

Minutes of the Trustee Meeting of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Meeting held: **02 February 2015**

In attendance: Trustees: Dan Lee (Chair), Ron Chamney, Michael Garside, Michele Severn.

Regrets: Trustees: Richard Hannah, Bruce Patterson, Michael Schubart

Staff Members: Chief Tom Bremner, Corporate Administration Officer (CAO) Andrew Peat

20 residents

Called to Order: 10:00

Trustee Garside reported to the meeting that he has received from the Walker Resource Group their report on the Fire Services Review. **Motion** moved by Trustee Garside seconded by Trustee Chamney that the Board of Trustees of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District receive the Final Report from the Walker Resource Group. The CAO Peat is instructed to immediately put the PDF version of the Report on our website for the public to access and that printed copies be distributed to the trustees, Chief Bremner, Salt Spring Island Public Library, Salt Spring Driftwood newspaper and Salt Spring Exchange. Carried.

Trustee Garside expressed thanks on behalf of the Board to the Walker Resource Group (WRG) and their sub-contractor Fire Wise Consulting, for their service to the Salt Spring Island community. The public engagement process was a critical part of the whole process and both WRG and Fire Wise exceeded expectations with their openness and willingness to engage members of the public. Trustee Garside commented that WRG delivered their report for the original contracted fee and there were no additional charges for an expanded public engagement process.

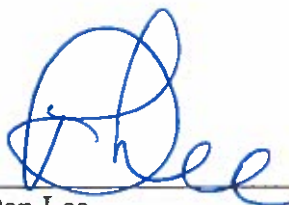
Motion moved by Trustee Garside seconded by Trustee Severn that the Board of Trustees of Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District express their thanks to the Walker Resource Group and their sub-consultant Fire Wise Consulting for their efforts to complete the 2015 Fire Services Review and for their professionalism and dedication to the inclusion of extensive public input to the assignment. Carried.

Chair Lee advised trustees that at the open meeting session prior to the 16 February 2015 meeting of the Board, Richard Walker will give a brief summary of the Report and he and representatives from Fire Wise Consulting will answer questions from the public.

Adjournment

After receiving confirmation that the Fire Service Report had been uploaded to the District's website a **motion** to adjourn moved by Trustee Chamney. Carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:13.

Next scheduled meeting of the trustees is 16 February 2015.



Dan Lee
Chair Board of Trustees



Andrew Peat
Corporate Administrator

Minutes of the Trustee Meeting of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Meeting held: **16 February 2015**

In attendance: Trustees: Dan Lee (Chair), Ron Chamney, Michael Garside, Richard Hannah, Bruce Patterson, Michael Schubart, Michele Severn.

Staff Members: Chief Tom Bremner, SSIFFA Lieutenant Mitchell Sherrin, Corporate Administration Officer (CAO) Andrew Peat

32 residents

Called to Order: 19:48

Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes of the 19 January 2015 monthly Trustees' meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. CAO Peat asked that under Old Business District Boundaries the paragraph be amended to read:

Chief Bremner advised in his report that with the help of outside resources, Polaris Land Surveying Inc. he hopes to finalize work next month. Trustees expressed their thanks for the assistance offered by Polaris.

Motion to accept the minutes as amended moved by Trustee Schubart seconded by Trustee Severn. Carried.

Minutes of the 02 February 2015 Trustees' meeting were read by CAO Peat. **Motion** to accept the minutes as read moved by Trustee Garside, seconded by Trustee Hannah. Carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes

Walker Resource Group Fire Services Review Report

After the acceptance of the 02 February 2015 minutes there was discussion concerning implementation of recommendations contained in the report. Trustee Chamney said that with input from the public, recommendations should be prioritized and realistic timelines set. Given upcoming trustee elections (20 April 2015 tentative date for AGM) work will begin in earnest after that date. Trustee Chamney agreed to prepare and present a timeline schedule where tasks can be assigned to staff members and/or trustees.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Draft minutes of the 28 January 2015 meeting of the Finance Committee were distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes). Committee Chair Chamney summarized the report and suggested that in-line with WRG recommendations committee membership might be expanded to include members of the public. Audited 2014 financial statements are expected to be received by 05 April 2015 with the Finance Committee meeting shortly thereafter to review them. CAO Peat has been instructed to

investigate alternate payroll software as existing software is not robust/flexible enough to handle our needs. CAO Peat reported that letters have been sent to local financial institutions soliciting proposals for the investment of Capital Replacement Reserve funds. **Motion** to receive the report of the 28 January 2015 Finance Committee meeting moved by Trustee Chamney seconded by Trustee Schubart. Carried.

Human Resources Committee

Draft minutes of the 28 January 2015 meeting of the Human Resource Committee were distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes). In the discussion concerning the Committee's recommendation that Andrew Peat be appointed Financial Administrator, it was noted that the Local Government Act allows the Corporate and Financial Administrator offices to be held by one person. **Motion** moved by Trustee Severn seconded by Trustee Hannah that Andrew Peat be appointed Financial Administrator of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District. Carried. **Motion** to receive the report of the 28 January 2015 Human Resource Committee meeting moved by Trustee Severn seconded by Trustee Schubart. Carried

Correspondence

CAO Peat advised that receipt of a "Request for Access to Information" has been acknowledged and that an email has been sent to a local business (Salt Spring Island Fire Protection) requesting a meeting to discuss possible confusion with ourselves.

Trustee Chamney requested that Mr. Mark Lucich's presentation during the 19 January 2015 "town hall" meeting be received as correspondence. (Copy attached to the original minutes). Trustee Chamney summarized the presentation and thanked Mark and Julia Lucich for their continued interest and engagement.

The Fire Chief's Report

Chief Bremner's report for January 2015 was distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes). Repair and maintenance issues at Ganges Fire Hall are ongoing and delays continue in the installing the new ventilation systems. Chief reported that two operational promotions were made in January reinstating the position of Assistant Fire Chief to Jamie Holmes and one staff lieutenant to Ken Akerman. Training of new of Class of 2015 recruits (8 members) began in earnest. **Motion** to receive the Fire Chief's report moved by Trustee Chamney seconded by Trustee Severn. Carried.

Salt Spring Island Fire Fighters Association Report

Lieutenant Sherrin summarized Lieutenant Taylor's report on SSIFA activities. (Copy attached to the original minutes). **Motion** moved by Trustee Schubart seconded by Trustee Hannah to receive the SSIFA report. Carried.

Old Business

District Boundaries

Chief Bremner advised in his report that with the help of Mr. Brent Taylor of Polaris Land Surveying Inc., progress continues to be made.

Emergency Water Delivery - fire hydrant responsibility.

Chief Bremner again advised in his report that he continues to look at alternative options to work with the island's water districts. Trustee Chamney spoke of concerns made in the WRG report concerning the availability of water for firefighting purposes (p.32 recommendation 16). The "Superior Water Shuttle" system was adopted by the District to assure water in rural and remote locations but this can be compromised by road and weather conditions. Letters Patent and existing agreements with other local improvement districts must be review. Trustee Chamney suggested that a special committee of the board be formed to address these concerns. **Motion** moved by Trustee Chamney seconded by Trustee Garside that formation of a board committee to address emergency water delivery and fire hydrant responsibility be tabled until the March meeting. Carried.

Bylaw No. 125 "Fire Regulations"

Trustee Chamney advised that he expects to present a revised bylaw to the March meeting.

Brinkworthy Trail Proposal

Trustee Chamney advised that there are no new developments.

Communications Policy

A proposed "Access to Information Policy and Procedures" was distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes.) In the discussion it was suggested that a copy be posted on the website to allow for public comment and input. **Motion** moved by Trustee Chamney seconded by Trustee Hannah that consideration of the policy be tabled until the March meeting to allow for staff review and public input. Carried.

Bylaws

Bylaw No. 127 Ministry of Forests Licence of Occupation

A proposed bylaw prepared by staff was distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes). The bylaw authorizes execution of the Licence of Occupation agreement with the Ministry for a further term of 5 years relating to the operation and maintenance of an automated weather station located on the District's Fulford Fire Hall property. Bylaw No. 127 was read by CAO Peat. **Motion** moved by Trustee Severn seconded by Trustee Schubart that the first reading of Bylaw No. 127 be accepted. Carried. Bylaw No. 127 was again read by CAO Peat. **Motion** to reconsider and finally pass Bylaw No. 127 moved by Trustee Chamney seconded by Trustee Garside. Carried.

New Business

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue Response Level Policy

“Service Delivery Level” recommendation and draft policy documents prepared by Chief Bremner were distributed prior to the meeting. (Copy attached to the original minutes.) The BC Office of the Fire Commissioner has recently established minimum training standards required for fire service personnel which are determined by the Service Level provided. It is Chief Bremner’s recommendation that Salt Spring Island Fire/Rescue be accredited as a “full service” fire service. After discussion it was the consensus of the meeting that the proposed policy and supporting documents should be posted on our website to allow for public input.

Delegations

None.


Adjournment

There being no further business, motion to adjourn moved by Trustee Chamney. Carried.
The meeting adjourned at 20:45

The next scheduled meeting of the trustees is 16 March 2015.



Dan Lee
Chair Board of Trustees



Andrew Peat
Corporate Administrator

Report of the Town Hall Meeting of the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District

Meeting held: **16 February 2015**

In attendance: Trustees: Dan Lee (Chair), Ron Chamney, Michael Garside, Richard Hannah, Bruce Patterson, Michael Schubart, Michele Severn.

Staff Members: Chief Tom Bremner, SSIFFA Lieutenant Mitchell Sherrin, Corporate Administration Officer (CAO) Andrew Peat

Guests: Richard Walker (Walker Resource Group), Dave Ferguson (FireWise Consulting Ltd.)

32 residents

Called to Order: 18:30

Chair Lee thanked members of the public for attending and introduced the evening's guest speakers Richard Walker of Walker Resource Group (WRG) and Dave Ferguson of FireWise Consulting Ltd. (FWC). The purpose of the meeting was to enable members of the public to ask questions of the consultants regarding the findings of their reports.

At the direction of the Chair CAO Peat was asked to record a summary of the meeting's discussion.

Summary of Report

Walker Resource Group

Richard Walker (WRG) stated that work started in mid-September and his assessment was informed by an extensive public engagement process. It is the assessment of WRG that the fire/rescue service on Salt Spring is an example of a very well trained, professional emergency response unit.

WRG concluded that it is their assessment that, as a whole, the fire and rescue service on the island is much more professional than it has been in the past and the management of the operations is on par or better than in most comparable communities in the province. The cost of the fire and rescue service is not excessive given the costs in similar communities, however the extent to which the full roster of services can/should be provided in future needs to be examined by the community. The report identified areas where improvements can be made to the Board governing model; areas where cost efficiencies could be realized; and that prior to renewal of the collective agreement with the firefighters union in December 2016 the board should research and begin crafting a negotiation strategy. In the opinion of WRG the most pressing items on the Board's agenda are opening the decision making process to include more public participation; a more robust administrative unit; and the need for a new facility to replace Fire Hall #1.

FireWise Consulting Ltd.

Dave Ferguson reported that FireWise Consulting Ltd. (FWC) conducted an Inspection and Audit of Salt Spring Island Fire/Rescue to establish a benchmark for the fire

department in regard to its compliance with generally accepted standards and best practices.

The report of FWC contained thirty-seven recommendations which are largely minor in nature. The Inspection and Audit did not reveal any alarming issues or serious non-compliance concerns. Chief Bremner and all firefighters were commended for their commitment to public safety.

Questions from the Public

Was two days on site work adequate time for FWC to conduct an Inspection and Audit?

Dave Ferguson commented that a team of three people from FWC were on site for the two days. A “boat load” of information was made available to them in advance of the onsite work and considerable work was done off site. Dave Ferguson was fully satisfied that the report and recommendations are meaningful.

Concerns were expressed about continuing delays in installation of exhaust extractions systems at all three fire halls.

Dave Ferguson commented that while delays were frustrating he was satisfied that procedures in place diminish the risk to staff. He commented that it was their recommendation that Occupational Health & Safety Committee reports be distributed to the Board if only for information purposes as the Board is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of their employees.

Richard Walker was asked to comment on his thinking regarding his recommendations concerning wage costs and zero based budgeting (WRG Recommendations #11, 12, 14 & 15).

Richard commented that it is important to understand that in 2006 career members met the Labour Relations Board standard for unionization and that a collective agreement has been in place for some 10 years. Between 2006 and 2011 wage rates increased incrementally to the union scale. Notwithstanding the escalation in wage costs, the total cost of fire protection services for Salt Spring (reflected in the mill-rate) is at or below the provincial average for communities of our size and islanders are getting better than average service for their tax dollars.

The report recommends that the District begin the process of seeking the advice, expertise and guidance from professional negotiators with respect to what can and what cannot be expected in the December 2016 negotiations with the union. Richard commented that the dollar cost of wages and benefits is too high to continue “business as usual”. The District has to negotiate “with” the union and not “against” them.

Before the next budget cycle, the community must be engaged in a dialogue to discuss what level of service the District is expected to provide (including First Responder, inspection, fire safety training and education). Every service costs money and the realities of island living must be acknowledged (the community is underserved by the RCMP because the island is not a municipality, the ambulance service is not generously funded,

and being an island we cannot rely on timely assistance from adjacent areas). In many respects the District's "scope of service" has expanded because by default there has been no other organization available to do the job and/or assist.

Richard commented that in the "zero based budgeting model" there are no blanket across the board increases but rather each budget line starts at zero and costs must be justified and defensible.

Richard Walker was asked to comment on the need to examine the administrative function within the District (Recommendation #18).

Richard commented that the District has traditionally relied on the volunteer trustees to perform many administrative functions and cannot realistically continue to do so. Increased cost needs to be viewed as the "necessary lubricant" to allow the organization to run more efficiently.

Dave Ferguson was asked to comment as to whether career staff could safely work an average sixty-three hours per week.

Dave Ferguson stated that the issue was outside the scope of his engagement and he could not comment. Career staff hours include regularly scheduled hours (average 35 hours per week), Stand-by-Duty (average four 14 hour shifts per month) and volunteer POC hours.

Richard Walker was asked whether the number of people who participated in the public engagement process (109 persons) was sufficient to infer the "public's" assessment of and desires for the fire service.

Richard replied that he felt that his assessment of public concerns and positions expressed in the report are accurate with a high degree of statistical certainty. Public engagement is important to enable trustees to gauge what level of service the District is expected to provide and paramount when discussion concerning a new fire hall is again brought forward.

Adjournment

Chair Lee thanked Richard Walker and Dave Ferguson for attending the "town hall meeting".

The meeting concluded at 19:48.



Dan Lee

Chair Board of Trustees



Andrew Peat

Corporate Administrator