

FIRE SAFETY – AGREEMENT WITH BLAINVILLE

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

As you know, on March 7, the Municipal Council decided to bring the activities of the Rosemère Fire Department to a close and conclude an agreement with the Town of Blainville. This decision was taken with an eye to providing you with fire protection services 24/7, while achieving significant savings.

Since this decision was made public, a great deal of false information has been making the rounds, causing Rosemerites to ask questions. The Town wishes to set the record straight on this matter.

The foremost consideration in concluding this agreement with Blainville has always been, and will always remain, the safety of Rosemère's citizens. Let's be clear: there could be no compromising on this point.

THE FACTS AS THEY RELATE TO THE SAFETY OF CITIZENS

- For the first time in its history, Rosemère residents benefit from fire protection services ensured by firefighters physically present at the fire station 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. As well, few of you were aware that the Rosemère Fire Department was operating on a part-time basis. This meant that more than 50% of the time, firefighters were on call but not present at the fire station. With this intermunicipal agreement, firefighters' response time as well as your safety will be improved.
- The agreement with Blainville complies with the RCM's fire safety cover plan, which is a tool used by elected municipal officials for the management of fire risks and decision-making. The RCM is required, by virtue of the Fire Safety Act, to establish a fire risk safety plan, in compliance with fire protection orientations established by the Minister of Public Security.
- The Blainville Fire Department operates two fire stations manned by approximately 71 employees assigned to fire safety: Station No. 7 located at 310 Bas-de-Sainte-Thérèse Road and Station No. 8 located at 790 De la Mairie.
- Rosemère will be served first by Station No. 7 at 310 Bas-de-Sainte-Thérèse Road, which is located just 500 metres from the Rosemère town limits and 3.2 kilometres from Rosemère's current fire station.
- Everything is in place, therefore, to offer each and every citizen safe and secure services that strictly comply with all applicable laws and standards.

- It should be noted that the partnership agreement involving the RCM's different fire protection services remains in effect. Consequently, the Blainville Fire Department can call on its firefighting colleagues in other RCM towns (Bois-des-Filion, Ste-Thérèse and Boisbriand) to lend a hand in case of need (for example, in the event that a fire should break out in both Blainville and Rosemère at the same time.)
- Furthermore, the Blainville Fire Department is signatory to the Lower Laurentians' mutual assistance agreement according to which four other fire departments are also available to come to its aid.
- Moreover, since the agreement ensures the presence of firefighters at the fire station 24/7, Rosemerites will benefit from more rapid intervention at night when, according to statistics provided by the Québec Ministry of Public Security, there is a greater loss of life.
- In the event of a rescue on the water or on ice, the Blainville Fire Department will, in keeping with the existing mutual assistance agreement, call on its colleagues in Boisbriand or Bois-des-Filion who have the expertise required for this type intervention.

THE FACTS AS THEY RELATE TO PUBLIC FINANCES

- Over the next 20 years, Rosemerites will save some \$30 million. In fact, Rosemère's financial contribution will be in the order of \$525,500 in 2016, \$675,250 in 2017, and \$798,775 in 2018.
- As of 2019 and until the end of the agreement, our financial contribution will amount to that of the previous year plus a 3.5% increase. It should be noted that the Rosemère Fire Department's 2016 operating budget was projected to be approximately \$2.1 million.
- For a 20-year period, therefore, Rosemerites know how much they will be paying for fire protection services. As the amount will not fluctuate, there will be no unpleasant surprises.
- It should be mentioned that the Rosemère firefighters' union had presented a proposal for the implementation of firefighting services 24/7 that would have carried an annual operating price tag of **approximately \$3 million** (the current operating budget of \$2.1 million plus some \$900,000 for additional salaries and fringe benefits). These figures do not take into account additional costs related to new government fire protection requirements that could come into effect.
- The agreement with Blainville is unquestionably advantageous for Rosemère and its residents.
- Given an economic context that makes it imperative that we not add to the tax burden of current as well as future generations of taxpayers, this agreement is beneficial on every level.

THE FACTS AS THEY RELATE TO LABOUR RELATIONS

- Other than the firefighter/prevention officer, Rosemère had no full-time firefighters.
- Some have stated that the firefighters' union had never been made aware of the need to reorganize the Rosemère Fire Department, given its high operating costs. This is false.
- In fact, at least three times during the course of 2015, the firefighters' union had been informed that the status quo was not a viable option. The president of the firefighters' union also met with the Mayor of Rosemère in the fall of 2015, at which time the impossibility of operating the Fire Department as it stood was raised again.
- Contrary to what has been said, on March 7, the firefighters were not issued a legal notice.
- All firefighters have received an eight-week notice of termination, which will end on May 2, 2016 with no need to report to work. In addition, all firefighters will receive an employment termination package based on their years of service.