

SSIFR

Fire trustees get 'tour' of new Ganges hall

3D rendering reveals fresh project details

BY ROBB MAGLEY
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Trustees with the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District got a tour of the completed fire hall, despite construction having only begun this year — through a computer 3D model.

Chief Jamie Holmes “drove” the AutoCAD system during the presentation at the district’s Monday, Nov. 18 board meeting, allowing trustees to take a three-dimensional walk through the new facility, from the EV charging area on the southeast side to the hose tower and everything in between.

Much easier to visualize than blueprints, the software even brought trustees underground, where the rendering showed conduit and pipe being laid to an area left open for a future firefighting museum, “so we don’t have to rip up everything,” he said.

“A lot of people are just seeing these concrete pads [at the site] right now,” said Holmes. “This kind of gives an idea of how far up we have to come out of the ground still before we really start building.”

Details illuminated by the virtual walk-through included shutter doors that will come down in the front entrance administrative area, so the meeting room space can be rented out without security issues, as well as a first look at the training room that will likely also be utilized for board meetings — and can be divided into separate spaces for multiple uses.

“The truck bay has the clean self-contained breathing apparatus room up front,” said Holmes. “There’s a fill station for our air bottles, what we’re breathing in a fire. We can clean our backpacks, our masks and everything, and then hang them to drip dry.”

Individual wire-mesh lockers in the firefighters’ gear room were surrounded by orange pipes, which Holmes explained are part of an air ventilation system connected to the building’s HVAC that would dry gear faster — and operate under negative pressure, keeping equipment and turnout gear from off-gassing into the rest of the building.

The virtual tour visited the tower, for hanging firefighting hoses as well as train-



SSIFR PRESENTATION SCREENSHOTS

3D renderings of a meeting area, top, and firefighters’ wire-mesh lockers as they are likely to appear once Salt Spring’s new fire hall is completed. Fire district trustees were recently given a virtual walkthrough to help visualize some of the planned spaces.

ing on the steep staircases and high windows, and the upstairs kitchen and dorm areas that will ultimately be off-limits to the public.

Holmes said these sorts of virtual environments were fun, but also a good way to ensure plans on the drawing board make sense in a real-world application.

“It’s important for operations to go

through after the architect has done their first run-through,” said Holmes. “Things like the flow path from where our gear is into the apparatus bay; it’s different for career firefighters who are there already, versus paid-on-call who are coming in from outside.

“Or,” he added, “it’s good just knowing which way the doors swing.”

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