



Subject: *Lantz Volunteer Fire Department MOU - Extension*
To: Corporate and Residential Services Committee
Date Prepared: March 6, 2026
Related Motions: C24(26)
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Summary

In 2024, Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lantz Volunteer Fire Department (Lantz Fire). The MOU is to explore the former Lantz School site PID 45148111 for mixed use development opportunities that may include a future fire station.

In 2025, a governance study was completed by the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS). The following business day after the report was presented to government, the Province introduced Bill 158 *Fire Safety and Services Act*.

In 2026, Bill 168 *Support for Fire Protection Services Act* was tabled in February. The focus the Province has put on fire service governance, has paused any progress on the MOU.

The MOU expired March 1, 2026.

In consultation with Lantz Fire, staff are recommending that Council extend the MOU.

Financial Impact Statement

None.

Recommendation

Extend the MOU.

Recommended Motion

Move that Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that they direct the CAO to extend the existing Memorandum of Understanding with Lantz Volunteer Fire Department for two (2) years with terms to be agreed upon by both parties.

Background

Lantz Fire has expressed interest in the former Lantz School site PID 45148111.

In 2024, Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Lantz Fire for the site. The intent of the MOU was to explore mixed uses on the site. The site could include the potential for a new fire station. In 2024 and into 2025, staff explored mixed use options.

In 2025, the Province provided funding to the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia to complete a governance review. That review was submitted to provincial government on September 29. On October 1, the Province tabled Bill 158. The tabling of the Bill indicated the governments intent to put the recommendations of the

FSANS report and value for money audit for fire training into legislation. Although the Bill did not receive Royal Assent, the province started moving on engagement.

In February 2026, the Province tabled legislation that should it pass, will require municipalities and fire service providers to complete fire service reviews in the manner required by regulations. The Bill has yet to be proclaimed and regulations will follow.

MOU highlights:

1. Both parties to speak formally with each other;
2. The fire department to confidentially engage their membership during the process;
3. The possibility of exploring complimentary uses on the site;
4. The Municipality to lead all aspects of engagement with potential project partners;
5. The Fire department to define their space requirements for the next 50 years;
6. Exploration of land ownership and operating models;
7. Both parties to be responsible for their own costs incurred;
8. The current site owned by Lantz Fire to be reviewed for long term municipal needs;
9. If a land ownership and operating model has not been agreed to by both parties by March 1st, 2026 this MOU may be exited by either party.
10. The MOU is not legally binding.

Discussion

In correspondence with Lantz Volunteer Fire Department, staff noted that as a larger fire service review may be forthcoming (pending legislation), Council would likely not want to see Lantz Volunteer Fire Department invest funds to complete a needs assessment.

Lantz is agreeable to an extension of the MOU.

Lantz Volunteer Fire Department - Feedback

- Understand the uncertainty regarding major commitments until such time as a fire service review can be completed
- Agree with the conversation of extension of MOU
- Concerned with how lengthy the delays will be and the impact it will have on a new facility for their department
- Asking if Council has a timeline for completing the fire protection services review and addressing any findings

Extending the MOU provides a continued commitment by Council to Lantz Volunteer Fire Department to discuss the site for a potential fire station. Extending the MOU should include:

- Updated Whereas section to provide context of the FSANS and Provincial legislation that has contributed to a change in landscape for fire service delivery in Nova Scotia.
- 2-year extension

Lantz Volunteer Fire Department has inquired about a timeline for completion of the fire protection services review. As the legislation and subsequent regulations have not been approved, a timeline would be challenging to commit too at this time. However, given the path that has been outlined by FSANS and the Province, Council could take incremental steps along side the fire service to prepare for a review.

A fire protection services review would include many components. It may also take multiple steps to complete. If Council wanted further information on how to incrementally move this forward, staff could provide a dedicated report on this topic.

It should be noted that in the corridor both Enfield and Lantz Fire Departments have new fire station projects on the horizon. These are now at a standstill due to the change in fire service landscape. There are other departments such as Mount Uniacke and Maitland that are in various planning stages/discussions of a new fire station. Although a financial analysis has not been completed at the municipal level, the ability for those departments to secure independent financing without municipal intervention will likely not be achievable. In addition to municipal involvement for financing, the debt will likely not be able to be carried without impacting municipal debt capacity along with significant financial burden to the ratepayers for debt servicing costs.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Councils Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Key Strategy: Strong Community

Goal: Our goal is to provide services, programs and facilities, through direct service delivery and collaboration with others, that allow people and businesses to thrive.

Objective: Support the long-term planning of the East Hants Fire Service and policing services.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Council has the authority to extend the MOU.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no immediate financial commitments to extend the MOU.

It should be noted that in the corridor both Enfield and Lantz Fire Departments have new fire station projects on the horizon. These are now at a standstill due to the change in fire services landscape. Other departments such as Mount Uniacke and Maitland are in various planning stages/discussions of a new fire station. Although a financial analysis has not been completed at the municipal level, the ability for those departments to secure independent financing without municipal intervention may not be achievable. In addition, the debt will likely impact municipal debt capacity along with financial burden to the ratepayers for debt servicing costs.

Alternatives

Choose to let the MOU lapse and not extend.

Attachments

N/A