

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

POLICY MANUAL

Section	
Policy Number	
Policy Title	Audio Record of Board of Trustee Meetings

POLICY OBJECTIVE

A priority of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District is that the decisions of the Board of Trustees are made transparently. In British Columbia, many local governments including the Capital Regional District and the Islands Trust publish audio or video recordings on their websites to provide greater public access to meetings to those who cannot or choose not to attend.

Improved accessibility to meeting proceedings will: communicate and provide accessibility to Board of Trustees’ decisions to a wider audience; provide accessibility to Trustees’ decision-making process; and promote confidence in the integrity and accountability of the Board of Trustees to our electorate and community.

The purpose of this policy is to set clear directions for how recordings will be produced and how the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District will manage the use of audio recordings.

DEFINITIONS

“*Administrator*” means the officer position as established in the *District’s “Officer Positions Establishment Bylaw No.85”*;

“*Board of Trustees*” means the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District;

“*District*” means the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District;

“*official record*” means the approved written minutes of the meeting;

“*Town Hall Meeting*” means the informal session usually held before regular meetings of the *Board of Trustees* where members of the public have an opportunity to express concerns that relate to the Fire Service and direct questions to *trustees*;

“*Trustee*” means a duly elected member of the *Board of Trustees* of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District;

SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy provides direction and guidelines for *Trustees*, District staff and the Salt Spring Island community.

This policy applies to the: Annual General Meeting; Special General Meetings of Members; *Town Hall Meetings*; Regular Meetings of the *Board of Trustees*; and Special Meetings of the *Board of Trustees*.

Unless directed otherwise by the *Board of Trustees*, audio recordings of meetings of Standing and Select committees of the *Board of Trustees* will not be made.

Any sessions of meetings that are closed to members of the public under section * of the *Local Government Act* are regarded as confidential. To ensure that this confidential and or privileged material is not disclosed, audio recordings will not be made of “in-camera” or “closed” sessions of meetings of the *Board of Trustees*.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Policy Implementation

The *Administrator* or designate will make a recording of meetings and upload them to the District’s website, where the audio file is accessed by the public.

Meeting recordings will be accessible on demand – meaning that the content can be downloaded or streamed from the internet after the meeting has concluded. Recordings should be made available online usually within five (5) business days of the meeting.

Recordings will remain on the website, available for downloading, for a period of twelve (12) months after the meeting date. Audio recordings will be erased after ~~three~~ one years_ unless the *Board of Trustees* by motion order the permanent retention of a specific audio recording for historic or other significant reasons.

Editing of Meeting Recordings

Audio recordings of meetings will only be edited before being made available on the *District's* website in the following circumstances:

- a) when a member of the public who is addressing the *Board of Trustees* has advised that they do not wish for their comments to be included in the audio recording; and
- b) to prevent the publishing of material that is offensive, defamatory, breaches copyright or breaches an individual's privacy.

Audio recordings of meetings will not be edited:

- a) because a speaker that has been recorded, including a *trustee*, *District* staff member, or member of the public, regrets their remarks;
- b) to save embarrassment in regards to comments made and recorded;
- c) to edit out meeting procedural errors.

The *Administrator* will approve the final version of the meeting audio recording that will be made available on the *District's* website.

Freedom of Information Requests

The Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District is a public body and audio recordings would be considered records within the purview of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. As such, a "Request for Information" may be made to receive a copy of the unedited record.

Risks and Liability

The *District* may be liable for defamatory statements made by trustees during a meeting. The *District's* liability risk is increased if meetings are recorded, published online, or made available to the public.

It may be an offence to disseminate material using the internet that results in a person(s) being menaced or harassed.

If at a meeting, copyrighted material is read, without the consent of the copyright owner, the District may be breach a copyright owner's exclusive right to reproduce the material if the material is published as an audio recording.

Recordings of meetings can be used in proceedings against the *Board of Trustees*, *District* staff, and individual *Trustees*. No protection is afforded *Trustees*, *District* staff, or members of the public for comments made during meetings which are subsequently challenged in a court of law and determined to be defamatory.

The ability of the *District* to have control over content becomes limited once the audio recording is in the public domain.

Meeting Attendees

At the start of every meeting all attendees should be advised that the meeting will be recorded and published on the *District's* website. The meeting agenda shall also include a similar notice.

Meeting attendees before they speak to the *Board of Trustees* in the “*Town Hall Meeting*” or as part of a delegation shall advise the assembly that they do not wish to be included in the audio recording to be prepared by the *District* and their comments will be edited out of the audio recording.

Meeting attendees should be aware that open meetings of the *District* or *Board of Trustees* are considered public meetings and that there can be no presumption of confidentiality. Other individuals attending the meeting may make recordings of meeting proceedings for their own purposes.

Disclaimers

The online content will be accompanied by the following disclaimers which may be included as part of the recording, or separately on the webpage containing links to opening the audio files of meeting recordings:

The views and opinions expressed by individuals at this meeting, unless explicitly stated otherwise, are those of the speaker or author and are not endorsed, approved or certified by the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District. This recording is not an official record of the meeting and is provided for the convenience of the public.

The Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District takes no responsibility for technical issues beyond its control which hinder or prevent the production and or publishing of audio recordings, including but not limited to failure of the recording device, power outages, or website unavailability.

Official Record of Meetings

The official record of a meeting of the Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting of Members, and of the *Board of Trustees* is the written minutes of the proceedings approved by the membership or *Board of Trustees*.

An audio recording is not an official record of a meeting and is provided for the convenience of the public.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' DISCRETION

The provisions set out in this policy are subject to revision from time to time at the discretion of the *Board of Trustees*.

CROSS REFERENCES

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District, *Officer Positions Establishment Bylaw No.85*
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Local Government Act

APPROVALS

Approval date:		Approved by:	
1. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
2. Amendment date:		Approved by:	
3. Amendment date:		Approved by:	