

Town of Riverview

COUNCIL REPORT FORM



Presented to: Colin Smith, CAO

Department: Riverview Fire & Rescue

Date: October 16, 2023

Subject: RFR Dispatching to Medical Calls

Background:

In early January of 2023 MCMC, the Ambulance New Brunswick dispatch centre, ceased medical dispatching service to twelve NB municipalities, including Riverview. This left Riverview Fire & Rescue to entirely rely upon the Codiac OCC/PSAP to identify medical calls we should respond to. In response, the Fire Chief requested Fire Control to dispatch the fire department to all medical calls until such time as a solution could be found. As a result, the fire department's medical call volume increased 33% in the first eight months of the year.

Recent Developments:

On October 2, 2023, the Chief Officers met with representatives from the Department of Health as well as Medavie Health Services. They advised us they would be returning to the previous notification process for medical first responders. This was implemented effective October 5, 2023. As a result, the Fire Chief asked Fire Control to also revert to our previous practice.

Riverview now continues to rely on a hybrid system. Fire Control uses a list of "key words" to identify life threatening calls we should attend without delay. Where a 911 call is transferred to MCMC and the fire department is not dispatched, MCMC further processes the call and will call Fire Control back to dispatch us if required. We are pleased that MCMC has reverted to their previous practice, and it has reduced the operational burden on Riverview Fire and Rescue. We should note however that the system is not perfect, as call backs from MCMC to Fire Control can easily take 3-4 minutes on average, which delays the attendance to calls by medical first responders.

We will continue to advocate for further improvements in the dispatching of medical first responders to medical calls.