



Emergency Services

Departmental Overview

In 2022 Essex-Windsor EMS (EWEMS) adapted to ongoing changes and pivoted to address numerous challenges. With the pandemic continuing to consume the department's attention, various opportunities and challenges surfaced that required EWEMS to identify new ways to serve the County of Essex, City of Windsor and Township of Pelee. The 2023 Budget incorporates this modified service delivery model.

The same services are delivered; however, the 2023 Budget separates the presentation of different programs to improve the understanding of the service and their associated funding sources. These programs are:

- Essex-Windsor EMS
- Community Paramedicine, Long-Term Care
- Emergency Management

Service Delivery Promise

Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services (EWEMS) is responsible for the provision of land ambulance services for the County of Essex, City of Windsor and Township of Pelee. EWEMS is committed to providing the highest quality Emergency Medical Services in a manner that is accessible, accountable, responsive, seamless and integrated.

In 2022, it is projected that Essex-Windsor EMS will have responded to approximately 59,500 clients requiring medical services, interventions, treatment, transport or assistance.

In 2021 the Vulnerable Patient Navigator (VPN), an arm of our Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program, was called upon for numerous tasks involving the most vulnerable in the community. As a result, the Province recognized the versatility, the mobility and nimbleness of community paramedics and is providing 100% funding, over a four (4) year term for the Community Paramedicine, Long-Term Care Program (CPLTC). The MIH program experienced growth in 2021, continued in 2022 with MHART and with the addition of CPLTC, a true Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) model was formed and is achieving great results.

EWEMS also oversees the services of Emergency Management, Preparedness and Coordination. Emergency Planning and Preparedness is responsible for ensuring that the County of Essex has plans in place and is prepared for situations that are likely to have impact on the County, or to any of the individual local and neighbouring municipalities. Emergency Planning and Preparedness collaborates with and supports other municipal service providers, community agencies, provincial ministries, stakeholders, organizations and responders to ensure the communities within and around Essex County are prepared and can respond to any current or potential threats.

Emergency Medical Services



Level of Service Statement

Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services is committed to providing the highest quality emergency medical pre-hospital care to the citizens of the County of Essex, the City of Windsor and the Township of Pelee.

Our purpose is to foster fiscally responsible quality care by:

- Maintaining mutually supportive relationships with other emergency services and health care agencies in our community.
- Participating in public education for prevention and awareness.
- Providing continuous quality improvement to ensure the highest standards are achieved.
- Supporting our employees and providing them with the tools and methods to accomplish the highest quality of care.

2022 Achievements and Challenges

Essex-Windsor EMS continued its focus and partnerships across the region in the battle against COVID-19. Learning from the experiences of the previous year and fostering those relationships to improve the care and treatment of patients, EWEMS was able to slowly move out from under the weight of

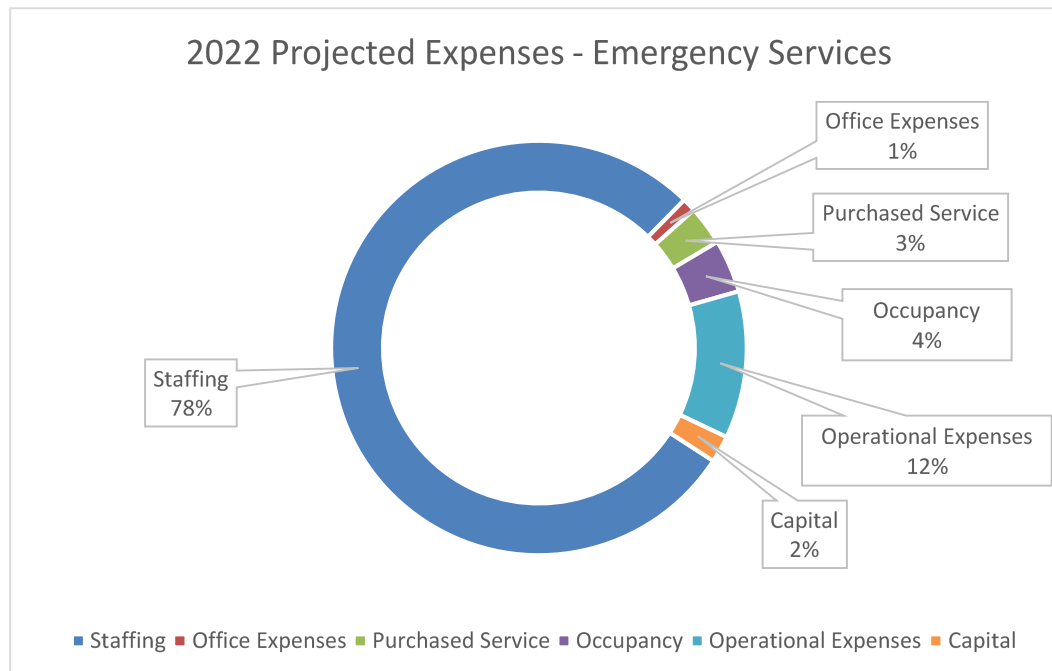
pandemic response. As a valued partner in the Windsor Essex Ontario Health Team EWEMS assisted in the development and building of a Mobile Medical Support Unit. Utilizing the expertise and knowledge of logistics, patient care and mobility, a vehicle is now travelling across the region providing care close to home and diverting patients away from the emergency departments and EMS transport.

2022 saw the full implementation of the Mental Health and Addictions Response Team (MHART). MHART is a partnership between EWEMS and Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital, that pairs a paramedic and social worker to meet clients in their communities, providing care, resources and connections to community services. The objective is to reduce the use of EMS and transport to local emergency departments and to provide care at the right place, at the right time and by the right resource. In the first year the program realized great success in decreasing repeat use of EMS by this population by approximately 60%.

Urgent, emergent and standby volumes are projected to increase at a 4% rate, compared to 2021, while transfer calls are expected to remain stable. An important factor of the volume trends is the increasing use and success of the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program, which includes the Vulnerable Patient Navigator, Community Paramedicine – Long-Term Care and the Mental Health and Addictions Response Team. The usage of EWEMS 911 services among enrolled Mobile Integrated Health clients has remained low compared to previous years which ultimately diverts activation of 911 EMS resources. This trend assists in reducing offload delays and utilizing the right resource for the right response.

Continuing challenges in 2022 include the increasing costs of medical supplies, equipment, vehicles, fuel and vehicle maintenance. As we make our way out of the pandemic, there are uncertainties within both the global and local market, and the unknown of when and how a “new normal” will impact EMS, both operationally and financially. The general pressures of COVID-19 and the “new environment” will have financial and systemic pressures on the staff and operations of EWEMS. These uncontrollable variances and uncertainties impacted both the current projections as well as future budget planning.

The graph on the next page illustrates the key areas of spending in Emergency Services for this past year (projected to December 31, 2022).



Opportunities, Challenges and Risks for 2023

Continued collaboration, communication and integration with our local communities, organizations, partners and stakeholders will support the momentum realized in 2021 and 2022. COVID-19, variants, the resumption of scheduled healthcare and the catch-up of delayed procedures has placed pressures on the entire health care system. Hospital capacities, backlogs, health human resource pressures, primary care backlogs are among the issues facing EWEMS daily. Although offload delays are expected to decline with the attention currently given to this important component of ambulance service delivery, we will continue to experience peaks and valleys as we navigate the waves and recovery of COVID-19 in the years to come.

Opportunities exist to partner and collaborate with the community to improve the successes of our Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Teams. With the realignment of the MIH model, EWEMS is setting the goal to reduce ambulance use within the patient populations of mental health, falls and low acuity responses by providing the right care, at the right time and in the right place. Being a partner of the Windsor Essex Ontario Health Team (WE-OHT) allows those relationships to mature to meet stated objectives.

COVID-19 created numerous obstacles for EWEMS. As we progressed over the past two years, COVID fatigue, compassion fatigue, decreased morale and decreased uptake of the profession represent new hurdles to overcome.

EWEMS is addressing the pandemic in the 2023 Budget with the continuation of doffing sites, uniform cleaning and continued mental wellness training and support. EWEMS also appreciates the financial pressures facing the County of Essex as we move down the road to recovery. EWEMS is approaching the 2023 Budget with a measure of conservatism, while preparing for the future. We must be prepared for growth in demand for service and within our communities, along with increased pressures and reliance on EMS that the health care system creates.

Proposed 2023 Budget Plan

The 2023 Budget reflects the ongoing attention to asset management and includes the replacement of seven ambulances, sixty defibrillators and station security equipment.

Funding from reserve is included in the 2023 Budget to allow for land acquisition to support future EMS station development. As highlighted in the 10 Year EMS Master Plan and witnessed in current population growth trends within the region, increased development and forecasted call volume growth will require the department to scale its resources to maintain service levels.

Paramedic safety is also a focus of the 2023 Budget which includes continued uniform cleaning and the continuation of doffing trailers at all hospital sites. These key elements and the ongoing focus of infection control practices for the paramedics have mitigated the risk of cross contamination and infection among the ranks of EWEMS.

Mental wellbeing for responders is a growing concern and is expected to increase as the recovery of the pandemic progresses. EWEMS is very progressive in its services and tools for mental wellness support. The 2023 Budget continues education and support for frontline staff, support staff, administration and their families of EWEMS.

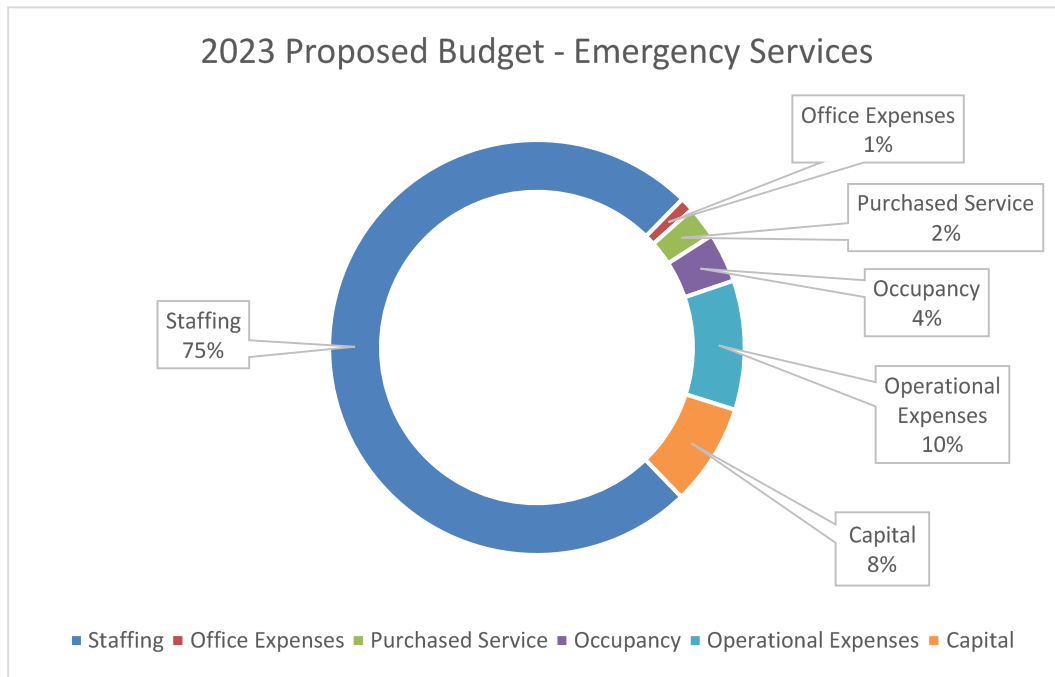
The 2023 Budget reflects the annualization of the twelve (12) full time paramedics implemented in the last quarter of 2022. This annualization is primarily funded municipally as the Provincial funding model does not cover this expenditure until 2024.

Funding

From a funding standpoint, the 2023 Budget assumes the provincial funding formula used in 2022 will remain in place for 2023. The 2021 formula was changed by the Province to exclude inflationary increases which historically formed part of the funding calculation. The Provincial funding model is

structured to provide 50% funding of EMS services.

The graph below illustrates the key areas of proposed 2023 Budget spending in Emergency Services:



Overall, the 2023 Budget for Emergency Services, net of recoveries, totals \$14,715,800 (an increase of \$1,700,500 (13.08%) over the 2022 Budget of \$13,015,300).

Community Paramedicine, Long-Term Care

In 2021 the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Long-Term Care, announced funding for the Community Paramedicine, Long-Term Care Program (CPLTC). The MIH Program incorporates CPLTC services. CPLTC began operations in May 2021. CPLTC provides services to individuals who are waiting for placement in a long-term care home or who are soon to be eligible for long-term care. This initiative is part of the province's modernization plan to address systemic barriers in long-term care bed development and the growing demand for long-term care. CPLTC is staffed by:

- two full time VPN paramedics, (staffing 12 hours a day, seven days a week)
- one clerk, 8 hours a day, 5 days a week
- one Registered Nurse/Paramedic District Chief, 8 hours a day, five days a week
- .25 Captain, 10 hours per week

Funding

The CPLTC program is funded 100% by the Ministry of Long-Term Care. The County of Essex will receive up to \$3,196,000 in one-time funding over the four-year transfer payment agreement (2020-2024). The proposed 2023 Budget reflects the 2022 projections and proposed 2023 allocation of the 100% funding model.

Emergency Management

2022 Achievements and Challenges

The County of Essex Emergency Management Department was engaged on numerous fronts across the region during 2022. Most notably, COVID-19, COVID-19 recovery, coastal flooding and most recently, the Emergency Declaration for Code Red, Code Blacks and continued Ambulance Offload Delays. These two starkly different occurrences impacted the department in direct ways. As the Declaration of Emergency was declared in October 2022, Emergency Management has, and continues to address and support both threats.

The Emergency Management Coordinator focused on the coastal flooding issues. Liaising with local community leaders, Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMC's), government and non-governmental organizations, the County CEMC maintained situational awareness and planning for any flooding issues that may have risen and impacted the County of Essex as a whole. COVID-19 command was assumed by the Chief of EWEMS for the coordination and collaboration of community tasks and preparedness. The ambulance offload delays, Code Red and Blacks command is under the oversight of the Deputy Chief of Operations.

Dividing responsibility for these challenges has allowed for a more focused, manageable and direct approach to the different occurrences while obtaining achievable results. Although flooding is still a risk to all municipalities, the water levels have remained relatively stable across the County, with localized flooding occurring only during adverse events. Planning by numerous communities continues and Essex County Emergency Management is a partner at those sessions.

During 2022 the focus of Emergency Management and the County of Essex was the return to education, information and planning of our residents and communities. Preparation is the key to Emergency Management.

Proposed 2023 Budget Plan

The 2023 Emergency Management budget maintains the status quo of previous years in most aspects. A Budget decrease is being proposed as we have efficiencies within the department and are proposing to offset some pandemic related expenditures with the use of Safe Restart funding.

Overall, the 2023 Budget for Emergency Management, net of recoveries, totals \$226,100 (a \$2,100 (0.92%) decrease over the 2022 Budget of \$228,200).