

Riverview to debate ambulance service's future

■ Discussion expected to be hampered by still-unformulated provincial plan to amalgamate services province-wide

TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Riverview town council meets for their regular session tonight at 7 p.m. with the future of the town's ambulance service highlighting the agenda.

The Riverview Fire Department is

the only fire service in the province that also offers a complete ambulance service, and council has long pondered whether town taxpayers should be in the ambulance business.

Tonight's debate comes as the province says it will announce a complete overhaul of province-wide ambulance service "soon," something Riverview has heard for about two years. The province intends to amalgamate all ambulance services, to be run by Medavie Blue Cross, with all paramedics to become provincial government employees.

The town's ambulance service was reduced to one vehicle from two

after running up a \$300,000 deficit more than a year ago, when the town blamed much of that red ink on frequent calls it made to serve Moncton residents, a service for which it didn't feel it was adequately compensated.

It also means Riverview firefighters on ambulance calls out of town — most recently to the Hillsborough/Riverside-Albert area which doesn't enjoy 24/7 service locally — aren't available for fire calls in Riverview while they are away, incurring yet more costs.

The issue has been dormant for the past year but tonight's meeting promises to reignite the debate on the

service's future.

Dennis Woods, the paramedics' and firefighters' local union president, will address council on the issue. Woods realizes the town is in a tough spot, but he believes the town should wait for the province to act.

"Let the province be the bad guys," Woods says.

"I just wish they'd get their act together and if they are going to do, then just do it."

Other matters on the agenda include an expected application for a rezoning for a parcel of land at 361 Pine Glen Rd.

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Ambulance service's future

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Mark Crandall of the Riverview Molson Mustangs, the town's senior men's football team that plays in the Maritime Football League, will give a presentation to council. The town is a corporate sponsor of the team.

Marcia Gaudet of Scotiabank will also make a presentation to council which is expected to

include an announcement that the firm will build a new branch on Pinewood Road.

Other discussions will revolve around the National Day of Mourning, coming up Saturday, which is a day to recognize workers killed and injured on the job.

Third and final readings will be given to local improvement bylaws for Cromwell Street, Westminster Street and Florence Street.



ARTIST'S CONCEPTION

Riverview council will hear details tonight of a proposed new branch of the Scotiabank to be constructed in town.