



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 Iannidinaro, 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.were previously circulated via email. There were not errors or omissions. The minutes were adopted as received.

4. Governance Presentation:

D Ferguson gave at presentation reviewing the Improvement District's governance. The Improvement District has a relationship with the Province and follow the governing 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.

The first fire hall was in 1962 at the Hall which presently houses the Water District. In 1968 the Improvement district was started to oversee and manage the delivery of fire service in the Cowichan Bay area.

Questions were asked

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.

Chair E Polsom thanked D Ferguson for his presentation. Then introduced Fire Chief C. Gaw

2. **Fire Department Presentation**

a) Fire Chief Gaw shared a presentation which explained what the Fire Rescue did. From chimney fires to MVI, to structure fires to public education. They also do rescues, Hazmat, fire inspections, boat fires, and alarm inspections.

b) The department had many call outs, 162 to date this year, 165 the previous year and 203 back in 2018.

c) The department followed the 10.01 training requirements for the crew. Members are required to have Class 3 & Air licenses. The CBVFR pays for all members to have these courses. Wildfire training is also taught so the firefighters can assist with the wildfires. The crew have many hours of community involvement.

Fire Hall Concerns.

a) Accessibly in and around the fire apparatus.

b) Inability to decom for the firefighters after a hazmat or fire event.

- c) Turn out gear located in the truck bay

Questions and Comments

Q - How many hours a month do they do training? A - approx 4000 hrs a year

L. Iannidinardo commented on how valuable the tour of the fire hall 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 a 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 - SVCA Re bottling, 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 than they need but will have ample aid from other depts.

Q - Is there a concern regarding the decimal 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.

3. **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 has to 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 make a decision on functional, full service fire dept.

L. Iannardino 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 compliance to the standards and who decides. Who will make those decisions?

It was noted that the point of standards is like a north star it is a reference. The minimum standards are with building codes, work safe bc. Ultimately the Board, Chief will be part of that, of that decision making.

The history is a straight line. It has been known for a few years regarding the state of the hall.

The fire hall was built in 1979. The Improvement District bought the adjacent land in 2005 with the thought of future use or expansion. 2016 there was a lot of changes in the industry, Harold Engineering was commissioned to do a study of the building and found many issues. It was not seismically stable.

There is a risk management question. Can we afford to lose the hall and equipment if there was a sizeable earthquake? This resulted in a need to act.

CBID acknowledged at the Annual general meeting in 2017 & 2018 that there was a need to act. It was not a new conversation.

The process is about seeking approval and acceptance of the community

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

Residents will require understandable information, which we will provide to them, that will lead to them giving permission to spend their tax dollars. Most people want to be part of the process. Surveys, referendums will let them feel like they have done their part.

Costs and impacts on the community are at least as important as operational effectiveness.

Options will have to be sustainable.

L. Iannardino stated that she would like to see a broader community aspect in Cowichan Bay. There are established community groups looking for meeting spaces. She mentioned

we don't have any community halls, churches etc. that community can gather. There is a real need to make space available and she thinks the community will accept a proposal that includes that. It also needs diversity which needs to be highlighted for of course washrooms and cultural sensitivities. Noting that even the ASC did not have any First Nations etc. L. Iannidinardo also mentioned the amazing new bus transfer station that was just completed in Duncan. It had amazing energy efficiency with great new infrastructure that she had never seen before, another very valuable local tour to go on if and when possible, she could set it up.

Where are we headed?

With the building not meeting standards. We need to follow good practice and include the community. They are the ones paying for it.

We will need good planning options. The Board has gotten only so far.

We will only deal in facts, then package them to the community.

The Board is looking for guidance and support

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

7. Questions

L. Iannidinardo. Asked for example of what Fire Wise went through for the process they went through.

*** 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

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

Employee and Employer relationships

What the staff need. Wants versus needs.

Reflect approved service standards proved to a Fire Dept.

Mandatory requirements.

- a) BC Building Codes
- b) Architectural Acts
- c) Work Safe BC

Standards and industry Practices

Worksafe BC requirements

Land use and developmental controls A/R zoning

Discretionary decisions

- a) Design
- b) Construction materials
- c) Location
- d) Finishing
- e) Cost Containment
- f) Environmental sustainability

Most residents have no idea that there is a problem. Renovations would not fix lack of space issues.

Bryce Rawson noted the Cumberland fire hall

What principles Guide our Decisions?

- a) Affordability
- b) Functionability
- c) Energy Efficient
- d) Longevity
- e) Growth w/community
- f) Safety - Risk factors

9. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm