

Hello, my name is Breanne Wheaton and I've lived in Sackville for the entirety of my 29 years of life.

I'm here today to speak about the ongoing concerns regarding the safety of the community and volunteer firefighters, as well as the sustainability of our fire department. The National Fire Protection Association Standard 1720 for Volunteer Fire Departments states it expects a rural community like Sackville to be able to put six trained firefighters on scene within 14 minutes, 80% of the time. With less than 18 firefighters remaining in our department, that standard is not realistically achievable.

Although these standards are not law, if the municipality chooses to ignore them, they assume the risk of public safety. Council stated in both media releases that we have two other departments within our municipality as mutual aid. Mutual aid from Dorchester and Point de Bute is valuable, but it cannot replace a properly staffed local fire department. Smaller departments that are farther away arrive later with fewer people and cannot perform time-critical, life-saving tasks that must happen in the first minutes of an emergency.

Although you just posted an update online, I also want to address the unresolved internal issues within Sackville Fire and Rescue. Over the past 10 years, more than 30 of our volunteer firefighters have stepped down, repeatedly stating issues connected to the fire chief. Council spent \$31,000 on an investigation which produced 20 recommendations that nearly three years later have not been all implemented and additional firefighters have left since.

This leads me to three questions for you.

One, what makes Council think doing another investigation will bring about any change?

Two, when does Council determine that a change in leadership is necessary when repeated grievances in investigations identify leadership concerns?

And three, what actions are council taking to ensure public safety while our fire department remains understaffed? Thank you for your time.