



City Council Committee Report

Date: 25 September 2012

To: Mayor & Council

**Fr: Warren F. Brinkman, Emergency Service Manager, City of Kenora
Fire and Emergency Services**

**Re: Kenora 109- Ninth Street North / Valley Drive Water Tower Wildfire-12
September 2012**

Recommendation:

That Council of the City of Kenora hereby accepts the preliminary report outlining the activities and costs associated with suppressing an out of control wildfire located in an forested urban area near the Valley Drive Water Tower and Ninth Street North, known as Kenora 109.

Background: At twenty two minutes past two o'clock in the afternoon of 12 September 2012 the City of Kenora's Fire Dispatch Centre received the first of many 9-1-1 calls reporting smoke being observed behind the Valley Drive Water Tower. A Ministry of Natural Resources Helicopter returning from another fire flew over this location and confirmed that a .1 hectare fire was burning about 400 metres east of the Valley Drive Water Tower. At twenty seven minutes after two o'clock the City of Kenora Fire and Emergency Services responded to this fire location and observed heavy black smoke and visible flames. At thirty five minutes after two o'clock the .1 hectare fire had grown to one hectare and was out of control. On scene Incident Command for the City of Kenora requested a "four Station alarm" and requested assistance from the Ministry of Natural Resources. The MNR dispatched two CL-415s, one Birddog, one Helitac and four three man ground crews to this fire location. Winds speeds gusted between 30 to 50 kilometres per hour throughout this incident. Kenora 109 grew to 6 hectares in size before "being held".

Concurrently the Ontario Provincial Police secured and provided traffic control to the roadways that were impacted by this fire and assisted with the evacuation of Valleyview School, several homes adjacent to Valleyview School and the offices of Grand Council Treaty #3.

Unified Command was established between City Fire, Ministry of Natural Resources Fire and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Pinecrest Nursing Home contacted Unified Command to determine if an evacuation of their facility was imminent. It was not.

As the main Hydro line serving the south side of the City was in the midst of this fire conflagration, Ontario Hydro attended to determine if any damage had occurred to their transmission lines. It was determined that all hydro lines remained intact and in service.

The investigation as to origin and cause of this fire began soon after this fire was reported. Ontario Provincial Police and the Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation Office continue their investigation into this human caused fire.

At forty seven minutes past seven o'clock on the 12th of September 2012 Kenora 109 was "being held".

City and MNR Fire crews continued to work on this fire until the 15th of September 2012.

At 2:00pm on the 20th of September 2012 Kenora 109 was declared "out".

Thankfully no injuries were reported during Kenora 109. Save and except for minor damage to a private vehicle, all values and structures remained unscathed.

Kenora 109 is human caused and therefore preventable. Kenora 109 compromised the health and safety of residents of the City of Kenora. In short this unconscionable act assigned manpower and apparatus that would otherwise be required to address other fire and emergency calls for service such as structure fires and motor vehicle crashes.

Of equal significance was the trauma suffered by young children feeling endangered and the parents who were hearing dislocated information on social media and who were worried about their safety.

Not only are lives and property at risk in such human caused events, there is a real cost associated to fire suppression. The City of Kenora Fire and Emergency Services assigned 380 man-hours to resolve Kenora 109 at a cost of \$10,955.00. In addition apparatus was assigned to Kenora 109 for 134 hours. Calculated at an established Ministry of Transportation rate the City of Kenora's fire apparatus cost is \$54,940.00.

This report does not include the Ministry of Natural Resources billable hours as per the Forest Fire Management Agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the City of Kenora. Please see the attached By-Law 23-2010 and Municipal Forest Fire Management Agreement.

Budget: Manpower and associated apparatus costs are contained in the 2012 Operating Budget.

Communication Plan/Notice By-law Requirements: Municipal Memo, Portal, and Media.