

Contract ratified between Town and firefighters

The Town of Caledon announced that a four-year contract with its 26 full-time firefighters was ratified at Tuesday's council meeting.

The new agreement is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2015 and will expire Dec. 31, 2018. The negotiation committee (consisting of the Town's Human Resources department, Fire Administration and the Caledon Professional Fire Fighters Association (CPFFA)) has worked over the past nine months to negotiate the agreement.

"This agreement sets the stage to support strong, professional services provided by the men and women of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services for years to come," said Mayor Allan Thompson. "As the Town changes and grows, so do the demands on our firefighters. We support the work Caledon Fire and Emergency Services does, day-in and day-out, keeping our community safe and protected."

The agreement will see improvements for the Town of Caledon firefighters. It includes overall benefit improvements, as well as a guaranteed wage increase over the duration of the contract.

The agreement covers the full-time professional firefighters employed by the Town: 26 firefighters, comprised of 20 personnel dedicated to fire suppression, two dedicated to training and four dedicated to support services.

Beginning Dec. 28, the full-time fire suppression staff will move to a 24-hour shift. This scheduling change will be accomplished with existing staff; no new staff will be required to move to a 24-hour shift. The move to 24-hour shifts is a trend gaining momentum in the firefighting profession because of the enhanced opportunities for training, scheduling and health of the firefighter. New promotional exam procedures have been negotiated.

The agreement includes a 2.59 per cent wage increase, year over year. The agreement brings the firefighters' contract up-to-date and avoids a costly arbitration process, which would also have taken the control of the agreement process away from the Town and the CPFFA.

Caledon Fire and Emergency Services is operated by a mix of full-time and volunteer firefighters. Last year (2014), Caledon Fire responded to more 2,300 emergencies. The Caledon service has one of the largest composite fire departments in Ontario, with 26 full-time firefighters and more than 250 paid volunteers.