

Priorities Committee Meeting_Sep15_2020

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Emergency Services- Department Business Plan Update

Report Purpose

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on the 2020-23 Emergency Services Department Business Plan.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Goal 8 - Foster an environment for safe communities

Report

Strathcona County Emergency Services is an integrated fire, rescue and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department operating in an urban and rural environment. SCES is a community-focused, proactive department that works closely with our public, industry and strategic partners to help facilitate public safety, respond to emergencies and get the best possible patient safety and customer service outcomes. The department operates four full-time stations, two-part time stations staffed by 207.6 permanent and 48 hourly employees.

Progress:

Community Communications and Relations

- In our 2019 patient survey we received an overall satisfaction rating of 96%. SCES prides itself on customer service and these results are a testament to the highly trained and dedicated staff who deliver this essential service. We are grateful for the resources we have available and recognize the support services both internal to SCES and through other departments that work in coordination to support these patient safety and customer satisfaction outcomes.

Prevention

- SCES continues to take a risk-based approach to planned inspections. Over 2019 and 2020 we have been able to conduct inspections for a greater range of property types. Property type and historical data are key inputs that help to direct inspection efforts to the highest risk areas. The desired goal is to ensure that every business owner has a point of contact at least once every 3 years.
- In 2019 we completed 1035 risk-based inspections. 2020 may see a reduced number as inspections were suspended for approximately three months due to COVID-19. 2020 inspections have been innovative and even more flexible to ensure that public safety objectives are met in a way that is respectful of the increased pressure our business stakeholders are faced with during the pandemic.

Industry Engagement

- Developed an industrial engagement program charter. The charter will provide direction to SCES to ensure our engagements work to mitigate the overall risk for the community and provide a more coordinated interaction with our industrial stakeholders. This initiative is designed to further improve on what has been a historical point of success for Strathcona County and SCES. In addition to direct engagement with specific sites, the Strathcona Industrial Association (SIA) and

Priorities Committee Meeting_Sep15_2020

Northeast Capital Industrial Association (NCIA) remain as key partners through their respective mutual aid organizations, SDMAP and NRCAER.

- Completed fire inspection of 39 heavy industrial sites in 2019 and are on track to complete 39 sites again in 2020. In the second year of this program we are seeing an increased engagement level and are finding that industry appreciates our facilitative approach and their staff representatives are highly engaged in relation to meeting any obligations they may have that fall under the Alberta Fire Code.

Emergency Management and Business Continuity Planning

- Albert Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) conducted an informal audit in December of 2019. The audit identified that the County's Emergency Management (EM) program is compliant with the Local Authority EM Regulation requirements. Improvements could be made to the identification and training of EOC staff, activation process and formalized plans that include training opportunities.
- Q1 progress report for the Parkade Incident was provided to Council in April. SCES is currently preparing an update on Q2 and Q3 progress. A key deliverable expected by year end is an updated Municipal Emergency Management Plan.
- The COVID-19 response was an effective platform to update and action departmental level Business Continuity Plans (BCP). During the preparedness phase (February) all departments were directed to review their BCPs while simultaneously, ITS was developing a virtual platform for reporting BCP challenges. As our response escalated to the mitigation phase (March/April), we were well positioned to ensure continuity of operations across the organization.

Emergency Communications

- As a follow up to a business continuity plan that was completed in 2019 and was specific to the Emergency Communications Centre, a live back up site was established in Station 6. While this is only an interim solution it is a positive step forward and is already yielding benefits related to staff training as it enables a test environment for our Emergency Communications Operators.
- NG911 – This project is jointly led by Information Technology Services and SCES. It is currently in the procurement phase and is on track from a time, scope and budget perspective. This project will modernize our 911 call answer and dispatch software. Expected project outcomes include increased system reliability and the ability to seamlessly accept 911 calls with a variety of media, including text, photos and video.

Emergency Response

- Wellness and Fitness Initiative (WFI) - a joint initiative between SCES, Human Resources and IAFF. The program purpose is to support the health and well-being of staff at work, in life and into retirement in the context of the unique occupational exposure risks that come with the role of a fire fighter:
 - Lab work and medical screens for half of eligible staff are progressing in 2020. Lab work and medical screens for the other half of eligible staff will be scheduled in 2021.
 - A peer fitness team has been selected. Formal training was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Priorities Committee Meeting_Sep15_2020

- Ongoing collaboration with subject matter experts to develop essential resources for staff such as Sleep and Shift Work, Nutrition and Heart Health, Safe Lifting Techniques/Fundamental Movements.
- Policies and procedures (SOP's) - in 2019-2020 SCES focused on adapting emergency responses to meet the needs of an expanding community as well as addressing new threats to our fire fighters. Programs were implemented or updated to address:
 - How we develop, review, and implement new policies and procedures
 - How we manage a "Mayday" situation
 - How we minimize exposure to the gasses, chemicals, and carcinogens that our fire fighters are exposed to each time they respond to an emergency incident through the implementation of an "Exposure Reduction" policy and procedures
 - How we respond to and utilize resources when responding to large residential buildings (Mid-rise and Hi-rise)
 - How we ensure we are not overstressing our fire fighters on an emergency incident through the implementation of "Rehabilitation and Recycling" policies and procedures
- Quality Management - An external audit of our ISO program was conducted and our certification was maintained.

Initiatives:

Municipal Emergency and Business Continuity System

- Hiring of BCP position is delayed due to COVID-19 but we have made significant progress relative to advancing Strathcona County's emergency management program in the areas of risk assessment, service prioritization and business continuity planning. In addition, tools and processes have been developed that will have a permanent benefit towards the organization's business continuity capacity.

Fire and Emergency Services Long Range Plans

- Original plan was to select a consultant by Q3 2020. Procurement has not commenced due to COVID-19. This delay represents a major impact to an important initiative for SCES. This initiative will provide an opportunity to review our community risk and resourcing levels. This information will be used to review whether service levels are meeting community needs and to evaluate our ability to meet the required service level targets.

Medical Services Delivery Model

- In 2019 SCES conducted a community needs assessment, looking for opportunity to deliver emergency medical services (both urgent and emergent) more effectively and efficiently and to better integrate with the healthcare services within the community. We also reviewed our internal operations in an attempt to identify potential resource capacity. In March of 2020 Alberta Health Services (AHS) expanded their provincially based "mobile integrated health" program to include Strathcona County. This is good news for our residents who now have enhanced services. It is unfortunate news for SCES as we believe that a community-based program is best delivered by a

Priorities Committee Meeting_Sep15_2020

community-based organization. AHS has committed to an information sharing session with a focus on our community needs assessment. We hope that this information will help inform and influence future evolutions of the AHS Mobile Integrated Health program within our community. Through this process SCES has strengthened relationships with key local stakeholders who are also engaged in providing health care in our community and we look forward to continuing to collaborate with this stakeholder group.

Annual equipment replacement program

- This program ensures our fire and EMS assets are maintained and replaced as per life cycle requirements. For example, 2019 saw the rollout of new thermal imaging cameras. This piece of equipment helps to target fire suppression efforts and most importantly helps to mitigate risks to our firefighters. The annual equipment replacement program is on track.

Council and Committee History

December 6, 2018 Council approved 2019-222 Corporate Business Plan and 2019 Budget

December 5, 2019 Council approved 2020 Budget

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: Information Technology Services (ITS)

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Enclosure

1 SCES Department Business Plan Update – Presentation