

Council approves solution for fire-related cost recovery

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Shelburne Town Council has approved the decision to enter an agreement with Fire Marque Inc. to help recover costs associated with fire-related incidents.

During their meeting on Oct. 16, Town councillors received a report from chief administrative officer Denyse Morrissey regarding the Fire Marque Program. Shelburne Town Council was first presented with the program in March of 2020, and a decision on it was delayed as a result of COVID-19.

"The direction was to move forward with an agreement that we would be one of the municipalities in Ontario, which there are many, participating with the Fire Marque program in order to recover costs associated with structure fires and other related incidents," Morrissey told councillors.

Initially incorporated in 2009, about one-third of Ontario's 444 municipalities currently participate in the program. Existing clients of Fire Marque within local counties include 1 of 8 municipalities in Dufferin County, 6 of 8 municipalities in Grey County, 7 of 8 municipalities in Bruce County and 11 of 16 municipalities in Simcoe County.

The Shelburne and District Fire Department provides service to the Town of Shelburne, Amaranth, Mono, Melancthon, and Mulmur. According to the report, Shelburne's cost for service is about 54 per cent of the fire department's overall budget and in 2023 the Town's contribution was \$639,888.71.

"I have dealt with this in former municipalities and found it somewhat beneficial," said Shelburne and District Fire Chief Ralph Snyder regarding the program. "It's not huge money, but it is nice that if you do have a structure fire, you get something back."

The report noted that the cost recovery fees received from the program would be placed in a designated reserve account and applied toward the fire department's operating and capital budgets for the municipality.

"I first brought [the program] up many years ago, but unfortunately the council of the day wasn't interested. I'm finally glad to say that it has come forward," said Coun. Walter Benotto.