambers
June 19, 2024 @ 1:30 p.m.

1 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kevin Kahoot called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2 ROLL CALL

Mayor Kevin Kahoot, Councillor Brad Mountain, Councillor Daniel Sutton, Councillor Kim Thain, Councillor Doug Woolsey, Clerk Treasurer Administrator Kimberly Ballance, Deputy Clerk Intern Shawna Weston, Fire Chief Darryl Desjardins, David Elloway and Shawn Armstrong from Centred Performance (electronically)

3 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

None Declared.

4 MATTERS FOR WHICH SPECIAL MEETING WAS CALLED

4.1 Ear Falls Community Risk Assessment 2024

Mayor Kahoot welcomed the presenters from Centred Performance, David Elloway and Shawn Armstrong who will be presenting the Ear Falls Community Risk Assessment (CRA) to Council.

David introduced himself and Shawn, and their involvement in the development of the CRA for Ear Falls. The development of the CRA is mandatory under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, O. Reg 378/18 and must be completed by July 1, 2024.

There are nine profiles that had to be reviewed as required by the Regulation, and there are four treatment options to address the risks that are identified.

- Avoid the Risk
- Mitigate the Risk
- Accept the Risk
- Transfer the Risk

The Risk Assessment Matrix is a combination of probability and consequence and is used to identify risk levels for the community. This Matrix is being used throughout Ontario to classify risks.

The outcomes of the CRA which are the responsibility of Council to advance through various means were reviewed. An example was the potential need to review and update the Fire Department Enactment By-Law.

Data sources for the development of the CRA included demographics, geography, economic drivers, critical infrastructure, forest information, climate change, education programs and Provincial Regulations.

Ear Falls statistics for Fire Department calls were reviewed over the past three years, including both the volume of calls and location of incidents. These have been graphed visually for Council for ease of understanding.

The current community fire and life safety profile risk summary were reviewed individually and in combination. Ear Falls profiles risks were predominantly in the moderate risk level.

- High – 18.5%
- Moderate – 50.6 %
- Low – 30.9%

This information should help Council to determine which areas to tackle in order to best improve and manage the community's risks.

There are several recommendations that have been provided Council as a means to inform future direction for the community. The top eight are:

1. Collaborate in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) and Ontario Parks to reinforce fire-safe behaviours, thereby mitigating the risk of accidental ignition in wildland areas.
2. Develop the appropriate incremental operational and capital budget plan to maintain minimum annual training and certification requirements.
3. Amend the Township of Ear Falls By-law #1982-15 to increase Firefighter staffing.
4. Acquire a fire department electronic records management system.
5. Conduct an annual review of the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and conduct a new CRA in 2029 to address any changes in the identified risks and recommendations.
6. Conduct an annual review of all fire service partnership agreements and contracts.
7. Complete all profile risk treatment options as presented in short- medium- and long-term planning horizons.
8. Conduct a Fire Master Plan to provide a mid-long-range plan for the EFFF for the future to ensure continued alignment of risks and capabilities and the resources required to maintain services.

Council discussed the level of administration of Fire Departments that is increasing which has a significant impact on the operational aspects of fire services in the community. This increase of administrative work will have an impact on small communities with limited budgets.

David and Shawn recommended that Council focus on incrementally

making changes to improve its risk management efforts across the board. This incremental improvement plan is easier to tackle than trying to move by leaps and bounds.

Council requested clarification on the electronic records management system. David and Shawn discussed the availability of training, reporting and equipment records being a concern when only paper copies are available. Simple systems may work for a small department, but there may be other areas of the municipality that would also benefit from an electronic records management system so it could be part of a bigger project for the municipality.

Council requested clarification on the potential shift to full-time fire fighters as opposed to volunteers and whether there is any funding that will be provided for the increased needs within the fire services. David and Shawn advised that the level of service is set by Council so the provision of those services needs to be able to be met within local financial means. If Council determines that a full-time fire service was needed, it would be its responsibility to fund it. The certification requirements are a challenge across the board, not just for volunteer departments.

Council thanked Centred Performance for their work on the Ear Falls Community Risk Assessment.

David and Shawn left the meeting at this point.

Council asked Fire Chief Darryl Desjardins to provide his comments on the development of the CRA and his thoughts on moving forward to improve community safety. He voiced concerns about the ability for the fire department to attain the certification standards by July 1, 2026. Council discussed the potential reduction in service levels closer to that date if certification standards are not met, and the needs for regional training opportunities to facilitate certification.

Council discussed whether there is an opportunity for partnership with the Kenora District Services Board to bridge the gaps in paramedic and fire department operations.

RESOLUTION NO. 096

Moved by Kim Thain. Seconded by Doug Woolsey.

RESOLVED THAT Council adopts the Ear Falls Community Risk Assessment, dated June 19, 2024.

Carried.

5 ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION NO. 097

Minutes – Special Meeting of Council

June 19, 2024

Page 4

Moved by Brad Mountain. Seconded by Doug Woolsey.

RESOLVED THAT this Special Meeting of Council adjourn at the hour of 2:46 p.m.

Carried.

Mayor

Clerk