



**Subject: Automatic Aid Agreement between Port Colborne and Wainfleet**

**To: Council**

**From: Community Safety & Enforcement Department**

Report Number: 2021-286

Meeting Date: November 22, 2021

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### **Recommendation:**

That Community Safety & Enforcement report 2021-286 be received;

That the Fire Chief be directed to enter into a two-year Automatic Aid Agreement with the Township of Wainfleet to provide and receive services as laid out in this report;

That the Fire Chief be directed to bring forward a report to Council after the term of the agreement has passed with recommendations on ending, extending, or making permanent a similar agreement; and

That a By-law to enter into an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Township of Wainfleet be brought forward.

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### **Purpose:**

The Fire Chiefs of Wainfleet and Port Colborne are discussing operational ways to provide superior protection to the residents of their municipalities while remaining fiscally responsible. An Automatic Aid Agreement has been identified as a means in which both municipalities could improve fire protection services in each municipality. The Automatic Aid Agreement would be designed to provide and/or receive assistance from the closest available resource, irrespective of municipal boundaries, on a day-to-day basis.

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### **Background:**

**Port Colborne**

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services protects against loss of life, property, and the environment from the effects of fire, illness, accidents, and all other hazards. Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services service area is a mix of urban and rural land with a total area of approximately 122 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 18,306. The lakeside community does see a significant influx of transient residents and visitors during the summer months in rental cottages and campgrounds, including Sherkston Shores Beach Resort and Campground which hosts 3,200 trailer sites.

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is comprised of 15 full-time staff and approximately 36 volunteer fire fighters operating from one strategically located fire station. All staff, including volunteers are certified under the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to Fire Fighter II and Hazardous Materials Operations.

The department operates out of one fire hall located at 3 Killaly Street West. Apparatus operated by the department include two engines, one heavy rescue, one ladder truck, and one 3,000-gallon pumper/tanker. Engine No. 1 is staffed around the clock with full-time staff and complemented by volunteers for motor vehicle collisions, alarm systems, technical rescue, and structure fires.

As with any department that utilizes the volunteer system, Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has been struggling to attract volunteers over the past several years. To maintain the current operating system, staff believe this is an opportune time for a trial of an Automatic Aid Agreement with a neighbouring municipality's department to bolster the Department's ability to respond.

## **Wainfleet**

Wainfleet Fire & Emergency Services protects against loss of life, property, and the environment from the effects of fire, illness, accidents, and all other hazards. Wainfleet Fire & Emergency Services service area is a mix of rural hamlets and agricultural lands with a total area of approximately 218 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of about 6,400. Similar to Port Colborne, the lakeside community does see a significant influx of transient residents and visitors during the summer months.

Wainfleet Fire & Emergency Services is comprised of two full-time administrative staff and approximately 50 volunteer fire fighters operating out of 4 facilities. All staff, including volunteers are certified under the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to Fire Fighter II and Hazardous Materials Operations. Apparatus operated by the Department includes four engines, one light rescue, two mobile water supply apparatus (tankers), one utility terrain vehicle and one rapid response vehicle (Car 2).

Both municipalities are part of the "Region of Niagara Mutual Aid Plan 2019-2023". The plan helps co-ordinate efforts to minimize loss of human life, property, and damage to the environment through efficient utilization of fire department resources. If an incident is overwhelming the resources of a department, additional resources are available upon

request. Automatic Aid Agreements are simply one step higher; additional resources are dispatched without the Department in need requesting it.

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## **Discussion:**

The obvious advantage of implementing an Automatic Aid Agreement is the person experiencing the emergency receives assistance from the closest available provider by supplying seamless service through the elimination of artificial service boundaries. Each municipality has areas of concern identified in their respective risk assessments. The following proposal would add capacity and improved service for both municipalities.

Wainfleet Fire & Emergency Services will agree to automatically respond to Port Colborne:

1. On a confirmed structure fire, an Engine staffed with at least four fire fighters will automatically be dispatched to respond to Port Colborne. Port Colborne's command staff will direct the Wainfleet Engine to either respond to the fire hall in Port Colborne for standby or, proceed to the fire incident for manpower.
2. Any confirmed structure fire in the rural area of Port Colborne, a tanker will also respond for water supply.

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services will agree to automatically respond to Wainfleet:

1. On a confirmed structure fire or motor vehicle collision, Engine No. 1 staff will automatically be dispatched and respond for initial fire attack along with Rescue No. 1 and Tanker No. 1 to the area laid out in Appendix A.  
  
Once Wainfleet apparatus and staff are on location and Wainfleet command confirm Port Colborne resources are no longer required, Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services will be released as deemed appropriate.
2. On a confirmed structure fire, Tanker No. 1 will automatically be dispatched for water supply to the area laid out in Appendix B.
3. Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services will be dispatched to all 911 calls to 20101 and 20102 Barrick Road (expediting response time).

Both fire departments have completed call data analysis for the subject areas. Both Departments estimate a service exchange of 7 to 10 calls a year would fall under this Automatic Aid Agreement.

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**Financial Implications:**

There are no financial implications.

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**Strategic Plan Alignment:**

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Service and Simplicity - Quality and Innovative Delivery of Customer Services
- Value: Financial Management to Achieve Financial Sustainability
- People: Supporting and Investing in Human Capital

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**Conclusion:**

It is recommended by both Fire Chiefs that their respective municipalities sign a two-year trial Automatic Aid Agreement. No exchange of funds for service rendered would happen under the trial. Upon completion of the trial, data will once again be analyzed, and an update of operational efficiencies delivered to both municipal Chief Administrative Officers. Within that report will be the recommendation to end the trial, extend the trial, or sign a permanent agreement.

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**Appendices:**

- a. Area Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services will respond with Engine No. 1, Rescue No. 1 and Tanker No. 1.
- b. Area Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services will respond with Tanker No. 1

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Lawson  
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**Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.