

Negotiating Working Group of the County of Prince Edward (PEC) and Volunteer Firefighters (VFF) Association

Terms of Reference

Mandate

This Negotiating Working Group of the County of Prince Edward (PEC) and Volunteer Firefighters (VFF) Association (the “Working Group”) has been established in a time limited capacity to support the negotiation of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward and the Prince Edward County Fire & Rescue Volunteer Firefighters, with a retroactive effective date of December 1, 2024.

In all interactions and discussions, the Working Group will promote the collective values of the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward, these being innovation, respect, and service-orientation.

Goals/Purpose

The goals and purpose of the Working Group are to:

1. Negotiate the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Corporation of the County of Prince Edward and the Prince Edward County Fire & Rescue Volunteer Firefighters (VFF) Association in good faith.
2. Discuss the objectives and needs of Prince Edward County Fire & Rescue as well as the needs of the VFF members that serve the department to determine mutual gains that may be implemented for both in accordance with the strategic direction of the municipality.
3. Ensure that all proposals, discussions, and agreements are aligned with the corporate values and Strategic Plan priorities. The Working Group will negotiate a deal that adheres to the approved budget.
4. The Working Group will present the proposed terms of the new MOU to Council in closed session as allowed by Section 239(2) of the *Municipal Act*.

Membership

1. Two (2) representatives from Council, as appointed by Motion 2026-88:
 - i. Councillor Branderhorst
 - ii. Councillor Neiman

As outlined within the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, Council members shall disclose any pecuniary interest or nature thereof to the Municipal Clerk before accepting a nomination to the Working Group.

2. Two (2) representatives from the VFF Association

Prior to the first Working Group meeting, each party will select one (1) of its representatives to be a Co-Chair. The two (2) Co-Chairs will lead the discussion at the negotiations and act as the primary contact for all correspondence between meetings.

Scope of Activities/Roles

1. Meet at regular, mutually agreed-upon intervals to review and discuss each party's proposals, making every reasonable effort to ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding is reached in a timely manner.
2. Observe the County of Prince Edward's Strategic Plan, and any applicable by-laws policies and procedures.
3. Maintain strict confidentiality / non-disclosure during the period of active negotiations. Confidentiality / non-disclosure will continue to apply to the discussions that were had at Working Group meetings, even after the By-Law accepting the new MOU has been approved by Council, and the MOU is executed by both parties.
4. Attend each meeting fully prepared, with all required research completed and all follow-up items addressed.
5. Consult with senior staff or Association membership on proposals, as needed.
6. Prepare and deliver summary reports on a regular basis to Council and to the Volunteer Firefighters Association, through each party's designated representatives. These reports will provide updates on the status of negotiations and request direction on any matters of unresolved issues.

Term

The Working Group will disband when the new MOU is signed by all parties and the executing By-Law ratified by Council.

Staff Support

Human Resources staff will provide administrative support in scheduling the Working Group's meetings (including sending the meeting invites, booking suitable meeting locations, and recording/distributing action items as required).

With the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Working Group may also be supported, as required, by the following members of staff:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Manager of Human Resources & Organizational Development or designate
- Fire Chief
- Municipal Clerk or designate from the Clerk's Office
- Municipal Employment Lawyer (third party)
- Employees of the municipality asked to participate by the Working Group

Reporting Relationship to Council

The Working Group does not have any delegated authority. In accordance with Section 239(2) of the *Municipal Act*, the Working Group will report to Council or the Committee of the Whole regularly on its progress and intended direction in closed session.

Recommendations beyond the scope of this Working Group, such as the implementation of an MOU, would require a staff report to Council for decision.

Finances

No member shall receive remuneration for services. The Working Group does not have authority to incur any expenses (e.g. third-party consultants, lawyers, etc.) without prior approval of Council.

Meetings

Human Resources will provide administrative support to the Working Group and be responsible for the Working Group's meeting logistics. At its first meeting, the Working Group is encouraged to establish its meeting dates for, at minimum, the upcoming six (6) months.

To ensure that negotiations proceed and an MOU is reached in a timely manner, the Working Group should meet no less than once a month, and more frequently at the discretion of the membership.