

RE: IMPACT OF POSSIBLE SALARY ARBITRATION AWARD -
BURNABY FIRE DEPARTMENT

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Administrative & Community Services be adopted.

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1984 February 01

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: IMPACT OF POSSIBLE SALARY ARBITRATION AWARD -
BURNABY FIRE DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT this report be received for information purposes.

R E P O R T

Background:

During its In-Camera meeting of 1984 January 16, the Council was advised of the award handed down by Arbitrator McCall with respect to the Vancouver Fire Department, awarding a salary increase of 3% for 1983 and a further 3% for 1984. Some discussion took place as to the implications such a salary increase would have for The Corporation of the District of Burnaby, were the Compensation Stabilization Commissioner to approve it in Vancouver, and were Burnaby to accept that same level of increase.

Council concluded by adopting a resolution which stated "That on the assumption the Vancouver Arbitration Award will be the end conclusion in Burnaby, the Municipal Manager be directed to determine what the effect would be on the service provided by the Burnaby Fire Department if the Fire Department budget had to absorb in 1984 the amount of the corresponding 1983 and 1984 salary increases".

Discussion:

The impact of the Arbitration Award for the Burnaby Fire Department would be approximately \$570,000 for 1983 and 1984. I have had several discussions with the Director Fire Services on the impact of reducing by that amount the 1984 operating budget for the Department.

At the outset, it has to be pointed out that we are already into the second month of 1984; consequently any reduction would have to be somewhat larger than would be the case were those decisions to be made prior to the year beginning. For the purposes of examining impacts in 1984 on the Burnaby Fire Department, we have made the assumption that any changes would take place as of 1984 April 01.

It is impossible to make any reductions of this size within the Fire Department budget without affecting manpower. Very nearly all of the discretionary cuts possible within the Department's 1984 Provisional Budget with respect to maintenance items, etc., have already been deleted from the budget, in order to succeed in meeting the challenge put forth by the Manager and Council, i.e., holding down the tax increase to the smallest amount possible.

Consequently, the only options left open to achieve a \$570,000 reduction must focus on reductions in manpower, and therefore reductions in the service level provided by the Burnaby Fire Department to the community.

The Director Fire Services has put forward four (4) optional means of achieving that \$570,000 saving, none of which are recommended because of their detrimental effect on fire protection to the community. Nevertheless, those four options, which all achieve approximately the dollar saving sought, are as follows:

OPTION 1 - REMOVE TWO AERIAL LADDER TRUCKS FROM THE EXISTING FLEET OF FOUR AERIAL LADDER TRUCKS, AND PROVIDE THE EQUIPMENT TRUCK WITH A DRIVER

As Council members will recall, the Burnaby Fire Department has six operational Fire Halls, all of which are equipped with pumpers (manned by four men), while four of the Halls have aerial ladder trucks, each manned with three personnel. In addition, emergency response personnel are supported by an equipment truck, which responds to fire scenes from the No. 1 Fire Hall at Canada Way and Sperling, that vehicle carrying the additional equipment required at a fire scene. The equipment truck is currently without an assigned driver on some shifts because of the attritional reductions made during 1983. In those instances when a driver is required for that vehicle, a firefighter from elsewhere in the Department is temporarily seconded to take that vehicle to a fire scene.

In order to achieve the \$570,000 reduction, the removal of two aerial ladder trucks would result in a somewhat larger than necessary reduction in manpower, which the Director Fire Services has suggested would be offset by replacing the driver on the equipment truck. In other words, the removal of two (2) aerials would result in 24 extra men; only 20 are required in this option to save the necessary funds, and therefore four (4) could be available to restaff the equipment truck. The net staff reduction involved in this proposal would be 20.

Option 1 Implications

Adoption of this recommendation would still allow partial staffing of all Fire Halls on all shifts. Obviously, the response time for aerial ladder trucks to some fire scenes within the Municipality would increase, since travel distances would be greater to those areas where there is not an aerial truck stationed. The Director Fire Services advises that he could foresee increases in fire losses and reductions to life safety, as those aerial ladder trucks are required to work in conjunction with pumper units to effect ventilation, smoke control and rescue.

This option, however, is considered by the Director Fire Services to be the least detrimental of the four options put forward.

OPTION 2 - CLOSE FIRE HALL NO. 4 (SINGLE UNIT STATION)

Fire Hall No. 4, on Duthie Street, has one pumper vehicle and no aerial ladder truck. The cost savings and manpower reductions in this option are somewhat different than in Option 1, because of the additional savings flowing from the closing of a station, and not having to maintain a building.

In this option, because of the savings achieved from not having to operate the station itself, the net reduction required would total 13 men. Thus, from the 16 positions involved in operating the Hall, three (3) would be available for other assignments, presumably manning the equipment truck on most shifts.

Option 2 Implications

This option would result in excessive response times to the north-east section of Burnaby, thereby resulting in increased life and property loss arising from fire and rescue and safety calls. In addition, extensive work would be required in replanning the response patterns from all the remaining Fire Halls, to allow for extended boundaries.

OPTION 3 - ROTATING CLOSURE OF FIRE HALLS WITH REDUCED WORK HOURS

The implications of this option would be very similar to that under Option 2, with the added complication that, because of the seniority provisions of the Firefighters' contract, serious scheduling problems could result. As with Option 2, increased response times would lead to increased fire losses to an extent which the Director Fire Services considers to be unacceptable.

OPTION 4 - REDUCE MANNING ON FIRE VEHICLES FROM THE EXISTING FOUR ON A PUMPER AND THREE ON AN AERIAL TRUCK

The Director Fire Services considers that the present manning of four and three on pumpers and aerial ladder trucks respectively is the minimum acceptable standard. Implementation of a reduced manning standard would result in placing the fire crews and the public at risk, and reducing departmental efficiencies to unacceptable levels.

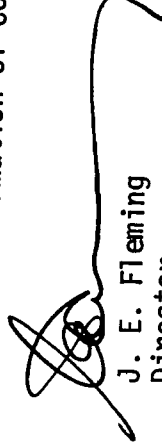
Conclusion:

In summary, the options all entail the reduction of manpower within the Department, and consequent increase to the risk of property loss, personnel injury, etc. In the opinion of senior Fire personnel, that risk is increased least by Option 1, although again the increased response time for aerial vehicles could be a hazard were there to be a fire requiring the assistance of an aerial vehicle at a longer than normal distance from one of the two remaining stations with aerial ladder truck capability.

While it is recognized that these options are somewhat extreme in nature, we are unable to offer other means of achieving the rather large cost reduction sought.

It should also be pointed out that, as a result of taking the reductions in mid-year, and taking into account two (2) years of increased cost in one budget year, the reductions resulting in 1985 may be larger than the Council may wish.

This report is submitted for the information of Council.



J. E. Fleming
Director

