

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf. 03 02-98-0009
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 28 September 1998

TO/DEST. 9-1-1 Management Board

FROM/EXP. Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee

SUBJECT/OBJET **9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the 9-1-1 Management Board receive the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee draft Minutes of 25 September 1998 for information.

BACKGROUND

The 9-1-1 Advisory Committee met on 25 September 1998. The draft Minutes of that meeting are hereby submitted for the information and/or discussion of the Board.

*Approved by
Rosemary Nelson*

att.

MINUTES

9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

COLONEL BY ROOM

25 SEPTEMBER 1998

9:30 A.M.

PRESENT

Chair: C. Powers, Nepean Fire Chief

Member/: Paul Asmis, West Carleton Fire Chief, G. Kemp, Kanata Fire Chief,
Alternate R. Lavictoire, Ottawa Central Ambulance Comm. Centre, L. Massender, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Ambulance. D. McCallan, Gloucester Fire Department, F. Payette, Ministry of Health, J. Yelle-Weatherall, Land Ambulance Health Service, R. White, Division Chief, Ottawa Fire Dept,

Associate: Councillor R. Cantin
Member

REGRETS K. Ablett, public representative, J. McWade, OPP, R. Erfle, 9-1-1 Bureau Manager, H. Bourgeois, RCMP, G. Hawkins, Rideau Fire Chief, C. Duchesne, DND, G. Bennett, Osgoode Fire Chief, T. Gervais, Goulbourn Fire Chief, G. Mills, Cumberland Fire Chief, D. Powell, Arnprior/Kanata Ambulance, A. Gignac, Rockland/Orléans Ambulance, J. McIsaac, Carleton/Richmond Ambulance, M. Cassidy, Osgoode & District Ambulance and St. Lawrence & District Ambulance, J. Kibsey, St. Lawrence & District Ambulance

Others: H. Murphy, Manager, EMU, L. Jenkins, Manager, 9-1-1 Emergency Service, Bell, S. Valiquet, Communications Co-ordinator, Environment and Transportation Department, P. Moyle, OCRPS

9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBER

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 23 Sep 98

Moved by R. Cantin

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee recommend that the 9-1-1 Management Board and Council approve the appointment of the Director of Land Ambulance Health Service for the Region of Ottawa-Carleton to the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee approve the Minutes of the meeting of 8 May 1998.

CARRIED

1. TRAFFIC STUDY - FEBRUARY 1998

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 11 Sep 98

It was noted that the next study would be carried out on the long weekend in July 1999.

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

2. 9-1-1 MANAGEMENT BOARD DRAFT MINUTES

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 11 Sep 98

G. Kemp reminded members that the Youth Achievement Awards will be held at noon in the Rotunda on 9 October. He suggested that as many representatives from emergency services be present to show their support for the youths who will be acknowledged for their proper use of 9-1-1 during an emergency.

With respect to the "Yield to Emergency Vehicles" campaign, S. Valiquet advised that following discussion of this matter at the last Board meeting, it was decided that staff needed to know what the committee's expectations were for this particular campaign and how it will be presented i.e. signage, public awareness campaign, use of radio/brochures, et cetera.

She referred to two annual events that will already be taking place e.g. “Hard to Find is Hard to Help” and the “Youth Achievement Awards”.

The Committee Chair indicated that 9-1-1 programs have had a fairly high level of public attention, however, motorists failing to yield to emergency vehicles have an adverse affect on the efficiency of the system. He suggested that staff take a similar approach to its previous public awareness campaign from last fall to make drivers aware of this fact. In an attempt to address different issues, he suggested the Region alternate its’ annual public awareness campaigns each year.

S. Valiquet agreed with that suggestion and proposed a spring and fall campaign. She explained that it would be easy to reproduce the “Hard to Find is Hard to Help” campaign because the Region already has the bus boards and television and radio commercials so there is no additional cost.

C. Powers indicated that public service announcements (PSA’s) have already been made in other cities and perhaps the Region could adapt their examples for its own use. F. Payette noted that the Ministry of Transportation has developed a PSA entitled “Seconds Count” and that it included reference to all emergency services. L. Massender also confirmed that Toronto ambulance had created a similar PSA and indicated he would look to see if something could be available for the committee’s review. S. Valiquet suggested these samples be collected and reviewed with a view to adapting a similar message for Ottawa-Carleton. C. Powers emphasized that the Region has spent millions of dollars to install 9-1-1, the primary purpose being to reduce delays and access to emergency response. The timing of emergency vehicles and response time therefore is critical.

Councillor Cantin indicated that motorists running red light cameras is also an issue and suggested there might be an opportunity to do a public awareness campaign for that. Staff confirmed that such a campaign is in fact underway. The councillor referred to a recent proposal adopted by Council which called for the installation of vertical measures on selected Regional roads to calm traffic and was surprised that the emergency services did not come out with a stronger voice against such measures because of the impact these will have on their response time. C. Powers acknowledged that this issue does concern all emergency services and Councillor Cantin suggested it was not too late for a strong letter to be sent from each agency.

H. Murphy suggested that if emergency services have ways of measuring delays, they should provide those statistics to staff so that a comparison can be made between what the situation is now and how it will be when those vertical measures are implemented. He confirmed that staff would be reporting back to the Transportation Committee and

Council one year following the installation of these devices to report on their effectiveness.

L. Massender stated that the City of Ottawa has already put vertical measures on some its roads and as a result, emergency vehicles avoid those streets as much as possible. He explained that an ambulance travelling over a speed hump at high speed will have a tremendous impact on the vehicle and the people inside especially. While he appreciated what the Region and the City were attempting to do, he was especially concerned about implementing vertical measures on arterial roads and proposed that the Committee forward its concerns to Council through the Management Board.

There was general agreement that vertical measures are not in the best interest of emergency services and the Committee Chair suggested these concerns be voiced to both Regional and local councils. It was further suggested by other members that the joint Fire Chiefs should send something as well and the Tiered Response Utilization Review Committee should indicate that vertical measures put tiered response in jeopardy. The latter committee will be meeting on Monday and it was suggested they discuss this item at that time.

G. Kemp suggested that what should be stressed to Council is the fact that 9-1-1 was implemented to save time reaching an emergency service and the system has been successful; however, the time saved through implementation of this system is being compromised and increased significantly by the slower response speeds resulting from these installations in areas of high volumes of emergency calls.

Moved by G. Kemp

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee recommend that the 9-1-1 Management Board forward to Regional Council and all local municipal councils, the serious concerns emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) have in regards to the installation of vertical traffic calming measures on arterial roads.

CARRIED

With respect to the issue of a "Yielding to Emergency Vehicles" public awareness campaign, the Committee Chair suggested that more information on this can be brought forward to the Management Board.

As a note to staff, Councillor Cantin suggested that when staff distribute safety information, that they do not duplicate information that is already available through other agencies. The Communications Co-ordinator agreed with this comment.

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive the 9-1-1 Management Board Draft Minutes of 5 June 1998 for information.

RECEIVED

3. 9-1-1 BUREAU QUARTERLY REPORT

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 11 Sep 98

On behalf of Inspector Erfle who was unable to attend, Superintendent Patrick Moyle explained to committee the reason for a decrease in the efficiency ratio. He stated that prior to amalgamation, emergency calls for police assistance for Gloucester, Nepean and the OPP were immediately sent to those particular areas; 9-1-1 call-takers did not have to verify the ANI/ALI as this was done by the agency the call was immediately downstreamed to. This transfer would last for several seconds and the call-taker was then available for the next call. However, the Bureau now verifies all of those calls and having to do so holds the line open for a longer period of time, resulting in calls being answered on the fourth ring rather than the third, hence a reduction in the efficiency ratio.

The Superintendent explained this is an opinion by the Bureau and is not verified as the cause, but confirmed the ComCentre is investigating and hopefully will have a recommendation before long.

It was suggested the answer might be the addition of another operator to assist the call-takers and the Committee Chair believed the Management Board may want to discuss what the impacts have been as a result of the amalgamation of the OPP being taken over by the ComCentre, et cetera.

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

4. 9-1-1 SERVICE INTERRUPTION

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 11 Sep 98

The Committee Chair stated that a number of residents in Goulbourn were not connected to 9-1-1 and requested an overview by the 9-1-1 Manager, Bell.

L. Jenkins advised that the mandate of the Region prior to the introduction of 9-1-1 service in 1988 required all residents of Ottawa-Carleton to have access to 9-1-1. To comply with this request, Bell introduced a method to route 9-1-1 calls from residents that lived within the Region (in boundary areas) but had telephone service from central offices

located outside the Region e.g. Goulbourn - some residents are served from the Carleton Place central office. These telephone subscribers required a code to be added to their customer profile that would allow a 9-1-1 call to be routed to the 9-1-1 Bureau in Ottawa, but callers outside of the Region e.g. Beckwith Township (Lanark County) would route to "0" (zero) and a Bell operator. In the event a code was incorrect, the Regional residents would also route to "0" as a back-up procedure and the operator would transfer the call to police, fire or ambulance as was the case for Mr. Clifton as outlined in the report dated 11 September 1998. In tests following this incident, it was discovered that several residents were routed to "0" and the routing codes are on every line and they have been corrected and the entire system was examined to ensure there were no glitches. With the migration to PERS, this line application will disappear because the new technology will provide the civic address on the screen of the call-taker and any downstreamed agency. She indicated she would be meeting with the Fire Chief and residents of the township to explain this issue to residents.

The Committee Chair advised that when this issue was discussed by the Regional Fire Chiefs at a recent meeting, it was discovered that this is not the first time it has occurred and he questioned whether there was a way of checking the extent of the boundaries with a view to determining if there are other groups that might be affected. L. Jenkins advised that this has already been done and while the system is better off now than before, she could not guarantee it would not happen again. She explained that in the situation in Goulbourn, the caller did not know which municipality they were in and when the 9-1-1 call was routed to a Bell operator who asked which fire department the caller wanted, listing those that appeared on the screen, the caller chose the wrong one. She emphasized that people must know which municipality they live in, so the operator can properly refer the call to the appropriate agency.

5. RENAMING OF FRANKTOWN ROAD - UPDATE

- Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Advisory Committee report dated 14 Sep 98

F. Payette brought to the attention of the Committee a brief note in the "The Gazette", Almonte, Ontario which indicated that this issue would be discussed by the Public Works Committee of the County of Lanark.

G. Kemp stated that what did not appear to get transmitted to the Township of Beckwith or the County was the importance of continuing the address numbers for the newly named "Richmond Road". He questioned whether this committee should send such clarification to the County. L. Jenkins advised that they have already completed their numbering and it would be costly to make any changes at this time. F. Payette advised that the name of the township appears on the road signs for Richmond Road.

R. White indicated that there have already been situations where a cell site was busy and the call "hit" the Ottawa site as an alternative, so he understood where confusion can arise. If a call is made from a cell phone and the call goes to a site in the Region, not knowing where that caller's township is can create a bad situation.

G. Kemp suggested that the committee forward its comments to the Public Works Committee in Lanark County, indicating its satisfaction if the addresses were numbered sequentially. The committee agreed that Gord Kemp attend that meeting on behalf of the 9-1-1 Management Board and the Advisory Committee, to address this issue verbally.

That the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee receive this report for information.

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OTHER BUSINESS

9-1-1 Cell Phone Problems

The Committee Chair made reference to a submission from the Cumberland Fire Chief dated 8 July in which he refers to 9-1-1 calls coming to their dispatch that are reporting fires in Prescott-Russell and from Rigaud, Quebec. He explained that a person on a cell phone calling 9-1-1 from outside the Region was directed by the Bureau to the closest emergency service to where the call appeared to emanate from. In these instances, calls are downstreamed to their dispatch with the request that they notify the appropriate fire department in Quebec. However, the Cumberland Fire Chief suggests that a more appropriate solution would be to link the caller through the 9-1-1 Bureau to the OPP dispatch centre which already handles similar calls for the Prescott-Russell area.

L. Jenkins advised that based on meetings with cell services, Bell recognizes the issues and believe it is more a policy issue than a technical issue. She stated that the 9-1-1 Bureau will have to maintain a list of numbers with which to refer to the caller.

G. Kemp indicated that in 1986-87, it was determined that callers would not be left with the 9-1-1 operator and would instead be transferred to a "like" agency i.e. fire to fire, ambulance to ambulance, et cetera. The question now is whether or not that policy is still efficient and is the best way to handle calls that are coming from further out than what was experienced ten years ago.

C. Powers reflected that in 1986-87 there were not as many 9-1-1 Bureau's to send the call to and believed it appropriate to have a link between the Region's 9-1-1 Bureau and the 9-1-1 Bureau serving Rigaud or possibly the Hull 9-1-1 Bureau. He explained that it

does not help a caller in Rigaud who has been transferred to Cumberland Fire dispatch to determine who they are supposed to be calling. He believed nothing is gained by downstreaming the call to a local agency when the caller is far away and suggested it would be better to send the caller to Hull because they would have a better idea who they should be referred to.

G. Kemp suggested that the Committee request the Bureau Manager to enter into discussions with his counterpart in the Outaouais, asking him that if the Bureau were to send a cell caller from Quebec to them, would they be able to take care of it and visa versa. He acknowledged it was not a large volume of calls.

The Committee Chair indicated that in this instance, the 9-1-1 call-taker followed the existing policy, but suggested that in these situations, the policy is probably not appropriate. He suggested that the Committee request that the Management Board revisit that policy on where calls should be transferred to when they are received from outside the Region's boundaries and make any appropriate modifications. Any change in the policy should then be circulated to all agencies.

Discussion arose on the inability of an individual to reach the Ottawa-Carleton 9-1-1 Bureau from a phone located outside the Region and the importance therefore of emergency services maintaining a 7-digit emergency number; it was noted that some municipalities have eliminated these numbers and it is extremely difficult to reach a specific emergency service directly. It was suggested that a letter be sent from this committee to the 9-1-1 Ontario Committee, APCO (Associated Public Safety Communications Officers Inc.) and NENA (National Emergency Number Association) stating that emergency services should maintain their 7-digit number as an alternative to 9-1-1. The Committee Chair further suggested that it be circulated to other 9-1-1 Bureaus and that emergency plan manuals be updated accordingly.

Implementation of PERS

When questioned when PERS will be in place L. Jenkins advised that she did not expect it within the next two years. She hoped to have a final update from the Region's GIS group by the end of the year.

Emergency Access from West Hunt Club Road to Trend Arlington Community

C. Powers made reference to a request from the community to close the emergency access from Hunt Club Road because of noise (the sound barrier/berm is interrupted by this access). He indicated that such closure will only increase their response time and are therefore opposed to this request.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to schedule its next meeting following the Board's spring meeting (March or April 1999).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

CO-ORDINATOR

CHAIR