



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of July 22, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 19, 2021
From: Daniel Atkinson, Acting Fire Chief
Subject: Agreement with Island Health for Administering COVID-19 Vaccination

RECOMMENDATION

That Council authorize the City Clerk and Mayor to execute an agreement in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, with Island Health for the provision of clinical and non-clinical support by City of Victoria Firefighters at the COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics established in Greater Victoria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victoria Fire Department has been requested by Island Health to utilize off duty Victoria Fire Department Firefighters to provide immunizer support and to fill staffing shortfalls at the mass immunization clinics established in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The strategy of utilizing off duty firefighters to maximize the number of vaccinations provided to public has been successfully employed in each of the Fraser Health Region and Vancouver Coastal Health Region. Island Health has expressed interest in entering a similar agreement with the City of Victoria in an effort to achieve the same.

Qualified and trained firefighters are eligible to “sign up” for any shift vacancy that may occur, as advised by Island Health, that does not conflict with their regularly scheduled work at the fire department. All costs associated with providing the service are reimbursed to the City by Island Health.

Fourteen members have successfully completed the required training, provided by Island Health, and are now qualified to administer the vaccine and provide the necessary supports as required.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the City to enter into an agreement with Island Health authorizing City of Victoria Firefighters to work for Island Health for the purpose of administering COVID-19 vaccination.

BACKGROUND

Island Health recently contacted the Victoria Fire Department to discuss the possibility of utilizing trained and qualified off duty firefighters to assist with administering COVID-19 vaccine. Island

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Health does not have existing resources or capacity to fully realize the maximum potential delivery of vaccine to the public. Being aware that both Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health have successfully employed firefighters to supplement their staffing levels, Island Health wishes to employ the same strategy in Victoria to increase the availability of COVID-19 vaccine to the public.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Fire Department staff have been working closely with Island Health and City of Victoria Legal on a draft agreement for the services requested. There are no negative implications or forecasted challenges with respect to maintenance of service levels or staffing capacity at the fire department should Council authorize entering into the agreement.

Having firefighters actively participate in the administering of COVID-19 vaccine further promotes community involvement and active participation in the health and wellness of the City of Victoria and beyond.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Accessibility Impact Statement

There are no impacts to accessibility associated with entering into the agreement.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

Entering an agreement with Island Health to provide clinical and non-clinical support in administering COVID-19 vaccine aligns with Strategic Objective “*Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City*” and Strategic Objective “*Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods*”.

Having staff visible in the community and assisting with administering COVID-19 vaccine increases the number of engagement opportunities with residents and promotes a feeling of safety and community belonging.

Impacts to Financial Plan

There are no negative financial implications associated with entering into the agreement, all costs for the provision of the service are reimbursed by Island Health.

CONCLUSIONS

Victoria Fire Department Firefighters are trained, qualified, and willing to assist Island Health in administering COVID-19 vaccination. Island Health has requested the assistance of our members to fill staffing vacancies or shortfalls in an effort to maximize the availability and accessibility of COVID-19 vaccine to the public. In view of the benefit to public health that COVID-19 vaccination presents, Council may consider authorizing staff to assist with this function.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Atkinson
Acting Fire Chief

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager

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