



NOV 26 2020

MR. STEVE NORN
MLA, TU NEDHÉ-WIILEDEH

Oral Question 412-19(2): Fire Hall in Dettah

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Questions you raised on October 27, 2020, regarding the capacity of the Dettah Fire Hall and emergency services on the Ingraham Trail.

Currently, many communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT) are challenged with the organization and delivery of emergency response services. Key challenges include meeting safety requirements, following industry best practice and maintaining sufficient volunteer staff. There are also numerous considerations involved in establishing or expanding any fire protection service. Some of these considerations include:

- The purchase of infrastructure, including buildings, fire apparatus, equipment and safety gear; all of which must meet recognized standards;
- Requirements for minimum staffing (paid/volunteer), training and certification on a wide range of equipment and topics;
- Policy and procedure development, including legal authority to respond to and enter public property;
- Maintenance programming (equipment and apparatus);
- Fire services require strict oversight from an operational and administrative perspective by individual(s) with the requisite skills and knowledge to manage and respond to reported fires; and
- Fire services must meet the requirements of the *Safety Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

Once a fire service is well established, it can expand to provide fire, rescue and ground ambulance services outside community boundaries. This requires additional equipment, staffing, policies/procedures and oversight. Emergency services delivery typically grows and expands over a period of time based on community needs.

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The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) has developed a Community Fire Protection Plan to support the development and maintenance of community fire protection services in NWT communities. MACA officials have had several meetings with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation over the past year and are continuing ongoing efforts to assist them in the development and growth of the Dettah Fire Department.

At the present time, the community is taking a fire prevention approach with the Yellowknife Fire Department responding to and managing structural fires. The Dettah Fire Department has not yet expanded to a stage where they can autonomously respond to active fires. MACA will continue its efforts in the provision of support and guidance to build fire response capacity in Dettah.

MACA is working with an interdepartmental working group to look at the delivery of fire services on the Ingraham Trail and considering emergency services in other areas of the territory. This work is to identify what level of service may be appropriate and the possible service delivery options available and will also consider alternative solutions. The work has just started, and at this point in time, it is still too early to consider using the Dettah Fire Services as a solution.

I will ensure that my Department provides an update to Standing Committee at an appropriate time on this important work.

Thank you for your interest on this issue.

Sincerely,



Paulie Chinna
Minister
Municipal and Community Affairs

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Deputy Minister, Municipal and Community Affairs