



COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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CBID-ASC Meeting Minutes: Meeting #1, November 24, 2020

1930-2100 hrs

Present: Trustee G. Fraser

Administration: Rhonda Smith – Hodgkin

Guests: D. Ferguson (retired Administration), Fire Chief C. Gaw

ASC Members: Lori Iannidinardo, Bryce Rawson, Dave Vanderschaaf, Scott Murray, Jason Murray, Keith Grandbois, Rick Mellson, and Craig Krystia.

Chair: Ernie Polsom

The 2nd ASC meeting via Zoom started at 7:30 pm, November 24, 2020

1. Welcome:

Chair E. Polsom welcomed everyone to the meeting. Due to Covid restrictions the meeting was via Zoom, hosted by D. Ferguson

2. Introductions

Meeting Chair E. Polsom introduced Fire Chief Colin Gaw

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting , were previously circulated via email. There were no errors or omissions. The minutes were adopted as received.

4. Governance Presentation:

D Ferguson gave a presentation reviewing the Improvement District's governance. The Improvement District has a relationship with the Province and follow the Local Government Act and report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

D. Ferguson went over the difference between Improvement Districts and Regional Districts.

a) Improvement Districts are local authorities that provide specific services to landowners who have requested and pay for these services. They vary in size from small subdivisions to larger communities and are generally located in rural areas.

b) Improvement districts are incorporated public local bodies governed by a board of elected trustees. They provide services such as water and fire protection services for the benefit of landowners within their boundary.

c) They differ from municipalities and regional districts, as they may only provide the services authorized in their letters patent.

d) Improvement districts are governed by an elected board of trustees, one of whom has the additional duty of chair. Trustees are elected by the eligible landowners of the improvement district, normally for a three-year term.

K. Grandbois asked if the Regional district would apply for infrastructural grants on behalf of the Improvement district?

Both L Iannidinardo and D Ferguson explained that the Regional district would not apply for the Improvement District. Improvement Districts do not have access to government grants.

5. Fire Department Presentation: Fire Chief Gaw

Fire Chief Gaw shared a presentation which explained what the Fire Rescue did. The fire department is a full-service department and responds to all manner of incidents. These include structure and chimney fires, motor vehicle extrications, public education, water and other special rescues, hazardous materials response, fire inspections, boat fires, and burning complaints.

The department has responded to 162 calls for assistance to date this year. The department responded to 165 calls in 2019 and 203 in 2018.

The department followed the BC Fire Commissioner's guidelines for structural, wildland and vehicle firefighting. Additional training for rescue services, inspections, fire prevention, vehicle operations and other required training is conducted at the fire hall. Members are required to have Class 3 & Air licenses. The CBVFR pays for all members to have these courses.

The crew have many hours of community involvement in fundraisers and fire prevention functions.

While there are a number of concerns with the fire station from an operations perspective, the fire department has identified the following as their chief concerns:

- Accessibly in and around the fire apparatus.
- Inability to decon for the firefighters after a hazmat or fire event.
- Turnout gear located in the truck bay

Q - How many hours a month do firefighters train? A – The department does approximately 4,000 person hours of training per year.

Iannardo commented on how valuable the tour of the firehall was. She noted it was a real "eye opener". She also stated it was amazing what they do in such a limited space.

Chief Gaw spoke of the CVRD Wildfire trailer which has hoses, pumps, and sprinkler systems. If the CVRD requires the trailer, the fire department will take it to where it is required. Mill Bay, Lake Cowichan have one as well, North Cowichan is in the process of putting one together.

Q - Mutual Aid agreements or Memos of Understanding in the neighboring communities. How are they working out?

A - Chief Gaw explained that the CVRD has a blanket agreement for the whole Cowichan Valley Area. Mutual aid with North Cowichan, Mill Bay, Shawnigan and Duncan. Updated an agreement with Mill Bay for an automatic aid agreement for tanker service. Waiting for Duncan to complete theirs so Cowichan bay can have an automatic aid agreement for a tanker as well. Tankers are a life blood for 3/4s of the area.

Q - SCBA Cylinder Refilling Station. Are you able to do what is required with the space available?

A - We make do with what we have but it would be nice to be able to refill somewhere else and have a clean room

Q - Do you have an adequate amount of bottle for air.

A - they have more bottles then they need but will have ample aid from other depts.

Q - Is there a concern regarding the decibel levels of the refill station

A – Yes. It is noisy, no testing has been done yet, but precautions are taken to avoid the noise of the filling station.

6. Scoping the ASC Efforts:

What are the important parts to pass onto the board? Explore what is important to you.

Questions, Comments and Concerns.

- a) Compliant to industry standards
- b) Every jurisdiction is unique. The fire hall must fit Cowichan Bay.
- c) Very rural area with narrow, windy roads.
- d) Small and heavy industrial with the bulk being small Commercial.
- e) Demographics quite diverse
- f) Busy highway in front of the hall
- g) Committed area to agriculture and tourism

The job of the committee is to make a recommendation to the board based on some of these facts, to help them deliver the services of a full-service fire department.

L laarinardo stated that the roads are provincial and are regulated by the province.

- a) The population is approx. 3500
- b) 70 % is agriculture land
- c) Cowichan Bay is a dark sky community, which means very few streetlights.

S Murray asked about Compliances to the standards and who decides. Who will make those decisions?

The next meeting will explore the difference between legislation and standards. Some standards are referenced in legislation and must be complied with. Others are more of a guide and serve as an agreed-on reference point.

From a historical perspective, the need to address facility shortfalls has been known for a few years.

The fire hall was built in 1979. The Improvement District bought the adjacent land in 2005 with the thought of future use or expansion.

There have been a lot of changes in industry requirements since the fire station was built.

Harold Engineering was commissioned to do a study of the building and found many issues. It was not seismically stable to current BC Building Codes.

There is a risk management question. Recognizing the need to secure essential emergency response equipment in the event of a major disaster encouraged the Board to act.

CBID provided updates to the station concerns at the Annual General Meetings in 2017 and 2018 and informed property owners that there was a need to act.

The creation of the ASC reflects the Boards commitment to providing the necessary information to residents about the issues, options and final decisions related to updated fire station facilities.

Options & solutions have to suit the need of the community residents and businesses.

Residents will require understandable information upon which they can make informed decisions. Most people want to be part of the process. Surveys, referendums and other engagement opportunities will make participation easy and ensure their opinions and concerns are heard.

Costs and impacts on the community are at least as important as operational effectiveness. Options will have to be sustainable.

Iannidinaro stated that Cowichan bay does not have community space.

The Board is looking for guidance and support

*** Problem statement to go out to the members** Ernie/Rhonda*

7. Questions

I. Iannidaro asked for an example of what Fire Wise went through for the process to get this far..

*** Chair E Polsom will include a presentation of this at the next meeting***

K. Grainbois would like to see other fire halls locally.

Challenge - What does the community need?

*** Chair Polsom will do comparisons for the next meeting***

8 Next Meeting - Dec 8, 2020 7:30 pm

What will be discussed

Discuss the industry standards of a fire department and station needs.

Mandatory versus discretionary elements of the project

Legislative Requirements

Standards and industry Practices

Land use and developmental controls A/R zoning

Examples of other fire station projects applicable to the CBID

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm