



INFORMATION REQUEST

INFORMATION REQUEST #: IR-07-25

REQUESTED BY: Councillor Tokar

TOPIC: Fire Prevention Officer

DATE OF REQUEST: Prior to GPC Meeting 2025

DATE OF RESPONSE: November 17, 2025

QUESTION:

Page 155 talks about adding an additional Fire Prevention Officer and in the "Business Need" section, it talks about some revenue generation and cost offsetting through permitting and inspection fees, but these are not called out in the financial summary at the top of the section. Do we know the value of these revenues and does it make sense to include it here as an offset to the expense?

Response

The revenue identified in the Business Case for permitting is not specific to the Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) position, but rather the Fire Prevention "Branch". As mentioned during the Municipal Development orientation session on Nov 10, there is a standard 10% charge applied on any building permit for a single-family dwelling or larger residential/commercial construction to cover the time required for plan reviews and related tasks. Smaller permits such as a deck, basement development, etc. do not have this fee applied. Adding an additional FPO would not increase this revenue stream as it is based on permit activity, which as we know continues to set records year over year. With increased permitting activity and other legislative changes/needs, it is causing capacity challenges in Fire Services and increased risk related to code compliance across the city.

The reference in the business case was intended only to highlight that the existing permitting fee provides some cost offset for the Prevention Branch. For the 2026 budget, the permitting fee revenue is projected to be \$180,000 (the City is currently sitting at \$185,000 for 2025). Again, this is an estimate based on permitting projections. Going back several years, this fee did not exist and therefore the entire tax base was subsidizing the Prevention Branch.

While FPOs can also charge a fee for re-inspections, these occurrences are not of significance to warrant identification in the Business Case. The current budget for this is \$10,000. The City's

current practice is that an initial “required” inspection is performed free of charge to the business and a fee is charged if there is a re-inspection required (i.e. where areas of non-compliance are found). This practice is consistent with the majority of comparable municipalities. The Fire Services Bylaw is currently under review by Administration and will be brought forward in 2026 for re-affirmation of this practice or consideration of changes.

The main rationale for the Business Case is in regard to operational efficiencies identified and reducing risk. The City has lagged behind municipal comparators related to Fire Prevention as identified in the 2023-2033 Fire Services Master Plan Report where only one other comparator had 1 FPO (outside of AB). All others had 2 or 3+. This means that the City has more of a reactionary and risk enhanced approach to fire prevention. For example, of the 1200 properties in Spruce Grove requiring regular inspection the City is only sitting at 400 to date.

Additionally, the City’s current Quality Management Plan (QMP) is based on a service level that includes or implies 2 FPO’s. During audits, the Safety Codes Council has “passed” the City with the understanding that the Master Plan has identified the need to add an additional FPO. Should the City not approve the additional FPO, which is entirely within Council’s purview and has been communicated as such to Safety Codes Council, the City would have to review the QMP for a reduced service level and seek support from the Safety Codes Council. They could accept it or ask for other considerations (i.e. contracted help). Several years ago, the City did contract additional help; however, the costs were prohibitive.

Background

Information shared with GPC on November 17, 2025: <https://pub-sprucegrove.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISIStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=fa9b77e2-0bcc-4751-a085-c632101ba2a7>

Financial Implications/Taxation Impact

As outlined in the budget presentation and business case

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