

2025 Fire Department Budget Follow Up Answers

The purpose of this paper is to answer the following questions that were asked during the 2025 budget presentation.

1. What items from the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and Master Fire Plan (MFP) are mandatory
2. Identify what our current volunteer Deputy Chief's(DC) role is and what would be added as a full-time position
3. Identify what surrounding municipalities have full-time support staff
4. Identify the number and type of fires over the past 3 years, as well as total losses

Question 1

I would like to start off by addressing the mandatory requirements outlined in the CRA & MFP. Although there are easy correlations such as mandatory firefighter certification driven from O.Reg. 343/22 made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997,(FPPA) many items are a result of a regulation or an Act. In the FPPA, Part 2, section 2 says:

2 (1) Every municipality shall,

(a) establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention; and

(b) provide such other fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances.

Douro-Dummer chose to execute these responsibilities by establishing a fire department. A Fire Chief is appointed by Council and is ultimately responsible to Council for the delivery of fire protection services. To determine these services outline in 2(1)(a) & (b) a municipality can seek the advice of the Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshal provides this guidance, through technical guidelines and more recently through the FPPA introducing O.Reg 378/18 – Community Risk Assessment. This regulation says:

Mandatory use

1. Every municipality, and every fire department in a territory without municipal organization, must,

(a) complete and review a community risk assessment as provided by this Regulation; and

(b) use its community risk assessment to inform decisions about the provision of fire protection services.

In 2024 The Township of Douro-Dummer hired a consultant to complete our CRA and MFP. As a refresher I have provided their executive summary and part of the conclusion that connects these dots:

“Executive Summary

This document, prepared by ESSSi for the Township of Douro-Dummer, presents the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) meticulously crafted to comply with Ontario Regulations and align with the

Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) TG-02-2019 Community Risk Assessment guidelines. The CRA serves as a vital tool for fire departments, enabling informed decisions regarding fire protection services based on identified risks.

Risk assessment is crucial for shaping the Master Fire Plan, tailoring fire protection strategies to local needs. By identifying and prioritizing fire and life safety risks, fire departments can develop effective programs for public safety education, Fire Code enforcement, and emergency response.

The Three Lines of Defence framework—public education, fire safety standards enforcement, and emergency response—guides municipalities in fulfilling their obligations under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act 1997.

To meet CRA obligations, municipalities must understand community risks and prioritize them for effective risk treatment and provision of fire protection services.

The methodology adheres to OFM guidelines, ensuring a comprehensive assessment. Ontario Regulation 378/18 mandates municipalities to complete and review a CRA, using it to inform decisions about fire protection services.

This CRA equips Douro-Dummer with valuable insights to enhance public safety and mitigate fire-related risks effectively.”

“Conclusion

...As public expectations of fire services evolve it is wise for Council to prioritize allocating additional resources to public education and fire code enforcement. This strategic approach aims to maintain a lower fire loss and injury rate, improve overall community safety, and prevent catastrophic fire incidents.

The Douro-Dummer Fire Master Plan complements the Community Risk Assessment (CRA) by guiding the municipality in determining the appropriate "Level of Service" for fire protection. Recommendations in the Fire Master Plan include establishing clear goals and objectives, identifying necessary resources, providing training and equipment, and implementing activities and programs aligned with the Three Lines of Defence framework for effective fire protection services.

Continuous review and updating of operational policies and standard operating guidelines are essential aspects of the ongoing Fire Master Plan process. Additionally, new policies and guidelines should be developed to address emerging risks effectively. The Fire Master Plan identifies areas requiring Council approval for the levels of service and activities aimed at enhancing fire safety within the community.”

The Master Fire Plan has 56 recommendations, of which I would conclude that about half are directly related to delivery of fire protection services and the other half are to enhance or create new initiatives to better serve the community in fire safety and the members of the department.

Question 2

The recommendation for a part-time Deputy Chief (DC) came from the Master Fire Plan, working defined hours every week, and to review annually the need to add hours to this position. Our Deputy Chief works approximately 20 hours a week but has only been compensated for about half due to

his generosity. The twenty hours on average are divided up as follows, 8 hours training, 2 hours admin, 6 hours response, and 4 as other duties as assigned. The DC's primary responsibility is training, being one of the five divisions outlined in our Establishing and Regulating by-law, 2019-27. A part-time position would add very little value to the current arrangement.

The Deputy Chief position summary from the current job description is:

“The Deputy Fire Chief is second in command of the Fire Department and normally has the overall responsibility of the operation of on-scene emergency services to ensure safe, effective and efficient actions are carried out. The Deputy Fire Chief is responsible for all activities related to the development, implementation, coordination and administration of the training programs as outlined in the E&R by-law, Division of Training. The Deputy Fire Chief manages personnel in a supervisory role for all other roles of the Fire Department, under the direction of the Fire Chief.

The Deputy Fire Chief role is to collaborate with and support the Fire Chief. The Deputy Fire Chief needs to understand all Divisional Responsibilities and may carry out these duties as assigned by the Fire Chief.”

The recommendation for additional support came from the consultant and was outlined in the MFP.

“Administration

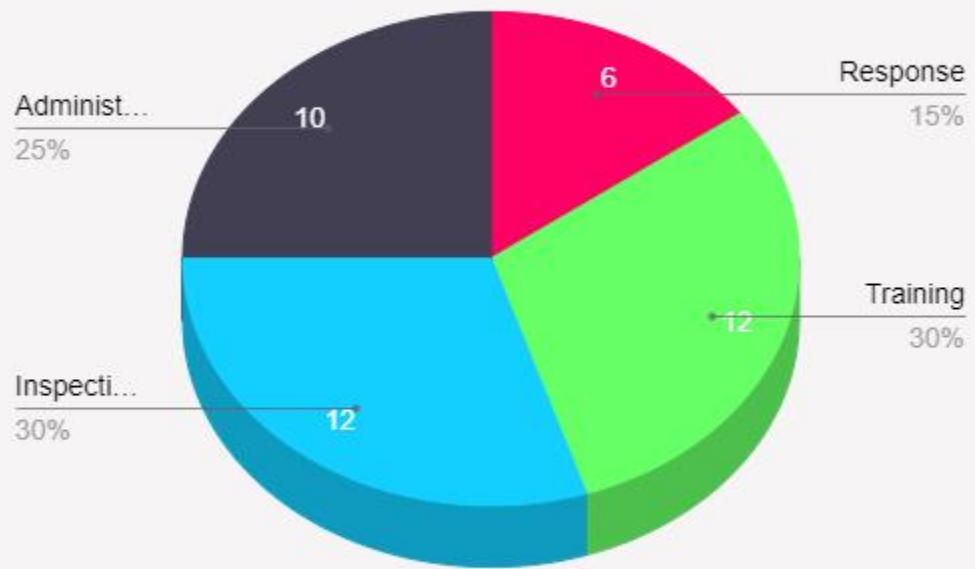
The Douro-Dummer Fire Department is led by a full-time Fire Chief, supported by a volunteer Deputy Fire Chief and an Administrative Assistant. The Fire Chief serves as the Chief Fire Official and holds ultimate accountability to the Council for the department's effective functioning. Within the department, each division operates under the authority of the Fire Chief or a designated representative, with all actions reported to the Fire Chief. Members are expected to adhere to directives issued by the Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief's ultimate responsibility lies with the Council, with reporting channels typically flowing through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Over the past decade, the Province of Ontario has decentralized numerous responsibilities to municipal levels, increasing the accountability and workload for Fire Chiefs. This trend is driven by factors such as the closure of the Ontario Fire College, heightened training and certification requirements, new comprehensive community risk assessments, and the ongoing evolution of Public Fire Safety Guidelines (PFSGs). The provincial government, through the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, continues to impose additional responsibilities on Fire and Emergency Services.

The Fire Chief bears a substantial workload, as outlined in the 2021 job description. This workload encompasses various responsibilities, including administration and human resources management, emergency response coordination, fire prevention activities including inspections, assistance with enforcement in collaboration with the Chief Building Official (CBO), acting as the County Fire Coordinator, serving as the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC), overseeing the operation of the County Rescue Team, and participating on the Board of Eastern Ontario Emergency Training Academy. All fire department personnel ultimately report to the Fire Chief, as shown in the Organization Chart.”

The MFP's has 45 short-term recommendations, being 1-3 years, 9 mid-term recommendations, being 3-6 years and 2 long-term recommendations, exceeding 6 years. The recommendations that could be directly delegated to the Deputy Chief could be Chair and manager of a Health & Safety Committee, increase training initiatives due to certification, officer development and mentorship and skill building for identified future leaders, one time overhaul of Operating Guidelines, Best Practices and Policies – with ongoing review and updating, increased public education, increased fire inspections, transition to NG911 (public education campaigns). I would anticipate that the role of a full-time deputy would have a breakdown of hours something like this:

Pie Chart



Note: based on a 40 hour work week. Number of hours are shown within the graph.

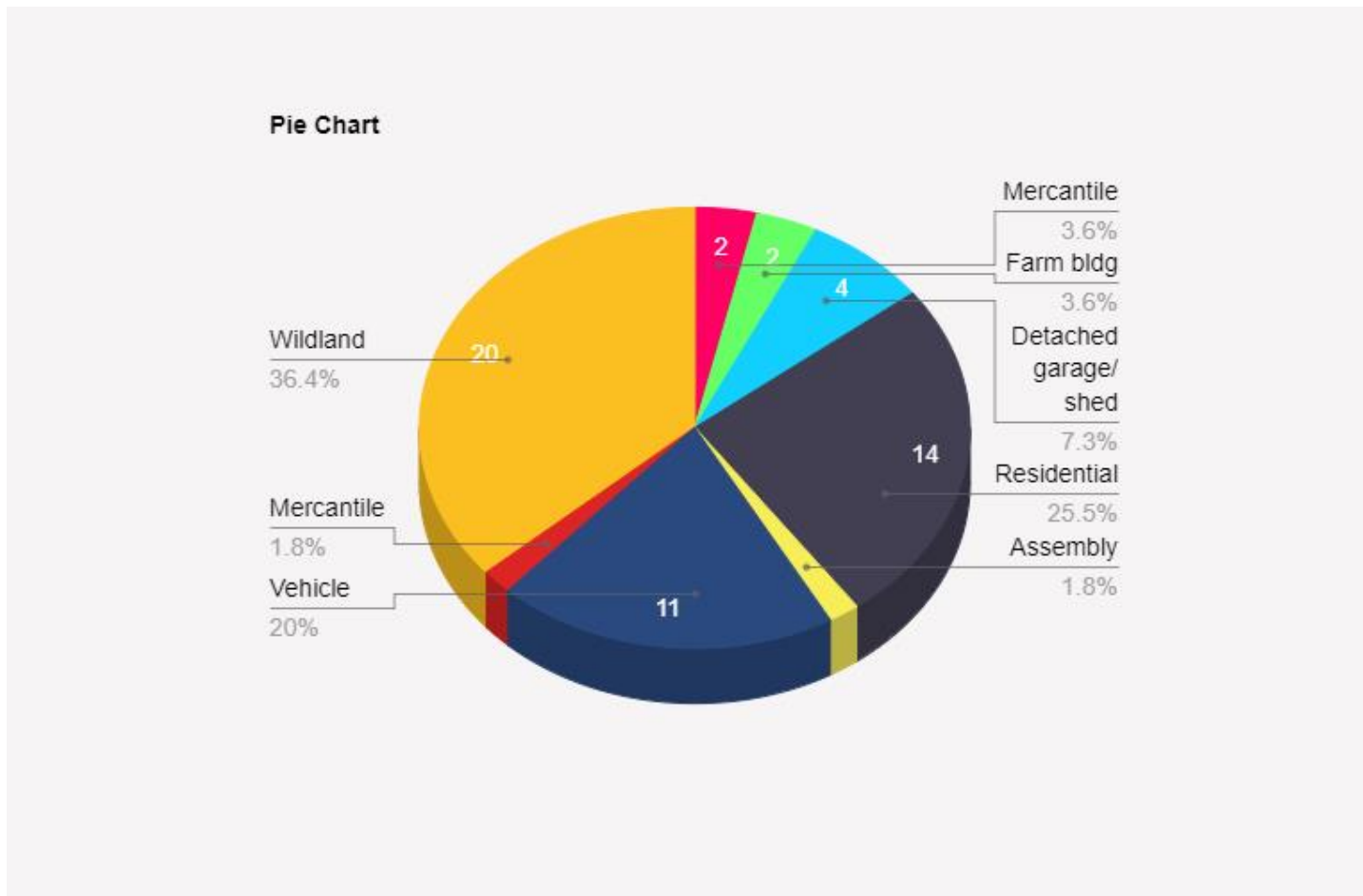
Question 3

Identify what other surrounding municipalities have paid additional staff

Department	# of stations	Chief	Deputy	Training	Fire Prevention	Administrative Assistant
AN	2	FT	N/A	N/A	N/A *1	PT
HBM	2	FT	PT	N/A	N/A	PT
OSM	4	FT	PT	N/A	N/A*2	FT
CM	2	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
NK	2	FT	FT	NA	FT (NEW 2025)*3	N/A
TL	4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
SEL	5	FT	FT	PT	FT	FT
	FT = Full time					
	PT = Part time					
	N/A = Not applicable					
	*1 duties carried out by volunteer f/f					
	*2 duties carried out by Administrative Assistant & Chief					
	*3 pending approved 2025 budget					

Question 4

Types of Fires over past three years, and total loss per type



55 Fires shown over the period of Jan.1 2022 – Dec. 31, 2024, not including utility type of fires

Total loss fires:

1. Farm type – one
2. Residential – three
3. Garage/Shed – three
4. Vehicle - ten

Summary

This report is a supplement to the recommendations that were identified in the MFP & CRA that was done by ESSSI in 2024. Staff is supportive of these recommendations as the current compliment of fire staff find it difficult to keep up without the added workload identified. Once this decision is made by Council, we will create an implementation plan for the MFP and monitor the hours committed to each area as identified.