



## **Administrative Report**

### **Office of the Chief, Essex-Windsor EMS**

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Justin Lammers  
Chief, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services

**Date:** Wednesday, November 01, 2023

**Subject:** Essex-Windsor EMS 2024 Pre-Budget Approval for Full-Time Staff Enhancement

**Report #:** 2023-1101-EMS-R08-JL

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Essex County Council with information and seek approval to enhance EWEMS by six (6) Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) immediately and to continue the enhancement into 2024 prior to the 2024 Budget deliberations.

#### **Background**

Essex Windsor EMS has a complement of 184 full-time Paramedics. This includes advanced care, primary care, and community paramedics. Since early 2020 recruitment and retention of paramedic staff has been difficult and this experience is not in isolation with Essex Windsor EMS, but across the industry globally.

Historically, EWEMS conducts one (1) to two (2) recruitments per year. However, since 2020, EWEMS has continually recruited paramedics and including our October 2023 recruitment, EWEMS has welcomed ninety-nine (99) paramedics to the service. In addition to this, EWEMS is currently creating an aggressive recruitment strategy and plans to launch it in the very near future. This recruitment strategy comes as call volumes continue to climb and offload delays continue to be realized. For clarity, surges in emergency response volumes easily overwhelm the system and the need to enhance services is required to meet the demands of our system.

Due to the inability to cover unscheduled absences and the need to provide well-deserved vacation time to the Paramedics, EWEMS has experienced an

increase in down-staffing ambulances from the schedule. This down-staffing has resulted in a positive variance, or surplus in the wages and salaries of the 2023 Budget.

## **Discussion**

EWEMS is recommending that approval be given to staff one (1) ambulance, twelve (12) hours a day, 7 days a week from November 20, 2023, until December 31, 2023. In addition, this enhancement would flow into the 2024 Budget deliberations as part of a larger staffing enhancement that is required within EWEMS.

As a result of examining a realignment of scheduled resources, we have found that a staffed ambulance during the morning to mid-day period should capture the times when we have a surge in volume. This enhanced coverage is anticipated to mitigate the experiences of Code Red and Blacks.

To staff one ambulance 12/7 for this time period, EWEMS requires four (4) full-time and two (2) backfill or six (6) full-time equivalent. The cost for this staffing amounts to \$94,130 for wages, benefits, and other staffing costs.

This is a measured approach to help provide additional coverage, while not significantly depleting the part-time pool. Operationalizing this in tandem with the eleven (11) part-time Paramedics who were just onboarded will help to meet this objective. Budgetary deliberations for 2024 will include further enhancements in a strategic manner, with ongoing recruitment efforts.

## **Financial Implications**

It is anticipated that the current surplus in wages and benefits will cover the amount required for this unscheduled/unbudgeted staffing enhancement. The 2024 Budget deliberations will include a larger EWEMS paramedic enhancement, which has been discussed previously and is covered within the 2019 EWEMS Master Plan.

## **Consultations**

Kelli Schmidt, Financial Analyst

Melissa Ryan, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Sandra Zwiers, Chief Administrative Officer

## Recommendation

That Essex County Council approve Essex-Windsor EMS to enhance Paramedic staff by six (6) FTE starting November 20, 2023.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Justin Lammers*

Justin Lammers, Chief, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services

Concurred With,

*Melissa Ryan*

Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Concurred With,

*Sandra Zwiers*

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

| Appendix | Title |
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| N/A      | N/A   |