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Shelburne Fire Department Board to be dissolved

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Shelburne Town Council is supporting a decision to dissolve the Shelburne & District Fire Board.

During their meeting on Nov. 25, Shelburne Town Council received a report from chief administrative officer (CAO) Denyse Morrissey, regarding the Dufferin County Multi-Jurisdictional Fire Prevention and Protection Modernization Plan.

The report recommended that Town Council approve the dissolution of the Shelburne & District Fire Department Fire Board and instead take over management of the service as a municipality while contracting out to the surrounding communities.

?Prior to the creation of the [fire] board and certainly at the time, there were probably a number of significant benefits and strategic direction that made the approach very beneficial and meaningful,? said Morrissey. ?However, the consultant's assessment as well as what staff have indicated, is that potentially that has evolved to the point where there needs to be a reassessment of the approach.?

The Shelburne & District Fire Department, located at 114 O'Flynn Street, serves the communities of Amaranth, Melancthon, Mono, Mulmur and Shelburne. The department consists of one full-time Fire Chief, one volunteer Deputy Fire Chief and 28 volunteer firefighters.

In its existing structure, the Shelburne & District Fire Department is operated by the Shelburne District Fire Board, which consists of two representatives from each of the five municipalities, and provides emergency services to the Town of Shelburne and surrounding communities.

The County of Dufferin completed a Multi-Jurisdictional Fire Prevention and Protection Modernization Plan and in September of this year, four recommendations were approved by County Council.

The four options recommended for the Shelburne & District Fire Department (SDFD), included:

1. A single fire department operated by the County of Dufferin

2. A single fire department operated by the Town of Orangeville

3. Governance of the various fire departments revert to municipal councils with contract for service model

4. ?Status quo? with some enhance administrative supports

?Staff is recommending we continue to proceed with bringing fire services, via the dissolution of the board, back within the formal structure of the Town of Shelburne and that there could be a fee for service arrangement based on a partnership and collaborative approach,? said Morrissey.

During the meeting, Morrissey noted the structure's successful use in other communities including the Town of Grimsby and the Town of Lincoln as well as a tri partnership between the Townships of Minto, Mapleton and Wellington North.

?At a recent board meeting we had a fairly lengthy and productive discussion as a group and a lot of the concerns I think that have been expressed in the past about a move to this sort of de-evolution to a municipal system, are maybe beginning to soften from some of our partners,? said Mayor Wade Mills. ?Time and time again, expert opinion after expert opinion and report after report, all

confirm the same thing; that the current board structure is outdated and not really recognized under the legislative framework we're working under. The consistent recommendation seems to be that there's a movement back to municipal service.?

The Town of Shelburne is expected to undergo an expansion of the Fire Department building in the near future with recent estimated costs of roughly $15 million showing in the 2028 budget.

According to the report, the Town of Shelburne manages 56 per cent of the Shelburne & District Fire Department's 2024 budget for a total of $724,898.03.

?This would be in our minds a strategic and beneficial approach for the Town of Shelburne,? said Morrissey.

With the support of Shelburne Town Council, the dissolution of the Fire Board and bringing the SDFD under direct governance and management of the Town of Shelburne is expected to go into effect in early 2026.