



City Council Report

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| REPORT NUMBER 066-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue | |
| DATE PREPARED | January 19, 2026 |
| | FILE |
| CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE | February 3, 2026 |
| SUBJECT | Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating Bylaw – Repeal and Replace Report |

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL

WITH RESPECT to Report 066-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue, we recommend that By-law 50-1984, as amended, be repealed and replaced as outlined in this report;

THAT Chapter 890 of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code, titled Fire Service – Regulation be repealed;

AND THAT a new Fire Establishing and Regulating By-law as outlined in this report be presented to City Council for ratification;

AND THAT any other necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 27, 2026, the Quality of Life Standing Committee reviewed Report 066-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue and endorsed the enactment of the new Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law, and repeal of By-law 50-1984, as amended.

The City of Thunder Bay’s current Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law (50-1984) no longer reflects modern legislative requirements under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) or current operational practices, service levels, and organizational structure of Thunder Bay Fire Rescue (TBFR).

A comprehensive update has been completed to:

- Align the by-law with the FPPA, Municipal Act, and current regulatory requirements;
- Clearly define TBFR's Divisional structure, roles, and responsibilities;

- Set out mandated core services as required by legislation;
- Establish clear authority for the Fire Chief to manage and administer Fire Protection Services;
- Introduce provisions for recovery of costs when Additional Resources are deployed.

Administration recommends repeal of the antiquated 1984 by-law and adoption of the new 2025 Establishing and Regulating By-law.

DISCUSSION

The Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law is the primary legislative instrument governing the organization, authority, and delivery of fire protection services in the City of Thunder Bay. The existing by-law (By-law 50-1984, as amended) was enacted over forty years ago and reflects an operational, organizational, and legislative environment that has changed significantly since its adoption. While the by-law has been amended over time, its structure and content no longer align with current legislation, service delivery models, or Council-approved strategic direction.

In August 2020, City Council received and accepted the **Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Strategic Master Fire Plan (SMFP)** and subsequently approved its Implementation Plan in December 2020. The SMFP identified the need to update and modernize the Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law as a foundational recommendation, noting that the existing by-law did not accurately reflect current services, governance structure, or legislative requirements under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* (FPPA). The SMFP specifically recommended that an updated by-law be developed and presented to Council for approval to support modern, risk-based fire protection services.

In parallel, Thunder Bay Fire Rescue completed a **Community Risk Assessment (CRA)** in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 378/18*. The CRA identifies local risks across mandatory profiles, including building stock, demographics, geographic characteristics, infrastructure, and historical incident data. These findings confirm the expanded and evolving role of TBFR beyond traditional fire suppression, including specialized rescue, emergency medical response, public education, inspections, and emergency management. Aligning the Establishing and Regulating Fire By-law with the CRA ensures that the City's legislative framework accurately supports the risk-based delivery of fire protection services.

Further supporting this work, the **Level of Service Survey conducted by the Asset Management Section in late 2024** gathered public input on awareness, satisfaction, response time expectations, professionalism, preparedness, and future service priorities related to Thunder Bay Fire Rescue. Survey results demonstrate strong community awareness of TBFR's broad service mandate and reinforce public expectations for effective emergency response, adequate staffing, modern equipment, and ongoing investment in training and facilities. These findings underscore the importance of a clear and contemporary by-law that defines and authorizes the services currently being delivered on behalf of Council to the community.

Key Changes

The proposed Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law repeals and replaces By-law 50-1984 and introduces the following substantive changes to modernize the City's legislative framework for fire protection services.

Legislative Alignment and Authority

The By-law updates all legislative references to align with the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* and the *Municipal Act, 2001*, replacing outdated references to predecessor legislation contained in the 1984 by-law. The Fire Chief is clearly established as the statutory authority responsible to Council for the administration, operation, and delivery of fire protection services, consistent with current provincial legislation. It clarifies Council's role in establishing service levels and approving budgets, while confirming the Fire Chief's operational independence within those approved parameters.

Modernized Organizational Structure

The By-law presents a modern divisional framework that reflects current Thunder Bay Fire Rescue operations with contemporary divisions such as Fire Prevention and Investigation, Training, Apparatus and Equipment, Administration, and Operations, rather than the outdated 1984 structure focused primarily on suppression and mechanical functions. It also provides flexibility for the Fire Chief to reorganize, establish, or eliminate divisions as operational needs evolve, subject to City policies and collective agreements.

Defined Fire Protection Services and Programs

"Fire Protection Services" are clearly identified in the by-law, reflecting the full scope of services currently delivered, including fire suppression, rescue services, emergency medical response, hazardous materials response, inspections and enforcement, public education, training, and emergency management. These programs and services align the By-law with the Strategic Master Fire Plan and the most recent Community Risk Assessment.

Risk-Based and Service-Level Approach

The By-law introduces provisions acknowledging that service levels may be limited due to factors such as simultaneous incidents, geography, staff training, environmental conditions, and infrastructure limitations, consistent with modern risk-based fire protection planning.

Expanded and Clarified Fire Chief Authorities

The By-law consolidates and modernizes the Fire Chief's authority to issue general orders, policies, procedures, and rules governing operations, training, discipline, staffing, and

deployment. It explicitly authorizes the Fire Chief to prepare and implement Community Risk Assessments, Strategic Master Fire Plans, and related planning documents on behalf of Council and identifies the Fire Chief's reporting function to Council.

Cost Recovery for Extraordinary Responses

The By-law introduces new authority for the City to recover costs associated with the use of Additional Resources during extraordinary emergency responses, where permitted by legislation.

Streamlined Compliance and Enforcement Provisions

The By-law updates offence, interference, and enforcement provisions to align with current Provincial Offences Act and Municipal Act penalty frameworks. It also removes obsolete operational prohibitions and replaces them with enforceable, contemporary provisions focused on public safety and operational effectiveness.

CONSULTATION

On January 27, 2026, the Quality of Life Standing Committee reviewed Report 027-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue and endorsed the new draft Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating By-law 028-2026 with no further recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There is no direct financial impact associated with the adoption of the updated Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing and Regulating By-law. The proposed by-law does not introduce new services, alter existing service levels, or change current operational practices. All services and authorities outlined in the by-law reflect activities already being delivered within approved Council service levels and existing operating and capital budgets.

The purpose of this update is administrative and legislative in nature, bringing the Establishing and Regulating By-law into alignment with current legislation, organizational structure, and modern fire protection practices, without resulting in additional financial pressures.

BACKGROUND

On June 20, 2022, City Council approved the Strategic Master Fire Plan with Report No. R105/2022 - Strategic Master Fire Plan Administrative Update 2022.

Corporate Report 066-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

On December 12, 2020, City Council approved the Implementation Plan for the with Report No. R146/2020.

The Strategic Master Fire Plan 2020 was received by City Council on August 24, 2020 with Report No. R102/2020.

Chapter 890, titled Fire Service – Regulation of the City of Thunder Bay Municipal Code was approved by City Council on November 12, 1996.

The City of Thunder Bay's current Fire Department Establishing and Regulating By-law, By-law 50-1984 was enacted in 1984.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – By-law 028-2026 – Draft Thunder Bay Fire Rescue Establishing & Regulating By-Law

Attachment B – Schedule A to Thunder Bay Fire Rescue By-Law 28-2026

REPORT PREPARED BY

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REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kayla Dixon, Commissioner – Infrastructure & Operations

January 30, 2026