

District of Barriere

# REPORT TO COUNCIL

## Request for Decision

<b>Date:</b> February 3, 2025	<b>File:</b> 530.20/Rpts
<b>To:</b> Council	<b>From:</b> Fire Chief
<b>Re: Policy Number change and Fire Department Remuneration</b>	
<b>Recommendations:</b> <b>THAT Council adopts Policy Number 54FI – Fire Department Remuneration.</b> <b>THAT Council rescinds Policy No.38 – Fire Department Remuneration.</b>	

### Purpose

For Council to review a change to the Barriere Fire Rescue's wage allocation and consider approving a small wage increase.

### Background

In reviewing the Fire Department Remuneration Policy, staff noticed that policy number 38 was assigned to two separate policies. To avoid confusion between policies, a suggestion is to change Policy Number 38: Fire Department Remuneration to '54FI'. For the purpose of this document and throughout this document, anytime 'Policy Number 38' is referenced, it is speaking to 'Fire Department Remuneration.'

In 2021, changes were made to Policy No. 38 increasing the Fire Department Remuneration, however, these changes were never made official in the policy. (Staff highlighted these changes in yellow in the policy) Staff are proposing a formal change in policy to accurately showcase these changes in remuneration moving forward. The amounts paid to volunteer firefighters in the last three years have been under the unofficial changes and no foreseen additional costs are expected (depending on call volume).

### Key Changes

There are several additions to the Policy recommended at this stage which are highlighted in blue font and highlighted in more detail below:

#### Fire Department Honorarium:

Staff propose to add a \$20 honorarium at the 6-hour mark for an event, a \$20 honorarium at the 8-hour mark of an event and to pay the Junior Firefighters the rate of Firefighters, once the probationary period is complete. As council may be able to imagine, at the 6-hour mark, volunteers have either cancelled shifts at work, given up an entire night of sleep, missed important family time including birthdays and holidays or given up a weekend day to attend these events. Staff believe that a good way to show appreciation would be to offer another \$20 per 2 hours worked for each volunteer at the incident and capping this amount at the 8-hour mark.

There has been no increase in Fire Department Remuneration since 2021. With the changes mentioned above, Staff are requesting to add in an honorarium at a calls 6-hour mark and 8-hour mark. This will have little effect on the current budget but displays support from the District of Barriere for calls where members are more commonly missing work hours. Staff feel these amounts can assist the volunteer when time is spent away from their employment and wages are ultimately lost during a longer emergency event.

Longer calls can be harder to keep volunteers for – typically these calls include much more demanding tasks of our volunteers, including extrication of deceased individuals, mop up of structure fires after being in full gear already for 6 hours (a minimum of 65lbs of unbreathable bunker gear and tools), wildfires, and investigations. In 2024, only one call would have been eligible for the additional \$20 for a total cost of \$200 for 10 members (for two hours’ worth of work per person). If an hourly rate was given for those two hours, this would mean they were making \$10 per hour.

As shown in the table below, out of 326 calls from 2021 to 2024, only 6 calls went above 6 hours and 4 of those extended into the 8-hour mark.

Calls Going over 6 hours and 8 Hours						
Fire Call Number	6hrs	8hrs	Total hrs	Firefighters Attending	Officers Attending	Additional Cost Per Call
I-24-39	X		6hrs	7	3	\$200
I-23-65	X	X	10hrs	7	3	\$400
I-23-18	X	X	9.5hrs	6	2	\$320
I-22-36	X	X	8hrs	7	3	\$400
I-22-15	X		7hrs	6	2	\$160
I-21-41	X	X	9hrs	8	2	\$400
					<b>Total Amount that would have been paid over 4 years (out of 326 calls)</b>	\$1880
Calls lasting over 8 hours since 2021: 4					<b>Total Cost Yearly</b>	\$470
Calls lasting over 6 hours since 2021: 6						

On average, this remuneration change would result in roughly \$470 on average in additional costs to the District.

### **Junior Firefighter Pay:**

Currently, Barriere Fire Rescue has one Junior Firefighter. The member mentioned above has been with the fire department since June 2023 and has showed an exceptional amount of engagement with both the fire department and its association. In the past, we have had Junior members graduate from high school while still with the Fire Department and continue to assist as firefighters, or they have moved on to other volunteer firehalls or even pursued careers in Industrial Firefighting. Junior volunteers are required to make 70% of all training practices, and 50% of eligible calls (juniors are not allowed to attend Highway Rescue Calls, Motor Vehicle Incidents, or any fire that has a known deceased person. Junior firefighters are also not permitted in the 'hot zone' (ie. Inside a burning structure fire). Junior firefighters are still tasked with hard and grueling work such as: operating pumps, digging or trenching with wildfires, running equipment back and forth, mop-up, etc. This work still exposes them to particulates that can cause cancer and other diseases.

Currently, Junior members are not eligible for pay under the current Bylaw #55 (limit to age 18+) nor under the current Policy No. 38 for Fire Department Remuneration.

To recognize the contribution that junior firefighters bring to the department and community, Staff would like to propose that Junior Members become eligible for pay at the firefighter pay out rate after their probation period. This would be a cost of roughly \$1,300 per year if the Junior member attends all practices and attends 15 callouts per year.

### **BC Wildfire Contracted Deployments:**

This addition is new to the policy; however, it is the standard that the District of Barriere has been paying firefighters when they are deployed under the Interagency Agreement with BC Wildfire Service. The 'Engine Boss' is responsible for attending daily safety meetings, submitting all paperwork before, on and after the event, and organizing the crew during the event – and as such, gets paid as per the agreements 'Single Resource Firefighter Rate.' An Engine Boss is required to have additional training, and all efforts are made to have an Officer of Barriere Fire Rescue as an Engine Boss. The crew holds less responsibility during a wildfire deployment and has been paid \$2.00 less per hour than an Engine Boss.

At the end of the day, the District of Barriere still receives a substantial amount of income from these deployments per hour. Each fire apparatus has a different rate at which it gets paid in an 'All Found Rate'. With the lowest profiting truck, after paying out wages for the crew, the District of Barriere still receives \$217 per hour (for a Type 3 Tender and crew of 2 people). Deployments can last anywhere from 12 hours (minimum pay rate) to 14 days (12 hours of pay each day).

**Scope, Policy Principals, Payment:** These sections have been added for consistency purposes and codify current practices and for example payment standards into Policy.

### **Summary**

The updated policy is intended to codify current practices, allow for remuneration of junior firefighters, and allow for remuneration for calls lasting 6 hours or more.

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## Benefits or Impact

### General

Overall, the proposed changes would allow for a correction of the Policy Number from 38 to 54FI, while also including a minimal increase for longer call outs and establishing a small remuneration amount for junior firefighters.

### Finances

As detailed above, based on current call volume and length of call lasting 4 or more hours, the additional cost on average would be roughly \$470 per year to accommodate the call-out length changes.

A Junior Firefighter inclusion could result in costs up to \$1,300 per year, per Junior Member. However, this also provides for a valuable resource during emergencies. The current Fire department policies do not allow more than 3 junior members at any time.

### Strategic Impact

Enhanced engagement with our Community and our Partners.

### Risk Assessment

Compliance: Fire Regulations Bylaw No. 55. (This by-law is currently under review by staff and a proposal to amend the current bylaw will be submitted to Council at a later date.); Policy No 38 – Fire Department Remuneration.

Risk Impact: Low

Internal Control Process: Staff follow standardized practices for amending policies.

### Next Steps / Communication

- Staff will be reviewing the Fire Safety Bylaw No. 55 in the coming months and present amendments that would remove the exclusion by age for volunteer members, while also presenting options to modernize the current Bylaw.
  - Work with Financial staff to update approved pay rates, and establish Junior Firefighter pay
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## Attachments

- Draft Policy No. 54FI – Fire Department Remuneration
- Current Policy No. 38 – Fire Department Remuneration

## Recommendations

**THAT Council adopts Policy Number 54FI – Fire Department Remuneration.**

**THAT Council rescinds Policy No.38 – Fire Department Remuneration.**

## Alternative Options

1. Council can maintain the current policy. If Council chooses this option, additional work may need to be done to ensure that only the changes from 2021 are applicable (as they had yet to be codified in policy).
2. Council can make amendments to the proposed Policy.

Prepared by:

A. Hovenkamp, Fire Chief



# DISTRICT OF BARRIERE

## COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Page 1 of 1  
Approval Date:

**NO: 54FI**  
**DEPARTMENT: Finance**  
**SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT REMUNERATION**

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all Volunteer Firefighters of Barriere Fire Rescue.

**POLICY PRINCIPALS:**

- A) This policy only applies following successful completion of a 3-month probation period, or as specified in the department bylaws and policies.
- B) Time spent at Association Events will not be considered fire service time and will not be tracked or remunerated through this policy.

**POLICY REMUNERATION:**

The following remuneration figures for the Barriere Fire Recue shall be as follows:

<b>Administration:</b>	Assistant to FC	\$25/hr*
	Admin	\$20/hr*

*(\*max of \$8,000 total per year for Fire Chief approved projects, unless otherwise approved by the CAO)*

<b>Chief Officers:</b>	Fire Call	\$30
	Practice	\$25

<b>Fire Inspections:</b>		\$25*
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*(\*Per site visit – max 2 visits per location – pay only for lead inspector)*

<b>Incident Commander:</b>	Fire Call	\$25/hr (max 3hrs)
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<b>Officers (All):</b>	Fire Call	\$30*
	Practice	\$20

- \*Officers will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 2 hours*
- \*Officers will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 4 hours*
- \*Officers will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 6 hours*
- \*Officers will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 8 hours*

<b>Training Officer</b> <i>(*when training):</i>	Practice/Training session	\$25/hr*
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<b>Firefighters</b>	Fire Call	\$25
<b>&amp; Junior Firefighters</b>	Practice	\$17

*\*Firefighters will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 2 hours*

*\*Firefighters will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 4 hours*

*\*Firefighters will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 6 hours*

*\*Firefighters will receive another \$20 honorarium when a call hits 8 hours*

<b>Probationary/Rookie/Junior</b>	All Events	Volunteer
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**BC WILDFIRE CONTRACTED DEPLOYMENTS:**

When firefighters are out on a provincially contracted deployment, remuneration will differ from the above policy. Engine Boss’s will be paid at the Single Resource rate (found under ‘Firefighter Wage Rate) and Crew Members will be paid no less that \$2.00 under that wage amount.

If the Chief is deployed or working on administrative assignments specifically for a wildfire deployment event, they will be paid according to their Employment Contract.

**PAYMENT:**

- A) Payment will occur once per quarter.
- B) All firefighters must provide banking information and a social insurance number for payroll at the beginning of their ‘start’ date.



# DISTRICT OF BARRIERE

## COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Page 1 of 1  
Approval Date: September 4, 2018

**NO: 38**  
**DEPARTMENT: Finance**  
**SUBJECT: FIRE DEPARTMENT REMUNERATION**

The following remuneration figures for the Barriere Volunteer Fire Department shall be as follows:

<b>Fire Chief:</b> <i>(*max of 60 hrs per month unless otherwise approved by the CAO)</i>	Admin	\$25/hr*
	Fire Inspection	\$25
	Fire Call	\$25/hr (max 3hrs)
	Practice	\$12/hr
<b>Incident Commander:</b>	Fire Call	\$25/hr (max 3hrs)
<b>Officers (All):</b>	Fire Call	\$30
	Practice	\$12
<b>Training Officer</b> <i>(*when training):</i>	Practice/Training session	\$25/hr*
<b>Firefighters:</b>	Fire Call	\$25
	Practice	\$10
<b>Probationary/Rookie</b>	all events	Volunteer

The above remuneration applies to the Fire Department's - Road Rescue Team as well.