

Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District (SSIFPD)

Staff Report

Date: **December 7, 2023**
Subject: **New Fire Hall Project Status Update for November 30, 2023**
To: **Board of Trustees**
From: **Rodney Dieleman, CAO**

Issue: New Fire Hall Project Status Update for November 30, 2023

Background:

The Project Steering Committee provides oversight and guidance to the project consultants regarding project specifications, business requirements and ensure the building costs and size to not exceed financial constraints. The Project Steering Committee ensures that the final building meets the needs of the community. The Committee reports to the Board of Trustees each month and publishes a project update on the Salt Spring Fire Rescue website.

Schedule delay:

In October, we received the Geotechnical Assessment from Ryzuk Geotechnical and shared it with the architect and structural engineer for their insights in designing a Post Disaster Building.

Despite conducting a comprehensive 110ft subsoil coring and soundings, the report revealed unfavorable findings. Consequently, the subsoil conditions require additional structural steel, a reduction in wood laminated beams, smaller window sizes, and foundation underpinning. The need to meet post-disaster standards is expected to result in higher costs due to the adverse test results.

The Geotechnical report's outcomes necessitate structural modifications, leading to a delay in applying for a building permit until mid-January 2024. Subsequently, the Construction Manager will initiate the tendering process, marking the imminent commencement of the construction phase.

Site Conditions:

The chosen location for the new fire hall is situated at the lower end of land elevations to the north and west. It's well-documented that a substantial amount of water flows across the property from neighboring plots. In anticipation of this water flow, the site was initially ditched to prevent saturation. Although the current ditching has proven effective, its execution is basic and will be upgraded when the site undergoes proper leveling and grading.



Fire Fighter Museum:

The integration of antique firefighter fire engines and firefighting memorabilia is beyond the defined scope of the new fire hall project. This element is not explicitly outlined in the Project Charter, Business Plan, or Financing models. There will be no additional consideration or inclusion of this display structure as part of the new fire hall project.

BC Hydro EV Chargers:

Staff has maintained ongoing discussions with BC Hydro concerning the installation of 4-6 quick charge Electric Vehicle (EV) stations in the proposed parking lot at the front of the site along Lower Ganges Road. These charging stations will provide the community with an exceptional charging service on the Island. Importantly, the construction costs will be covered by BC Hydro, alleviating the financial burden on the taxpayers of Salt Spring Island. The Fire Service will contribute by providing the designated charging space. This initiative is expected to benefit both the local community and tourism.

Pathways:

The project steering committee, in collaboration with the Construction Manager, has acknowledged the potential risk associated with closing the pathway along Lower Ganges Road. Given that the sewer line runs beneath the pathway, there may be a need to render the pathway out of service for a significant portion of the spring. Both the Committee and Construction Manager are actively exploring solutions to mitigate this inconvenience.

Project Budget and Expenditures:

<h2 style="color: #0070C0;">New Fire Hall</h2>						
Item	Total Project Budget (in thousands)	Expenditures 2023 (in thousands)	% Progress	Planned Start	Planned Ending	
Permits	\$ 370.0	\$ -	0%	1-15-24	3-30-24	
Site Work						
Off Site Works	\$ 480.2	\$ -	0%	1-1-24	6-30-24	
Owners Representative	\$ 194.9	\$ 29.4	15%	12-5-22	3-30-26	
Construction Manager	\$ 571.2	\$ 24.9	4%	1-5-23	12-31-25	
Architect	\$ 399.2	\$ 219.5	55%	1-5-23	12-31-25	
Structural	\$ 120.0	\$ 63.0	53%	2-4-23	1-15-24	
Electrical	\$ 77.9	\$ 34.3	44%	3-6-23	1-15-24	
Mechanical	\$ 92.4	\$ 40.7	44%	3-6-23	1-15-24	
Energy Modeling	\$ 17.5	\$ 8.5	49%	3-6-23	1-15-24	
Security	\$ 15.8	\$ 7.0	44%	3-6-23	1-15-24	
Civil	\$ 53.3	\$ 18.7	35%	5-1-23	1-15-24	
Polaris Survey	\$ 2.0	\$ 2.0	100%	5-5-23	9-30-23	
Ryzuk Geotechnical	\$ 17.8	\$ 17.8	100%	5-5-23	10-30-23	
Mark Hughes Excavating	\$ 0.4	\$ 4.2	1000%	10-30-23	10-30-23	
Financing	\$ 811.7	\$ -	0%	7-1-24	3-31-26	
Constructon Costs (estimated)	\$ 9,000.0	\$ -	0%	3-1-24	3-31-26	
	\$ 12,224.4	\$ 470.0	96%			\$ 12,224.39
		3.8%	Average			
		Project Financing				
Reserve Funds SSIFPD (2023)	\$ 500	\$ 500	94%	1-1-23	12-28-23	
Reserve Funds SSIFPD (2024)	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	1-31-24	3-31-24	
CRD -Community Works Grant	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	0%	5-1-24	6-1-24	
Reserve Funds SSIFPD (ISCU)	\$ 800.0	\$ 800	0%	6-28-24	7-1-24	
Chartered Bank Financing 7.5%	\$ 9,424	\$ 9,424	0%	8-1-24	3-31-26	
	\$ 12,224	\$ 12,224				
Borrowing Contingecy	\$ 276	2%				
Reserve Funds SSIFPD (Captial)	\$ 1,200	10%				
	\$ 1,476					

Contrary to speculations circulating in local online forums, there have been **no changes to the project budget of \$13.7 million dollars, construction schedule timeline, or the approved borrowing amount of \$9.7 million authorized by referendum.** The project's current financial estimate is \$12.3 million, fully financed, with no increases to taxes or the Fire Rescue Service budget for the new fire hall construction and financing.

To date, expenditures totaling \$470,000 have been allocated to building design, civil design, site survey, geotechnical investigations, and associated electrical, structural, and mechanical designs. The project is now fully designed, and the final drawings are prepared for permits and tendering in January 2024. The additional 60 days taken for reviewing site conditions will not impact the construction schedule but ensures compliance with "Post Disaster" standards. The finalization of the plans was impacted by about 60 days.

The Project Steering Committee emphasizes the extensive experience of the project team, including the Architect with over 40 fire halls designed and built, the Construction Manager with successful local projects, and the Project Manager boasting more than 30 years of construction experience on the island. The Fire Chief has 27 years of fire rescue experience and understands the community needs and operational requirements of Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue Service. The Chief Administrative Officer has 25 years of contract administration and capital financing experience in the public sector. The Committee expresses gratitude for the professionalism and expertise of these individuals, assuring the public that the project is receiving sound advice and planning.

The Committee encourages the public to attend or monitor monthly Board of Trustee meetings where questions may be asked directly of the Board of Trustees, the CAO or the Fire Chief regarding this project or any operational matters. This is the best method to obtain accurate project information rather than relying on speculations posted to social media.

Energy and Water:

The new fire hall will have a large roof and parking area. This will be used for water reclamation systems to fill water storage tanks. This water, filtered for debris, can be used to fill trucks, and provide fire suppression support.

The building will use a central heating pump as the most efficient heating and cooling method. The building has several different working zones (truck bays, offices) which will be controlled separately and automatically.

The building will also have a large training area for volunteer firefighters to gain understanding and experience in fire fighting techniques in a local, on-site environment. It is anticipated that the training room space would be made available for larger community meetings when not in use.

Risks:

A review of the risk register by the project steering committee revealed that many of the design risks have been mitigated but many risks remain at this stage of the project. They have not changed:

- Increasing financing costs. (interest rates rising at 8%+)
- Inflation on wages and materials at 6%+
- Product delivery delays and product shortages (12+ months for transformers)
- Wet Weather
- Delays in the construction schedule due to unforeseen events.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District Board of Trustees accept this report as information.