

The Township of The Archipelago

Information Report to Council

Report No.: 2024-11

Date: November 21, 2024

Originator: Maryann Martin, Clerk

Subject: Options for Potential Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Response for North Archipelago

BACKGROUND

In February 2023, Council tasked staff with investigating options for fire suppression and emergency response for the North Archipelago. Below is a timeline summarizing the key updates that have been provided since then.

➤ **December 2023:**

Staff have been in discussions with our OFM Fire Protection Officer and are currently awaiting responses to our inquiries. Plans are also being made to hold an exploratory meeting with local Fire Chiefs.

➤ **February 2024:**

The OFM Fire Protection Advisor confirmed that a municipality can establish a fire protection agreement with a First Nations community. However, the certification requirements for First Nations firefighters do not apply, as they are governed federally. They recommended the Township determine the certification and training levels of the department providing the service and seek legal advice on the matter.

Additionally, staff met with area Fire Chiefs who expressed a willingness to consider an agreement to provide land-based fire suppression services for North Archipelago.

➤ **August 2024**

Staff reported that local municipal fire departments currently lack the capacity to assist.

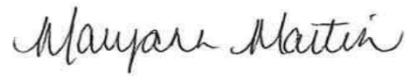
Council then directed staff to further explore the possibility of Shawanaga First Nation providing fire suppression services. Since then, discussions have continued with Shawanaga First Nation staff.

CONCLUSION

Recently, our solicitor provided legal advice, indicating that while the *Municipal Act* and the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* allow municipalities to receive services from other municipalities, it does not extend this provision to First Nations. After a thorough review, it appears that the Township is not permitted under current legislation to receive fire services from a First Nation.

Please note, that with Liam Thompson now hired as our new Coordinator of Protective Services, all fire-related responsibilities within the Township will be transferred to this new position from the Clerk's office.

Respectfully Submitted,



Maryann Martin,
Municipal Clerk

I concur with this report,



Shauna Lehtimaki,
Director of Legislative and
Information Services



John B. Fior
Chief Administrative Officer