



Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs

Large Urban Committee Meeting Minutes

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs mission is to lead innovation and excellence in public and life safety. Our vision is to inspire and influence a safer Ontario.

DEI vision: That every fire department in Ontario is equitable, inclusive, and reflects the diversity of the community they serve.

Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83024458883?pwd=dzF1U1hadFdUVzFmQ2ZwYmJhQUtEZz09>

Meeting ID: 830 2445 8883, Passcode: 931788
Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 9am

Attendees: Robert Grimwood, Bill Boyes, Deryn Rizzi, Bob Gilmore, Paul Hutt, Bryan Burbidge, Lori Hamer, Andy Zvanitajs, Dave Cunliffe, Stephen Laforet, Adam Grant, Paul Boissonneault, Jim Jessop

Regrets: Nancy MacDonald-Duncan

Minute Taker: Mark Tishman

1. Welcome – Committee Chair

2. Agenda Additions

- Paul Hutt added Task Force update

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

- None

4. Approval of October 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Andy Zvanitajs

Seconded by: Dave Cunliffe

Approved

5. Mandatory Certification

- At the AGM, the OFM mentioned that firefighter certification is being discussed and had minor consultations with OAFCA and OPFFA. The OAFCA recommended that OFM have more



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consultations and submitted other changes, which they did (AMO, our task force, Large Urban Committee). A chart was drafted to show NFPA standards and their timelines, and the Ontario seal which won't apply to the large urban areas. This process took us to up to late December. We have asked to see the regulation. We said the OAFCh can't endorse without the actual language. At the Labour Relations Seminar, OFM announced firefighter certification will be posted January 28, 2022 for 45 days. We still haven't seen the language. Certification isn't going away, and we have to position ourselves to support it. This is a Liberal initiative that the PC's are continuing. Our goal is to streamline feedback through us such as implementation barriers and timelines. The training framework isn't in place which needs to be finalized with RTCs.

- We will meet with all our members, collate the responses, and present data and the fire service opinion to the government. This issue divides our members. Small departments feel certification is an attack on them. We will need from this group your opinion. We need to know what challenges the large urban areas will face. This group meeting with the union president was a great idea and should try again.
- The OFM came to us as a group and we should respond as the Large Urban 12. We should meet with the union but that depends on COVID restrictions.

Action item: Schedule a Large Urban meeting two weeks after released - 4 weeks with the union's president.

- Last week, we explicitly asked about 1006 with OFM individuals and spoke to how the OFM can't do the testing on time. The OFM firmly believes there will be no roadblocks and will add staff as needed.
- If meeting with the union is done virtually, then do it in smaller groups. Cannot support in-person due to COVID.
- Toronto Fire Services supports certification in principle. The city manager was concerned about costs based on 1002 retroactive after x years, based on that information, it might cost Toronto over \$1m to comply.
- Every other standard had grandfathering abilities. Last week, we raised Toronto's 1002 issue, and in Mississauga, we have 630 truck drivers that could never be grandfathered. Weeks later we received a verbal commitment for a new legacy provision from pump ops.

6. Provincial Training Framework

- OFM has provided a 'vision' of training framework. We were hoping that they would articulate the total number of RTCs, funding, quality control of instructions, and the future of



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learning contracts, etc. OFM can only provide high level information on what they plan for training. We see an opportunity to fund and fix training as the only way to make certification work. What are the large urban strategies for training? Is it completely in-house through LC's, will you be a RTC or use them, language for training CBA and fire colleges?

- There has been some frustration with RTCs confirming the applications but not checking who signed off on the form and allowing individuals who shouldn't have been allowed into the course. The proctoring piece needs a lot of work.
- Mississauga and Lambton college pilot online testing which needs to be expanded quickly.
- We need to be able to do it in-house, and we need the technology. We've talked about proctoring for years.

Action item: Figure out how to expand Mississauga's online testing to other departments.

- Lori Hammer left the meeting.

7. COVID Precautions & Response

- Mississauga uses rapid testing since there is not a mandatory vaccination policy. Implemented rapid testing for all entering the workplace, but now we are running out of rapid tests. We have a formal communique from OFM where to get rapid tests, but then we receive emails with conflicting information. Should we advocate for fire service outside of the municipality?
- Oakville requested rapid tests through the municipality website but we never received the 30k tests. We did apply specifically as a fire department and got a small number but we haven't implemented. We have had mandatory vaccination since November 1 and letters of termination went out yesterday. The rapid testing isn't working for us, and we don't receive the results in time.
- Brampton received about 600 rapid tests, corporately bought for vaccinated staffed.
- Windsor's PHU doesn't apply to firefighters, they're still 10-day isolation. We applied to the province for fire services which was accepted but we have not received anything yet.
- Hamilton worked with the city to get rapid tests for unvaccinated and vaccinated on January 13. Terminations start in March and we're looking at approximately 52 firefighters. The city stated if no tests, then paid leave to March 31 but we chose not to do this and got tests from EMS chiefs.



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- Toronto only used rapid test in communications and the mechanical centres. We are off for 10 days due to high risk setting if exposed. Toronto has no intention of using rapid tests or giving them out since it would compromise arbitration and cause too many false negatives.
- Markham received 500 rapid tests but no sustainability to create a testing program. We cancelled rapid tests and going symptom based.
- Mississauga has 2 separate grievances around this: 1) The municipality gave rapid tests to undisclosed and unvaccinated, who grieved that it was discriminatory and providing additional protections for those unvaccinated and undisclosed and not to the vaccinated. 2) The Ministry changed the isolation practice, and if vaccinated and positive isolate for 5 days, but unvaccinated for 10 days, we do leave of absence with pay so 5 days covered for both, but unvaccinated get 6-10 without pay.
- Vaughan does not use and does not plan to use rapid tests. Direction from our CM and Mayor has solidified our commitment to 100% vaccinated staff and we do not plan on wavering from this position.

8. Tiered Response

- There was a discussion about MOH changing Tiered response and hearing that MOH is consulting with individual fire chiefs about the impacts of suspending tiered response at their level. There are changes occurring due to COVID, such as Toronto entering a more tiered response whereas Cambridge was contracted and went to less.
- This is also happening in Hamilton. Early in pandemic, we reduced medical response by 50% (so basically all non-life threatening) back to what we did 25 years ago. Getting pressure now from council to maintain the level through COVID. We have made OFM aware of this.
- Windsor hasn't changed and we still go to critical life calls. There has been no push to change. It has been a bit busier due to EMS offload delays.
- Peel region has stayed the same and status quo. We did send less people in but didn't change what we respond to.
- On December 23, Toronto's system crashed. We agreed to add about 38000 calls annually to assist EMS due to their offload delays but spending about 2/3 hours at low acuity calls.
- Oakville council would support more of a fire approach to medical responses.



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- Peter Dundas claims there is a table for provincial tiered response.
- The EMS chief has a mandate and agenda to not include fire in MOH discussions. Has told us that tiered response isn't fire services' responsibility and that they are leveraging the pandemic. We are building and adding not for medical calls, but for fire services based on the community risk assessments not based on medical calls.
- It's a matter of transparency, conversations happening that were not privy too. Would like to meet with someone at MOH about it.
- Bill Boyes left the call.

9. O AFC Update

- This week O AFC posted a Fire Service Liaison position for the office. The new board is in place and there are new O AFC committees. Rob Grimwood will chair Large Urban with Mark MacDonald.
- O AFC GR priorities are the following: 1) Training and certification; 2) Mental health PTSD and WSIB; and 3) Communications and dispatch (SN, NG 9-1-1, MPDS, and pressure on mid-size dispatch to consolidate).

10. Round Table – Emerging Issues/New Business

- Richmond Hill is adding sixteen firefighters with bargaining likely in May/June for 2023.
- Mississauga has two senior positions to be posted. Experiencing a lot of labour issues. We are looking at minimum staffing levels and how often do they reference the Sudbury staffing decision. We can't afford four people per truck monetarily, training wise, or logistically. Negotiations will start in 2023, but already we started looking at grievances.
- Ottawa is making progress with 1006. Some of the deputies are working on the provincial advisory groups to help with the standardization across the province. Hoping to wrap up first quarter. Evaluators and instructors need to be mapped out by OFM.
- Vaughan staffing is going well and will be posting soon for positions. Not doing rapid tests.
- Hamilton finally hired a deputy chief after a year of searching. Labour relations good.
- Windsor's labour relations are not good, mainly due to the vaccination policy. City is trying to use grievance to generate discussion and bargain which the chief said wasn't appropriate.



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City terminated four firefighters at the start of year. \$1m OT last year. No one wants to come off 24 hours shift. Everyone says they want a chief from inside, but we can't reach out to discuss that without them grieving it.

- Toronto Fire purchased new fireboat for 2023. New Bronto tower arrived. Facing extreme EMS challenges. Increasing our compliment by about 150 over the next 3 years. Looking to hire 500 in those years.
- Oakville is hiring 4 fire prevention people. Compensation and convenience for 24-hour shift is problematic to get people up the ranks. MOL inspector didn't know a whole lot about fire. Did have an order since COVID about passive screening and moved to active screening which as actually helpful vs. the association.
- Markham is feeling the pressure with COVID. We need to take time out for ourselves. Our dispatch is being outsourced to Barrie. February 9 is switchover date. Lost 9 people.

11. Adjournment