

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

TOPIC:	Procedures for Setting of Fire Fighting Rates for Antigonish County Volunteer Fire Departments
POLICY NUMBER:	38
DATE APPROVED:	November 18, 2014 (#2014-172)
DATE REVISED:	

1.0 TITLE:

1.1 This Policy may be cited as the “Setting of Fire Rates Policy” of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

2.0 DEFINITIONS:

2.1 “Area Rate” means the annual rate set against residential and commercial assessments that make up a Department’s annual Fire Levy.

2.2 “Department” means any volunteer fire department that is providing fire protection services to residents of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

2.3 “Municipality” means the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

2.4 “Ratepayer” is defined as a person who pays rates, or local taxes or a customer of a Public Utility.

3.0 POLICY:

3.1 Departments shall submit their annual budgets and proposed area rates to the Municipality no later than March 31st of each year.

- i. The annual budget shall include a projection of revenues, expenditures, capital investment and financing repayments.
- ii. If a budget is not submitted by March 31, the proposed area rate will be assumed to be equal to the previous fiscal year.

3.2 In the event there is NO proposed increase in the area rate, the proposed rate will be reviewed by the Municipality’s Finance Committee with a recommendation to Municipal Council upon presentation of its annual budget.

3.3 Should a Department request a change to the area rate that results in an increase in rates for any ratepayer, the following procedure will apply:

- i. A public meeting shall be held in the area affected by the change in rate;
- ii. Notification of the public meeting shall be advertised at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting by any of the following means: local paper, church bulletins, radio, flyers, or any other method the Department feels would be appropriate.

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- iii. The Municipality's Director of Finance and the municipal councillor(s) of the affected area shall be advised of the meeting at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date.
 - iv. Department representatives shall conduct the public meeting providing ratepayers an overview of the Department's projected revenue and expenditures and the rationale for the proposed area rate change.
 - v. After an opportunity has been provided to discuss the proposed change in rate structure, a motion if appropriate, will be put forward by the Department to support its request for an area rate increase.
 - vi. Only those ratepayers in attendance, including Department representatives, will be allowed to vote. One vote per property within the affected area on which fire rates are being paid will be considered valid.
 - vii. A record of the meeting will be kept by the Department and forwarded to the Municipality's Finance Committee. The Report will include the meeting purpose, the names and civic address of those in attendance, voting results if any, and the motion that was approved.
 - viii. Upon receipt of the meeting record, the Department's request will be reviewed by the Municipality's Finance Committee with a recommendation to Municipal Council upon presentation of its annual budget.

3.4 The Municipality will not transfer a Department's annual Fire Levy until an annual budget and proposed rates are received.

3.5 Municipal Council reserves the authority to set area rates.

4.0 POLICY REVIEW:

4.1 This Policy will be reviewed biannually, unless deemed otherwise by the Committee of the Whole from time to time.