

Headwaters Health Care Centre and county make progress on new ambulance deal

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

The contract for ambulance service between Dufferin County and Headwaters Health Care Centre has been extended again while both sides seek common ground to form a new agreement.

After about eight months of talks to that end, there is just one issue outstanding before a new contract can be inked, said Gary Staples, chief of Dufferin County Paramedic Services.

He said that issue could be resolved in the coming weeks.

Dufferin County council supported the development of a comprehensive 2025 paramedic service master plan and service delivery review carried out by Operational Research in Health (ORH) Ltd. The final report was received in early 2026.

The service delivery review included an assessment of the existing governance model for land ambulance services, stakeholder consultations, and careful consideration of how Dufferin County can best deliver ambulance services to the community.

The final recommendation was to maintain the current partnership between the county and Headwaters Health Care Centre. The review also strongly recommended that the partnership be supported by a more robust commercial contractual agreement.

Staples said considerable work has been completed on the updated agreement. Outdated language has been revised, accountability provisions for both parties are stronger, a Contract Review Committee was established, and there is greater clarity of financial responsibilities.

A comprehensive legal and insurance review has also been completed to ensure the proposed agreement appropriately addresses risk, liability, indemnification, insurance requirements, and the respective responsibilities of both parties.

A report to council for its Aug. 27 meeting indicated that work has helped inform the proposed agreement language and identify matters requiring further discussion before the agreement can be finalized.

?As consensus has not yet been reached, the existing agreement must be extended until such time as the terms of a new agreement can be finalized,? according to a report to council.

Staples said it was suggested there should be a more ?robust commercial? agreement.

The previous agreement, which was set to expire Aug. 31, was extended to ensure no disruption to ambulance service.