



Town of Ponoka Enters Regional Fire Services Agreement with Ponoka County

New Fire Services Agreement Takes Effect Immediately

(March 2, 2018 – Ponoka, Alberta) – The Town of Ponoka announced today that effective immediately, it has entered a regional fire services agreement with Ponoka County to provide fire protection services to the Town of Ponoka. The agreement, which was approved by Ponoka Town Council last week and by Ponoka County Council early this afternoon, took effect at 3 p.m. today.

“On behalf of the Town, I would like to express our deep and sincere appreciation for the dedicated service and outstanding fire protection provided by our Ponoka Fire Department members,” said Town of Ponoka Chief Administrative Officer Albert Frootman. “The Department was formed in 1906 and its many members have demonstrated their professionalism and commitment to the community over the years,” said Frootman.

With the Ponoka Fire Department no longer in service, the Town’s fire service staff and volunteer firefighters are being treated fairly and equitably in accordance with existing contracts and legal obligations, said Frootman.

Details of New Fire Service Agreement

Under the new agreement, the Town will pay the County \$140,000 annually based on a fee-for-service rate that is equivalent to the rate paid by Alberta Transportation for emergency response to motor vehicle accidents on Highway 2. The annual fee to be paid by the Town is based on an anticipated call volume of approximately 100 fire-related and EMS calls per year. The annual amount paid will be reconciled at year end to reflect actual call volume. The annual fee includes a joint 911 dispatch service provided through the City of Red Deer Emergency Services.

The Town will also contribute \$70,000 annually toward capital replacement costs for a fire engine and aerial fire apparatus that will be required to ensure the Town’s fire protection needs are fully served. This capital contribution will be reviewed every five years and adjusted as needed to reflect actual fire equipment costs.

Under the agreement, the County will purchase the Town’s Engine 16 and Ladder 9 fire emergency vehicles at their depreciated value, and will acquire, own, insure and maintain all fire emergency vehicles and apparatus required to provide full fire protection services to the Town. Under the agreement, the County will operate out of its own fire hall rather than lease the Town fire hall which will remain a Town-owned building.

The agreement states that in the event that two fires occur at the same time – one in the County and one in the Town – the County will activate mutual aid agreements with neighbouring fire departments to supply any



additional resources that may be needed. Frootman noted a fire engine will remain available in Town of Ponoka at all times to respond to fire calls within Town boundaries.

Significant Cost Savings Expected

“This is a fair agreement that should essentially cut our fire protection costs in half based on our projected call volume,” said Frootman. He noted the Town’s operational costs for fire services are currently about \$320,000. When long-term capital costs, including the fire hall are factored in, that annual amount totals approximately \$450,000 per year.

“Citizens made it clear during the election that they wanted us to work together on fire services,” said Ponoka Mayor Rick Bonnett. “As we face another tight budget year, this agreement will significantly reduce our fire protection costs while ensuring our community’s fire safety needs are fully covered,” added Mayor Bonnett.

Mayor Bonnett noted that the County is inviting all volunteer firefighters in Ponoka to apply to the regional fire department. “We have well-trained firefighters in town and the County recognizes that,” said Mayor Bonnett.

A copy of the new Fire Service Agreement can be viewed at www.ponoka.ca.

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