

**Andrew Peat**

Board of Trustees  
18 November 2019

**From:** Peter Parker [mailto:p.parker@vancouver.ca]  
**Sent:** November 10, 2019 1:57 PM  
**To:** Rollie Cook; Andrew Peat; Arjuna George; Mary Lynn Hetherington; Ronald Lindstrom; Per Svendsen; Howard Holzapfel; Jo MacDonald; Andreas Gedeon  
**Subject:** Comment on Joint Finance Committee and Strategic Planning meeting

Acknowledged  
Nov 11/19

Dear Andrew, Chief George and Trustees

Thank you for including me in this email and a possible joint meeting.

As a member of the Finance Committee, I wanted to provide you with a point of view to ponder as a concerned citizen and potential user of the Fire and Safety service.

The link below is a report in the newspaper of a rural fire outside Courtney, on Oct 9/2019. The fire claimed a life plus 1 more hospitalized.

<https://www.google.ca/amp/s/theprovince.com/news/local-news/one-dead-one-in-hospital-after-apartment-fire-on-vancouver-island/wcm/936d4a61-ca38-4b59-99de-872d17fd946a/amp>

To summarize, the paper said that fire crews were there within 10 minutes.

I am told and confirmed from some sources on-line, that a fire can engulf a room in 4 minutes or so.

From the Fire Wise Report Page 53 July 2018, our response times are not that great.... (8,16,22 minutes daytime, nighttime average 4 minutes longer). Should we be putting more focus into re-structuring at least the Volunteer Department, to significantly improve our response times?

I am on the understanding we also have water supply problems. Should more resources be put towards improving water supply such as more water towers, and linking outlets to the post sewage treated water. I am confident the Board have even better ideas for water sources.

We cannot realistically be able to respond in all parts of the Island in 10 minutes or less. Therefore should all new construction have mandatory sprinkler systems as part of the building code? What resources are we budgeting for to lobby this type of legislation?

It appears our fire equipment requires updating fairly urgently. However, The Chief knows best. He is the one in charge of putting a fire out.

My question to the Chief is.. What do you need TODAY, that you do not have, to save a life, keep all firefighters safe, or save a building. Are the homes in Southey Point and near Ruckle Park receiving the same service as at 102 Lower Ganges Road? Do they pay the same tax rate?

I understand the need of a new fire hall. However, none of us can predict if and when an earthquake will hit Salt Spring, and at what intensity. At what intensity can the current Hall stand? If there is a massive earthquake and the building remains intact, is it possible that the trucks and the firefighters at their homes can not reach victims due to a slide on a main road? What we CAN predict, is that there will be a house fire within the next 4 months. Let's say we built a new fire hall with a substantial the price tag that comes with it - how will it dramatically improve response times? Is it a moot point if the fire fighters arrive quickly but there is insufficient water or not enough equipment to control and extinguish a fire?

Therefore, should we not be focusing on protecting our Island for the **present** situation? Improve response time, water supply, equipment and prevention.

Lastly, you all know there are several moving parts to the challenge of protecting our Island. To me, it is clearly, very difficult to decide on the allotment of our revenue. Moving forward, I ask the Trustees to consider hiring a professional with a Risk Management designation. This consultant would be able to assist the Strategic Planning and Finance Committees in maximizing the return on the tax payers investment. Perhaps a new fire hall is the best investment for tax payers. A Risk Manager could assist in determining if it is or is not.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the next joint meeting.  
Peter Parker

# One dead, one in hospital after apartment fire on Vancouver Island

**LOUISE DICKSON,**  
VICTORIA TIMES  
COLONIST

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Local News



Firefighters prepare to enter a burning apartment in Merville on Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019. Photograph By CHEK NEWS

One person has died and at least one other is in hospital after a “catastrophic” fire in an eight-unit apartment building in Merville on Tuesday morning.

Firefighters from Courtenay and Oyster River responded to the blaze at the Hillview Apartments in the 7000-block of the North Island Highway, between Courtenay and Campbell River.

Oyster River Fire Chief Bruce Green said the two fire departments, which have an automatic-aid agreement, were dispatched at 11:39 a.m. and arrived about 10 minutes later. Green said that when he arrived he saw flames coming out the side of the building on the top floor, heading down to the back corner. He said he knew immediately that if anyone was trapped in the building, they had no chance of survival.

Courtenay firefighters hit the fire with a 2 1/2-inch hose, he said.

“Within 30 seconds, they probably had the flames knocked down. Then they had to go into the units and put the fire out that way as well and check for people,” said Green.

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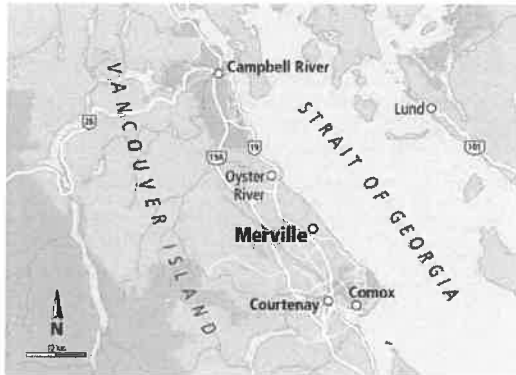
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Oyster River sent a command vehicle and a water tanker, "4,000 gallons of water on wheels," because the area has no hydrants, said the fire chief.

Green said the automatic-aid deal ensured firefighters arrived quickly to limit the damage.

"It's still a catastrophic fire, but because there were a lot of resources there quickly, the damage was limited. Unfortunately, somebody did succumb to the fire, but it could have been a lot worse," Green said.

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