

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, March 8, 2023 **WARD(S):** ALL

TITLE: **PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH WOUNDED WARRIORS CANADA**

FROM:
Nick Spensieri, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To request authorization for the Fire Chief to enter into an agreement with Wounded Warriors Canada and the Vaughan Professional Firefighters Association for the purpose of activating and enabling enhanced benefits and services related to trauma resiliency and therapy. There is no cost associated with this partnership. Once the agreement has been executed, a public statement by from Vaughan Fire and Rescue, Vaughan Professional Firefighters Association and Wounded Warriors will be released acknowledging the partnership.

Report Highlights

- The partnership is between Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service (VFRS), Wounded Warriors Canada (WWC) and Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association (VPFFA).
- There is no cost associated with this partnership.
- Wounded Warriors Canada is a national mental health service provider utilizing clinical best practices and evidenced-based care to help Canada's Veterans, First Responders and their families feel safe, supported and understood.
- Partnership Agreements are already in place with WFFC and more than 20 Fire Services across Canada.

Recommendations

1. THAT the Fire Chief be authorized to enter into a partnership agreement between Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, Wounded Warriors Canada and Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association; and
2. THAT the Corporate and Strategic Communications Department be directed to support this partnership arrangement.

Background

Wounded Warriors Canada is a national mental health service provider utilizing clinical best practices and evidence-based care to create an environment of compassion, resiliency and hope for Canada's Veterans, First Responders and their families.

This partnership will add an additional layer of mental health support for the members of Vaughan Fire and Services, both active and retired. WWC will work directly with VFRS to offer their innovative mental health programs and services to members and their families in need of additional support.

First Responders are highly trained and skilled professionals who, due to the nature of their work, often face challenging situations that test their physical or mental health and safety. WWC's innovative approach to mental health combines clinical best practices and evidence-informed care to create an environment of compassion, hope and resiliency for participants.

Wounded Warriors does not require any financial commitment. All they ask is for a letter of agreement to be signed by all parties (WWC, VFRS, VPFFA). Once this has occurred the employer and union agree to make a formal public statement (Internal and external) revealing their new partnership.

Previous Reports/Authority

None.

Analysis and Options

As a mental health service provider, WWC will work with VFRS and the VPFFA to serve as an additional layer of operational stress injury support for VFRS members and their families.

What the partnership provides all VFRS members:

- Access to multiple programs (at no cost)
- Programs that are held within Ontario
- Peer support resources
- Available clinicians
- Additional training that can be accessed for a fee

- K-9 Programs
- Additional layer of resources
- Clinicians for counselling

Programs available: **At no financial cost***

- Trauma Resiliency
- Couples overcoming PTSD Everyday
- Couples Resiliency Program
- Spousal Resiliency Program
- Surviving Spouses Program
- Warrior Kids Camp and Virtual Program
- K-9 assisted therapy and facility dog program

Financial Impact

None.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Partnership Agreements are in place with WWC and Fire Services across the Greater Toronto Area and Canada including Toronto Fire, Whitby Fire, Mississauga Fire. In addition to police and paramedic services such as York Regional Police.

Conclusion

Upon approval of this report, the Fire Chief will work with necessary parties to enter into an agreement with Wounded Warriors Canada and the Vaughan Professional Firefighters Association. This will enable Wounded Warriors Canada as an additional layer of operational stress injury support for their members and their families.

For more information, please contact: Andrew Zvanitajs, Fire Chief, ext. 6301.

Attachment

1. Partnership Agreement between Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services, Wounded Warriors Canada and Vaughan Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Prepared by

Andrew Zvanitajs, Fire Chief, ext. 6301

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Spensieri', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nick Spensieri, City Manager