



THE CORPORATION OF THE UNITED TOWNSHIPS
OF HEAD, CLARA & MARIA

Notes from the Community Partners meeting concerning auto-extrication services in Head, Clara and Maria on October 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

The following persons were present: Mayor Debbi Grills, Councillors: Chris Dowser, Fran Kelly-Chamberlain, and Ernie Villeneuve.
Staff: Crystal Fischer, Clerk/ Treasurer
Absent/Regrets: Brent Allen

In Person: Councillor Bruce Boucher, Town of Laurentian Hills
Fire Chief Kevin Waito, Town of Laurentian Hills
Fire Chief Steve Knott, Town of Petawawa
Jim Gibson

Virtually
Sean Patterson, CAO - Town of Deep River
Deputy Chief Matthieu Grenier - County of Renfrew Paramedic Services
LCol Tetreault – Garrison Petawawa

Mayor's Opening and Welcoming Remarks – see attached.

Information provided concerning insurance coverage if an accident were to occur in HCM in which a neighbouring municipality responded to;
No expectations that neighbouring municipalities are to foot the bill for services provided to HCM;
Looking for co-operation with neighbouring municipalities;
The number of travelling public that pass through HCM each day is in the thousands;
No decisions are required today, only discussing possibilities;
Appreciation of attendance today to begin an open dialogue of discussion.

Councillor Dowser – hopes that “piggy-backing” from Garrison Petawawa onwards can occur in order to reach an agreement.

Chief Waito: Laurentian Hills is not able to provide response due to limited staff, it is hard to commit with limited volunteers. A minimum of 5 people are required as well as a blocker, pumper and half ton vehicle. Three quarters of a million dollars travelling up the highway leaving their municipality with nothing. It is easy to say that we can get support from neighbouring municipality but rental fees for back up could be upwards of \$400/day.
How many accidents since 2015 requiring auto-ex? None. When going to false alarms, no one gets reimbursed. They are also taking a chance in winter (and summer months) that an accident could occur with their resources.

Mayor Grills: Laurentian Hills would not be called until OPP were dispatched if there was an agreement with HCM.

Chief Waito: It already takes 52 minutes to get from Chalk River to HCM; if they have to wait until OPP is dispatched in order to be called out, could be upwards of 1.5 for response time.
Councillor Dowser – less concerned about false alarms if OPP dispatches. Trying to get team together. What happens if non-fatal injuries happen but still extrication is required?

Councillor Boucher: Has HCM looked into trucks with power tools?

CAO Sean Patterson: Issues with audio, having a hard time hearing conversation.

Inspector Neufeld entered at 10:30 a.m. – apologies for lateness, there was an accident on the highway.

Inspector Neufeld – lack of auto-ex is a blind spot for our area. One agency cannot fill this need alone, happy to see community mobilization. Would not want to have lack of service because leaders cannot move forward to work together. Met with Mr. Yakabuski – very supportive, he would bring this forward to Minister Caroline Mulroney (MTO) as an ongoing issue. Need to move this forward, collectively work together.

Deputy Chief Mathieu Grenier – timely and important meeting today. Crucial section of the highway regarding response. Lack of extrication will delay response and treatment to patients. Looking forward to hearing ideas and how they can help – supporting Algonquin Park already, hoping to support in some way, looking to see what fire departments can provide.

CAO Sean Patterson – on behalf of Deep River, have missed a lot of the conversation. Going through transitions within their fire department. If there is anyway that they can help they would desire to do so. Agreement with Mattawa – can we share with Deep River? Potential to mimic an agreement like that.

Mayor Grills – We will share what we have. Agreement is from 1999, has not had to be used too many times for which we are grateful for.

Inspector Neufeld: Clarification – fire/auto-ex would arrive on scene before anyone as it is a tiered response – info received from 911 communication – initially everyone will be dispatched including fire, EMS, police – as worst-case scenario. Time is a factor – every second is the difference, 911 dispatching everyone in tiered format.

This is why it is important to have this discussion now, and not at the time of a scene, to decide who can respond and provide extraction services. Even informal agreement for mean time; major collision is not the time. Fingers will be pointed but it is the responsibility of all leaders. The fact that we are here today shows leadership. Mattawa agreement should be updated. Need established protocol – until then need an informal level of understanding.

Chief Knott – appreciate the invitation. Involved in extrication in this area for 46 years. Successful extrication service was here for many years. Chief Waito raised legitimate concerns. In Petawawa if response is called off before arriving on the scene, there is still a cost to the municipalities. Concerns need to be addressed, there are ways around it. Similar operation to another program; staffed 60 hours a week – no guarantee of response, just hope there are enough people to respond. Invoice that is provided once per month for services provided to those municipalities. Fire Chiefs and CAO need to meet to determine who can provide what service and back up, and determine boundaries. Did it with Laurentian Valley, Pembroke, North Algoma Wilberforce will be coming on as they just purchased equipment. A lot of work, a lot of communication but it can be done.

Mayor Grills: Horton Townships gets their response from Renfrew. Distance is a major factor.

Chief Knott: “Golden hour” response time. Concerned how many times called out that are cancelled off, and how long they are away from home base. Costs are recovered from Laurentian Valley in these cases. Insurance company may be covered under auto insurance however it depends on the policy etc.

Imperative for emergency services to meet to put everything on the table and see what we can do.

LCol Tetreault: Similar situation to other FD – protect military personnel and assets. Rescue truck with extrication equipment – to leave Garrison one hour up the highway is not practical. Would be willing to sit at the table and determine where they can help and see what departments can provide what.

County of Renfrew Paramedics would offer the same, if Chief would attend.

Deputy Mayor Villeneuve: A lot of the issue is the likelihood of something happening vs the cost. No requests in 6 years is a good indicator. A lot of time equipment and staff are available for a four hour call out. Equipment is worth a lot of money, if it can be used in a non-frequent situation it could be good for everyone.

Councillor Kelly-Chamberlain: Cooperation and options of what we can do. Chiefs have contracts with other areas – Laurentian Hills fire only contract with Swisha – hoping to get together, co-operate, get back up from other areas and work together.

Jim Gibson: Thanks Council for their perseverance to solve this issue even though he disagrees with it. HCM is effective in providing life saving measures with smoke detector program. Community issue. So many variables in any given accident. Lots of obstacles and problems. Look at all issues and see what can be solved. Moving away from communities helping themselves. Disbanded fire service because of average age of volunteers. Not much of a problem, greater concerns to deal with. Community solution. Disagree with concern but praise for perseverance.

Mayor Grills: Moving forward, she will be in touch with Fire Chiefs and CAO's to see if group efforts can be made and possibilities explored. Fire safety and safety in general major concern for her.