



CITY OF HAMILTON
COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Hamilton Fire Department

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 18, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Host Community Authorization and Delegation of Authority (CES14035) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Carla McCracken 905-546-2424 Ext. 5787 Gina Cliffe 905-546-2424 Ext. 6038
SUBMITTED BY:	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the City of Hamilton be a host community to residents of Ontario who have been evacuated from their homes as a result of emergency situations, including but not limited to forest fires and floods; and,
- (b) That the General Manager of Community and Emergency Services be authorized and directed to execute one or more agreements with the appropriate government bodies seeking host community services in the event of an emergency, with content acceptable to the Emergency Management Program Committee and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Emergencies of varying scale and consequence occur in Ontario on an annual basis. Some of these emergencies threaten the life and safety of citizens to the extent that they must be evacuated from their homes and sometimes even their community to ensure their well-being. The City of Hamilton has been called upon in the past to assist in such events to act as a host community; however, there is no formal authorization from Council for staff to do so. Furthermore, without an agreement outlining cost recovery and services to be provided, the City would be in a vulnerable position financially and in terms of liability. In the event the City agreed to host evacuees, an agreement would need to be executed to reduce this vulnerability. The most expedient manner to execute such an agreement would be through a delegation of authority from Council.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications of being authorized to act as a host community. In the event a government body requested the City of Hamilton to act as a host community, the executed agreement(s) would identify that any and all direct and indirect costs of the City in providing services, support and assistance are to be paid in full by the City, but reimbursed by that government body.

Staffing: Upon commitment to host for another community's citizens, City of Hamilton staff from various departments including the City Manager's Office, Community and Emergency Services, Public Health, Public Works, and Corporate Services may be required to support the planning and operation of being a host community.

Legal: An agreement will need to be executed by the City and the government body requesting services, setting out the services the City is willing and able to provide and the reimbursement of expenses. The City's obligation to provide assistance should be limited to facilities and other resources which are available at the time evacuation is required. As well, the City should have the right to withdraw its assistance, where, for example, the City requires devotion of its services to its own municipal emergency.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On an annual basis, through the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre, Ontario communities including the City of Hamilton are requested to act as host communities for evacuated northern First Nations due to floods and forest fires.

In 2011, City staff began planning to receive and host 240 Stage 1 evacuees from North Caribou First Nation at the provincially-owned and operated Bell Cairn Correctional Training Facility located at 467 Beach Blvd in Hamilton. These Stage 1 evacuees included children, elderly and individuals with chronic medical conditions. As a result of changing conditions, the evacuees never arrived in Hamilton and the City stood down its planning and response efforts after three days. Costs associated with this response included staff time, overtime, mileage, parking, security, and meals. These costs totalled \$16,826 for the Community & Emergency Services Department, Public Health Department, and Good Shepherd. Although costs were incurred for the set-up and preparation to receive evacuees, no costs were reimbursed through the federal Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, or the provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services as there was no funding program for municipal reimbursement where costs were incurred but evacuees never arrived. The Ministry of Health set up a cost reimbursement program for extraordinary costs associated with the 2011 forest fire evacuations to which Public Health claimed \$2,155 and was reimbursed \$2,139.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications associated with Report CES14035.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Legal Services Division provided advice and guidance on the legal/liability implications of hosting and delegation of authority for entering into agreements.

The Emergency Management Program Committee was consulted and provided direction to write this report and seek delegated authority for entering into a host community agreement. This committee consists of:

- Mayor
- City Manager
- General Manager, Community & Emergency Services
- General Manager, Corporate Services
- General Manager, Public Works
- General Manager, Planning & Economic Development
- Medical Officer of Health
- Chief of Police
- Fire Chief
- Paramedic Chief
- Executive Director, Human Resources
- Manager Corporate Communications
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator(s)

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

Within Ontario, emergencies arise periodically where citizens must be evacuated from their homes in order to ensure their health and safety. In most instances, the ability to evacuate citizens to a safe area and provide emergency social services (food, shelter, clothing, personal services, registration and inquiry) exists within the municipality itself; however, in some cases it may be more feasible to move citizens to another municipality due to proximity or, in extraordinary occurrences, evacuate an entire community to another.

The evacuation of several northern Ontario First Nations communities occurs annually as a result of flooding during the spring and forest fires in the summer. Many municipalities including Kapuskasing, Timmins, Sudbury, and Thunder Bay have repeatedly hosted evacuees from these communities.

In addition to potentially hosting First Nations, there may be emergencies that arise and impact other municipalities where citizens must be evacuated to other communities for their protection. Ontario has witnessed numerous emergencies in recent years such as floods, forest fires, tornadoes, ice storms, wind storms, fires, and transportation accidents, and it is conceivable that a municipality-to-municipality evacuation may be required in the future.

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In such instances, the ability to quickly and effectively execute an agreement that allows the City of Hamilton to assist, while ensuring it is protected legally and financially, is critical. The intent is that the agreement would ensure the City is reimbursed for any pre-planning activities in preparation to host evacuees, even in situations where evacuees never arrive.. It allows for immediate planning and response activities to begin in order to be able to offer the services that may be required while acting as a host community. Such services may include, but are not limited to shelter, registration and inquiry, sanitation, security, health care needs, meals, clothing and laundry, transportation, family reunification, personal care, recreational activities, language translation services, and cultural needs. Locations suitable for hosting evacuees within Hamilton include hotels, dormitories, recreation centres, and provincially and federally-owned facilities.

With formal authorization to act as a host community and delegated authority to enter into an agreement, the City would be in a position to execute agreements with:

- the federal government in regards to evacuated First Nations communities
- the province in regards to evacuated First Nations communities
- the province under a provincially declared emergency to host other municipalities (non-First Nations)
- another municipality to host their citizens (non-First Nations).

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.

Strategic Objective

- 3.1 Engage in a range of inter-governmental relations (IGR) work that will advance partnerships and projects that benefit the City of Hamilton.
- 3.2 Build organizational capacity to ensure the City has a skilled workforce that is capable and enabled to deliver its business objectives.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None