

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: FES 01-24 - Durham College Partnership – Whitby Fire & Emergency Services Inclusivity Excellence Scholarship Award

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: April 8, 2024

Report Number: FES 01-24

Department(s) Responsible:

Fire and Emergency Services

Submitted by:

Fire Chief Michael Hickey

Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer

For additional information, contact:

Michael Hickey, Fire Chief, ext. 4331

Recommendation:

1. That Whitby Fire & Emergency Services (WFES) partners with Durham College via the Inclusive Excellence Scholarship Award in exchange for fleet usage in the Fire Pre-service Program for a period of three (3) years, with Durham College's option to renew for an additional three (3) years;
2. That Durham College solely funds two (2) Inclusive Excellence Scholarships valued at approximately \$7,500 per recipient/student for a total cost of \$15,000 annually, for the term of the lease, as consideration for the annual lease payments to the Town;
3. Scholarship recipients will be comprised of racialized and/or economically challenged high school students from the Town of Whitby, who have been accepted into either the Fire Fighter Pre-Service Education and Training or the Fire Prevention and Technology programs;
4. WFES continues to provide Durham College access to a 2009 Seagrave Marauder II Pumper for use in the Pre-service Firefighter Education and Training program, as required throughout the curriculum;

5. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the lease agreement upon terms substantially in accordance with Report FES 01-24, and in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor, or designate;
6. WFES services and communicates the maintenance schedule for the 2009 Seagrave Marauder II Pumper, ensuring the apparatus is available and transported to the appropriate service destination;
7. Through newly created public education programming for high school students and signage at Fire Headquarters, WFES promotes the strategic alliance and scholarship with Durham College.

Highlights:

- In alignment of WFES' efforts to promote the fire service as a career opportunity to racialized or economically challenged individuals, WFES approached Durham College with a scholarship program proposal as a means to give back to the community we serve.
- Scholarships valued at \$7,500 each, will provide two (2) graduating high school students accepted into Durham College's fire programs with the financial support to open opportunities for post-secondary education in a fire service-related field.
- WFES would be the first municipal Fire & Emergency Services Department to partner with Durham College and award this type of scholarship to two (2) deserving high school students.

Background:

The purpose of this report is to propose a partnership between Durham College and WFES to create the Inclusivity Excellence Scholarship Program.

Durham College and WFES have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship for several years, relying upon one another to support important initiatives. Recently, conversations began on how to enhance this relationship to ensure that Durham College continues to have access to relevant WFES equipment for training purposes.

WFES has been providing Durham College access to a 2009 Seagrave Marauder II Pumper for their fire service programs since 2017, at the rate of \$1 per year. In reviewing previous arrangements and in alignment of WFES efforts to promote the fire service as a potential career avenue for racialized and/or economically challenged individuals, WFES approached Durham College with a scholarship award program proposal as a means to give back to the community we serve.

This visionary initiative was meticulously crafted to nurture diversity in the fields of fire suppression and fire prevention, with a distinctive focus on empowering individuals from

racialized or economically challenged backgrounds. Two recipients, living in the Town of Whitby and enrolled in Durham College's Firefighter Pre-Service Education and Training or Fire Prevention Technology programs, will be selected from an adjudication panel and will be awarded a scholarship in the amount of \$7,500 to assist with tuition and course expenses. This collaboration marks a pivotal moment in shaping the future of aspiring professionals within the fire industry.

Discussion:

Over the last several years, WFES in partnership with other departments, have focused on ways to increase the representation of racialized and/or economically challenged individuals in its ranks and through the recruitment process. Like the Town's administration generally, WFES strives to recruit individuals that reflect the demographics of our community. Such efforts included geographically advertising job opportunities via social media outlets, adjusting minimum qualifications to expand candidate pools, hosting virtual information sessions and/or adjusting weighted pre-screening questions in recognition that not all candidates may have financial access to complete additional qualifications and/or certifications prior to being hired full-time.

Durham College will work with WFES to confirm criteria related to racialized and/or economically challenged communities within the Town of Whitby. The adjudication and selection decisions of the scholarship recipients will be made solely by Durham College panel members.

Representatives from WFES will be provided opportunities to meet the recipients and may engage in mentoring and/or guidance via virtual or in-person meetings as a means to add additional value to the student's learning experience.

Financial Considerations:

Durham College will pay \$15,000 annually for use of the Town-owned pumper. However, in lieu of a payment to the Town, Durham College will provide two (2) students with an Inclusive Excellence Scholarship Award (outlined above), of approximately \$7,500 each at an annual cost of \$15,000.

Whitby Fire & Emergency Services reports that the Town will continue to provide service and maintenance to the 2009 Seagrave Marauder II Pumper; at an estimated costs at \$4,500 annually.

Promotional materials and/or signage for the new scholarship will be funded by Durham College.

Communication and Public Engagement:

WFES will utilize the Public Education Officer, in collaboration and consultation with Corporate Communications and appropriate parties at Durham College to advertise and

promote the Scholarship Opportunity. In addition, WFES will be posting signage of this opportunity at Fire Headquarters.

The partnership will begin with a three (3) year commitment with the first enrolment intake in September 2024.

Promotion in Whitby secondary schools will commence as soon as possible, upon approval of the agreement, and each subsequent year as the programs are often over-subscribed and the application process begins early.

Below please find a proposed timeline for this initiative:

- March 2024 – April 2024
 - Durham College and WFES promotions commence
- March 2024 – May 2024
 - Scholarship application portal/process opens and accepting submissions
- May 2024 – June 2024
 - Durham College panel to adjudicate all applications
- June 2024
 - Two (2) recipients selected, and Scholarships are awarded

Input from Departments/Sources:

The Town's Senior IDEA Specialist was consulted regarding this scholarship proposal, assisting in the development of naming the potential scholarship and the criteria of deserving recipients. Moving forward WFES envisions collaborating with Corporate Communications. Input on the proposal was also provided by Financial Services and Legal and Enforcement Services, Legal Services Division.

Strategic Priorities:

The recommendation contained in this report advances the following Strategic Pillars and Actions identified in the Town's Community Strategic Plan:

- Whitby's Neighbourhoods – Safe, Healthy, & Inclusive
 - Objective 1.1 – Improve community safety, health, and wellbeing

WFES' efforts of promoting careers within the fire service industry to young individuals within the community will assist in increasing attraction and/or candidate pools for a career within the fire services. As the Town's population continue to grow, more emergency service professionals are required to respond, and an increasing number of qualified candidates will be required to keep the community safe.

- Whitby's Neighbourhoods – Safe, Healthy, & Inclusive
 - Objective 1.2 – Increase opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of the community

Through this partnership with Durham College, the Inclusivity Excellence Scholarship Award will extend full tuition support to deserving racialized and/or economically challenged high school students in the Town of Whitby. This financial assistance will increase post-secondary educational opportunities for aspiring young professionals in the fire service industry as WFES strives to have a workforce that models the community we serve.

Attachments:

N/A