Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Community Relations Committee Terms of Reference Policy

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Policy Number	AG-4103-07
Policy Category	Governance
Approved By	Board of Trustees
Approval Date	September 21, 2026
Supersedes	AG-4103-01; AG-4103-02; AG-4103-03; AG-4103-04; AG-4103-05; AG-4103-06

PURPOSE

To establish the mandate, authority, composition, and operating procedures of the Community Relations Committee, a standing committee of the Board of Trustees.

SCOPE

The Committee supports the Board by strengthening relationships with the public and community partners; enhancing transparency and public awareness of District services, decisions, budgets, and strategic priorities; and advising on communications, public engagement, recruitment, and information-sharing practices.

DEFINITIONS

“Committee” means the Community Relations Committee as established by the Board of Trustees.

“District” means the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District.

POLICY STATEMENT

Membership

1. Committee members shall be appointed annually by the Board following the Annual General Meeting.
2. The Committee shall consist of:
    a. Up to three Trustees (including the Board Chair as an ex officio member)
    b. Up to two public members with relevant expertise. Public members must be eligible electors or residents within the District and serve in a volunteer capacity.
    c. Ex officio members: Board Chair, Chief Administrative Officer, and Fire Chief.
3. The Committee shall appoint a Chair from among the Trustee members**.**

Committee Roles & Responsibilities

1. The Committee shall develop and recommend policies and plans related to community relations, communications, public engagement, and information dissemination.
2. The Committee shall advise on communication practices related to:
    a. Privacy and FOIPPA compliance.
    b. Records and information management (in coordination with related policies).
    c. Media, digital, and public communications.
3. The Committee shall recommend strategies to inform the public of District services, emergency response capabilities, decisions, budgets, strategic priorities, and major initiatives.
4. The Committee shall support communication through:
    a. Website and digital platforms.
    b. Social media.
    c. Media relations and public notices.
    d. Community outreach and inter-agency relationship building.
5. When directed by the Board, the Committee may:
    a. Develop communications or engagement plans for major initiatives.
    b. Assist with public information campaigns or consultations.
6. The Committee shall provide recommendations to the Board on:
    a. Community relations and communications policies.
    b. Public engagement and stakeholder coordination strategies.
    c. Referred reports or initiatives.
    d. Opportunities to improve communication effectiveness.

Annual Work Plan

1. Prepare an information insert for inclusion with the 2027 provincial property tax notice outlining District fire rescue services and capabilities, the proposed budget, and strategic plan priorities.
2. Host a community partner meeting at the new Fire Hall with representatives from the CRD, Islands Trust, School District, RCMP, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to discuss shared issues and coordinate activities.
3. Communicate opportunities for qualified members of the public to serve on District committees and the Board of Trustees, including the skills and experience being sought.
4. Provide recommendations to the Board on significant public advertising, notices, website content, and other external communications.
5. Develop and recommend website materials and improvements that clearly present the Strategic Plan, annual budget, financial documents, District services, and governance information.

Accountability and Reporting

1. The Committee shall report to the Board of Trustees following its meetings, as appropriate, on its activities, findings, and recommendations.
2. The Committee may provide recommendations to the Board for consideration and decision.
3. The Committee shall prepare an annual report to the Board of Trustees that summarizes:
    a. Committee activities and work completed.
    b. Key recommendations made to the Board.
    c. Outcomes achieved or in progress.
4. The Committee shall ensure that its records, including agendas and minutes, are maintained in accordance with District policies and applicable legislation.

Meetings

1. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the District's Meeting Procedures Bylaw.
2. The Committee shall meet at least quarterly or at the call of the Chair.
3. An annual meeting schedule shall be established and published.
4. Meetings shall be open to the public except where authorized under the Community Charter.
5. Each member has one vote.

AUTHORITY

The Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees and operates in an advisory capacity. The Committee does not have independent decision-making authority and may only make recommendations to the Board unless expressly authorized. The Committee operates in accordance with: District bylaws, including the Meeting Procedures Bylaw; Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) and the BC Community Charter.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

All Committee members shall comply with this policy, applicable District bylaws, and relevant legislation, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) and the Community Charter. Committee members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with established standards of ethical behaviour, confidentiality requirements, and the public interest. Failure to comply with this policy may result in actions consistent with District policies and procedures, including removal from the Committee or other appropriate measures as determined by the Board of Trustees. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information, or the improper use, alteration, or destruction of records or information, may result in disciplinary action and potential legal consequences.

REFERENCES & RELATED DOCUMENTS

SSIFPD Meeting Procedures Bylaw 2025

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)

Community Relations Committee Annual Plan 2026-2027

REVIEW AND REVISION

This shall be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with legislative and operational requirements.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Approved By
AG-4103-01	December 7, 2015	Board of Trustees
AG-4103-02	November 20, 2017	Board of Trustees
AG-4103-03	June 25, 2018	Board of Trustee
AG-4103-04	January 20, 2020	Board of Trustees
AG-4103-05	May 17, 2021	Board of Trustees
AG-4103-06	September 16, 2024	Board of Trustees