TOWNSHIP OF PUSLINCH

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor Dennis Lever and Members of Puslinch Council
From: Linda Dickson, MCIP, RPP, Emergency Manager/CEMC
Date: September 3, 2014
Re: **Emergency Management Program Report for 2014**

Background

The following outlines the municipality's requirements as set out in the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and how the municipality has fulfilled these requirements for 2014.

Program Committee

The Program Committee met on March 3, 2014.

Emergency Response Plan:

Following the 2013 County wide exercise and the April and December Ice Storms in 2013, changes to the Emergency Response Plan were reviewed with the Emergency Management Program Committee. A report on the changes proposed to the Plan and a copy of the amending by-law are being presented to Council for review and adoption.

Training:

The following training sessions have been held or are being held in 2014.

1.   Basic Emergency Management Course – April 16 and 17, November 6 and 7
2.   Emergency Services Interoperability Training – June 12, 2014. A second training session may be held later this year.
3.   IMS 100, 200 and EOC and IMS – October 14, 15 and 16

In 2015, a training and information session for Elected Officials will be hosted. Information regarding this session will be distributed early in 2015.

Exercises

The Township held its emergency management exercise on July 17, 2014. The exercise included a test of the Township's emergency notification contacts.

The Scenario for the exercise involved a hazardous transportation incident at the main intersection in Morriston.

The objectives of the exercise were to re-enforce the basic components of the Incident Management System, test evacuation procedures, traffic management and the Emergency Operation Centre procedures.

Some of the lessons learned from the exercise included the need for continued training with the Incident Management System and its use in the Emergency Operation Centre. There is a need to consider animals – number and type – in the evacuation process. Need for improved access to mapping either through the use of large paper maps or on-line mapping including the need for additional technology to display more than one piece of information at a time.

Critical Infrastructure

The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act require municipalities to identify facilities and other elements of critical infrastructure that are at risk of being affected by emergencies. Staff reviews this list annually and updates as necessary.

Public Education

The Theme for this year's public education program was "Be Better Prepared for Prolonged Power Outages". A number of public education events were held this year using the theme. The following is a list of the main public education initiatives held.

1. Emergency management information was made available at the Wellington County Libraries and municipal offices during Emergency Preparedness Week.
2. A draw for a generator and 2 weather radios was held throughout the County of Wellington's 14 Library Branches, at each of the municipal offices and at special events held during EP week.
3. The County page in the Wellington Advertiser regularly contains emergency public information.

4. An insert was included in the Wellington Advertiser during Emergency Preparedness Week (May 4-10) containing information on how to be prepared for power outages.
5. Emergency Management staff attended the Fire Department's Breakfast and Open House on May 31, 2014.

Further Enhancements:

1. **Interoperability** - Attached for information purposes is a status report on the Interoperability program for Wellington County. An interoperability Committee has been formed for the County and includes representatives from police, fire, EMS and Emergency Management. Overall, interoperability in the County is good but can be enhanced. On June 12, the Committee held an Emergency Services Interoperability Training session that was very well received by all participants. A second training session is being planned for the fall.

2. **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA)** – Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, every municipality is required to complete a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment. A major review and assessment was completed in 2003 for the Township and has been annually reviewed by the Committee. Emergency Management Ontario developed a new HIRA tool for municipalities to use that includes a quantitative component. Given that the last major review was completed over 10 years ago, it was agreed that a new review and assessment should be undertaken. The HIRA for Puslinch was reviewed, updated and presented to the Emergency Management Program Committee at the March meeting. There are some changes to the significant hazard risks identified for the Township. Hazardous Materials Transportation incidents both road and rail, snow and ice storms, tornados and wind storms , explosions and Fires continue to score as high risks for the Township. Forest/wildland Fires have been added along with fog events and transportation emergencies primarily due to the presence of the 401 through Puslinch

3. **Strategic Planning:** Based upon several of the debriefs for both the April and the December Emergency Ice Storms, a meeting will be arrange with all of the municipalities to discuss appropriate municipal policies and procedures particularly when responding to emergencies that affect most or all of the municipalities in Wellington. Items to be discussed may include topics such as external communications, warming centres/shelters, cooling centres, etc.
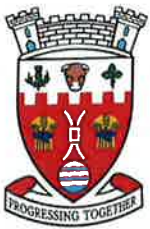
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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council for the Township of Puslinch accepts the annual emergency management report, and further **THAT** this report serves as the annual review of the Township's Emergency Management Program for 2014.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Dickson, MCIP, RPP
Emergency Manager

TOWNSHIP OF PUSLINCH

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor Dennis Lever and Members of Council for the Township of Puslinch
From: Linda Dickson, Emergency Manager/CEMC
Date: September 3, 2014
Subject: **Interoperability Study Update**

Interoperability Vision

That "public agencies in Guelph and Wellington will communicate and exchange information across disciplines and jurisdictions on demand, in real time, when needed and as authorized."

Background:

Municipal emergencies or disasters require a coordinated response among emergency response agencies including the coordination of emergency communication systems. For the most part, for simple incidents, emergency services depend upon their own standalone radio/communication systems. However, in certain situations, such as large complex municipal emergencies, the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with each other is vital.

Coordinated, timely and effective communication is imperative to the success of any emergency response and critical to first responder safety and the safety of residents.[1]

The North American Interoperability Continuum provides a chart where at one extreme there is limited governance/leadership, planning and collaboration and minimal investment in the sustainability of systems through to complete interoperability in areas of governance, training and exercises, Standard Operating Procedures, technology and usage. Interoperability is more than technology and communications it is about planning, processes and people working together for a common goal.

There is a national strategy for Interoperability – The Communications Strategy for Canada, Ontario is finalizing an Interoperability Strategy, and the Guelph/Wellington Strategy has been completed.

[1]Communications Interoperability Strategy for Canada.

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COUNCIL REPORT

Interoperability Strategy for Guelph/Wellington

An ad hoc working group comprised of representatives from Guelph and Wellington was formed in 2010 to review and discuss opportunities for interoperability within existing communication networks and systems. Representatives from Emergency Management, Fire, OPP, Roads, IT and Guelph Wellington EMS were represented on the working group for Wellington County.

Funding opportunities were available and the City of Guelph on behalf of the group submitted an application to help finance the development of an Interoperability Strategic Plan for the City of Guelph and County of Wellington. The study has been completed and presented to the Steering Committee.

Study Recommendations

The "**Strategic Plan for Interoperability among First Responders**"[1] identified a few key recommendations including over the short term to take advantage of opportunities to make small scale technology adjustments in order to align existing telecommunications amongst agencies. For the long term, consider the formation of local governance groups within Guelph/ Wellington to consider such things as acquisition procedures and priorities, common training programs and operating procedures for information sharing and communications.

Current Interoperability State in Wellington

The Steering Committee agrees that in some areas of the Interoperability Continuum there is good coordination and integration however there is room for improvement.

Moving towards interoperability some of the key areas where good interoperability exist are

1. Fire Training with the establishment of a County wide Fire Training Officer
2. Radio Communications in EOCs, Fire Stations and Public Works Departments; however more training and coordination is required.
3. Fire Departments moving towards an interoperability solution for the differing radio systems to be able to integrate for mutual aid incidents and major events.
4. Emergency Services training and exercises for simple local emergency incidents
5. Multi-agency exercises

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[1] "User Centred Strategic Plan for Interoperability among First Responders during Emergency Operations in the City of Guelph and Surrounding Wellington County"

Next Steps for Wellington

It is agreed that there are opportunities to improve on governance, developing standard operating procedures, technology and how we communicate and understand each other daily.

A Steering Committee comprised of representatives from police, fire and emergency management has been formed to look at the report and to provide guidance on the implementation of the strategic plan. The Steering Committee has planned a Wellington Emergency Services Interoperability Training day for June 12, 2014 as a way of increasing our interoperability at simple to more complex emergency situations.

Recommendation:

THAT this report is submitted to Council for information purposes.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Dickson
Emergency Manager/CEMC

TOWNSHIP OF PUSLINCH

Report to Council

To:	**Mayor Dennis Lever and members of Council for the Township Puslinch**
From:	Linda Dickson, Emergency Manager/CEMC
Date:	September 3, 2014
Subject:	**Emergency Response Plan Amendment Number 2.**

Background:

Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O., 1990, every municipality is required to have an Emergency Response Plan outlining policies and procedures for responding to large scale emergencies/disasters in their municipality. In 2010, the County of Wellington and the Member Municipalities adopted the current Emergency Response Plan.

The Emergency Response plan has been reviewed based upon the recommendations and lessons learned from the County wide emergency management exercise in October 2013 and the response to the April and December Ice Storm. A draft amendment was circulated and reviewed with each municipality's Emergency Management Program Committee. The following is a summary of the changes being proposed.

i) Clarify the wording in the "Actions Taken Prior to a Declaration".

ii) Update the current wording for "Joint Emergency Control Groups" and rename "Joint Command Advisory Team".

iii) A number of revisions are proposed to the Incident Management System (IMS) policies. Some of the revisions include the addition of the Basic Incident Management System model, a revised Emergency Operation Centre Enhanced IMS Model, and add a definition for and outlining the role of the Command Advisory Team.

iv) Add policies to provide for the appropriate use of Blackberry Messenger application during emergency response. This tool was used extensively and very effectively during the December Ice Storm response.

v) Some housekeeping changes to the Evacuation Section of the Plan including the addition of some Incident Management System models for the running of Reception and Evacuation Centres in the County of Wellington.

Attachments:

Amendment Number 2 to the Emergency Response Plan is attached.

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Recommendation:

That Council supports the adoption of the Amendment Number 2 to the Emergency Response Plan for the County of Wellington and the Member Municipalities, and further that Council authorizes the passing of a by-law adopting the amendment to the Emergency Response Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Dickson,
Emergency Manager/CEMC

August 27, 2014

To Mayor and council

RE: Arkell Springs Forest Stewardship

The City of Guelph is planning some maintenance work to be completed on the Arkell Spring Grounds in the Township of Puslinch. As such, you are receiving this letter to advise you of upcoming forest stewardship efforts.

Beginning in September, red pine plantations in the northeast section of the Arkell Spring Grounds will be assessed and rows of trees will be marked for removal. This work is part of ongoing groundwater and forest stewardship and will encourage succession toward a more natural and healthy native mixed forest. This involves removing about a third of the pines to improve the growing conditions for the remainder, and to create gaps in the canopy to accommodate regeneration of better-suited species. During marking, trails will continue to be open and accessible to users.

Tree removals may begin as early as December 2014. Once the work begins, trails in different areas of the Grounds will be closed to ensure the safety of both workers and trails users. Trail closures will be posted at that time and we ask for your patience and cooperation in obeying closures. We will provide you with more accurate timing information once tree removal has been scheduled.

Note that tree removals will be scheduled to minimize impacts to local wildlife, avoiding work during breeding and fledging seasons. To augment natural regeneration, plantings of native hardwood and evergreens in the newly-created canopy gaps are planned to begin in 2016.

A tentative timeline, additional background information and map of the area are attached for more information.

If you have questions about this project or would like more information, we would be happy to meet with you or arrange a presentation for you.

Sincerely,

Karen McKeown
Outdoor Water Efficiency Technician, Water Services Division, City of Guelph

T 519-822-1260 extension 2109
E karen.mckeown@guelph.ca

Forecasted timelines

September–October 2014:
- Tree rows identified for removal and marked (blue dots)
- Information signs posted onsite for trail users
- RFP for tree removal work issued

December 2014–Dec 2015:
- Time period for contractor to remove trees

Spring 2016:
- Planting of hardwoods and spruces in removed tree rows

Background

The Arkell Forest Stewardship Project goals are to create a diverse and functioning forest. This area comprises retired agricultural lands, plantations and forest. Forests help to protect and recharge underground aquifers and to prevent undesirable surface water runoff and flooding into local waterways.

Currently, the overcrowded red pines are under competitive stress. When stands are heavily stocked as these plantations are, thinning is required to allow light and moisture to penetrate the forest floor. Without thinning, the growth rate of the stand will taper off dramatically and tree strength and health will decline. This can also inhibit the natural succession process as the plantations collapse, reverting the forest to an open environment that favours the establishment of low quality and non-native species. This type of disturbance can set back succession to a healthy hardwood forest by many decades.

In addition to overcrowding, the soil conditions at Arkell are alkaline and rocky which is not suitable for red pine. Red pine will develop nutrient deficiency, specifically a lack of iron, in these soil conditions. This deficiency is sometimes observed in 30–40 year old plantations. Symptoms include chlorosis (yellowing) of the needles (especially the current year's growth), reduced growth, crown thinning, and dieback. These symptoms are now showing in sections of the Arkell Spring Grounds.

Thinning is a science–based forest management tool which selectively identifies and removes trees of a specified quantity to encourage healthy forest growth and sustainability with minimal impact to the remaining stand. Thinning releases strong, healthy trees by removing the damaged and unhealthy trees surrounding them. Opening of the canopy allows stronger trees to access light and reach their full growth potential. Thinning also promotes natural diversification, allows for variation in forest species and age composition, creates habitat, and helps to improve overall forest health.

Arkell Springs improvement thinning project location map

Arkell Rd

Watson Rd

Starkey Hill
Conservation Area

Google

Comp 50-1 Red Pine 69 acres

Comp 68-10 Red Pine 30 acres

Comp 58-4 mixed conifer 11.5 acres

Comp 56-4 mixed conifer 32.5 acres

Comp 64-7 mixed conifer 15 acres