

GABRIOLA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

GENERAL MEETING

A General Meeting of the Gabriola Fire Protection District was held June 1, 2022 with seven Trustees in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairman Paul Giffin.

Sean Lewis gave the opening greeting “The GFPID acknowledges that we are gathering within the traditional lands of the Snuneymuxw Nation”

The Chairman asked for any errors or omissions from the May 4, 2022 meeting, moved by Diana Moher that the minutes be accepted as presented seconded by Chris Windess, carried.

The Chairman asked for any errors or omissions from the May 11, 2022 meeting, moved by John Moeller Moher that the minutes be accepted as presented seconded by Chris Windess, carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Carol Waldo (from last meeting) noted and received.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Communications:

Chris Windess noted that he had contacted the library regarding putting a GFPID information binder with them and they are fine with it, he stated that he would update the minutes each month.

Select Committee:

Chris Windess stated that the Select Committee had been asked by the Board to contact Don Elkington to clarify certain points in his email and that they, Chris Windess and Diana Moher, had phoned Don. The following points were discussed:

- Why did you send the letter to the Chair and not the General Trustees? DE said after his conversation with Fred he felt uncomfortable and that’s why he wrote the email, he wanted to inform the Trustees but it wasn’t a formal complaint.
- FA explained that after the November 2021 meeting he had phoned Don Elkington to thank him for coming to the meeting, after that he called me and I replied.

Fred Apstein stated that DE changed his story from the email he sent me, Don and I agreed to speak frankly and that it would be just between him and me and I brought up the EMR funds controversy as things you have to put up with. He asked for my support for him as a Trustee and I told him about the controversy around the Board.

- SL email garbled and incoherent, don’t know where it is going. FA’s comments are concerns about the Board, I can’t see any value in this, it is not solving anything.
- JA email incoherent and confusing... DE didn’t want it as a complaint. Received a lengthy email from Penelope B saying shouldn’t take everything DE says at face value. Everyone’s recollection is different the real issue is have the funds been used properly, should have a breakdown of use. It is the Board’s obligation to ensure the money is spent correctly.

My concern is that it has now been clarified that DE was not influenced by FA not to run that there has been people posting it to facebook and trash him. I have seen facebook posts about election interference.

- CW noted that he had also been given stick on facebook. He also noted that the Select Committee had only been asked to tasked to ask DE questions.

- JM noted he had read all the emails and was disappointed that Don had withdrawn from the election but as the interaction with FA had nothing to do with it, put it to bed. The rest of the matter is closed, ask the Chief to come up with a budget for the funds.
- DM stated that they had asked to be on the Select Committee to clarify some information, FA had sent 3 mails and a meeting and gave us his point of view. Disappointed with facebook, Paul Giffin was blamed for stuff that happened before he was even on the Board.

Collective decision, two of you said you were hearing things about how the money was used, one of you quoted Penelope in an email. We have to be careful here we need to work together.

- PG noted that when he received DE email he phoned to ask his permission to release to the Board, I had concerns because FA name was in it, I contacted multiple agencies in Victoria for information and went to great lengths to not identify FA, it was FA who revealed that. Nobody got the redacted email until that night, I don't know how else it could be handled. I agree with JM but to ask the TO for a budget (Kitt interjected that we have a budget).
- The Fire Chief suggested that they look at the written report where the EMR breakdown is described.

There was a short discussion regarding the moving of the EWSS tanks, with the question being asked about if you move them can you use them still? Yes.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Call outs for May 2022: 43 (total call end May/22: 169)

Call outs for May 2021: 34 (total call end May/21: 149)

Alarms:	4
Burn complaint:	2
Chimney fire:	1
F.R.:	28
Hydro:	3
Other:	1

July 24 and August 14 training scenario:

- First training session will be evaluating a sample of the vulnerable sector with all local emergency services from Gabriola. The plan will be to evacuate to the ferry.

Second evacuation drill August 14, The second scenario will be evacuating a whole zone to the nearest beach with all local emergency agencies and expanding to marine agencies if available help with the evaluation and we may look at evacuating a few patients to Vancouver Island. In both drills the EOC will be set up in Nanaimo at the RDN. The RDN will be in support of these two drills with provincial tasking numbers.

- I would like to work with the Trustees on forming a bylaw that formalizes the policy that we use to determine High/ Extreme causing us to move into shut down. I've researched what some of the other islands do and Galiano, Hornby, Denman and Saltspring follow the same steps as we do that are provided by B.C. Wildfire Service.

- I would like to start working on a plan that would involve demolition of the site on Ricardo Rd and moving the tank and one other to Moby Dick, that would give us a total of 24,000 gallons of water in the Whalebone neighbourhood. I would also like to move the tanks to the ground and have the out-take embedded in sand so we no longer rely on electricity, keeping the out lets from freezing. This plan would also fall in line with our carbon audit by removing two electrical bills from our ongoing operating budget. There will be some cost incurred with these upgrades. The funds for this will be taken out of our Emergency Water Storage System (EWSS) budget of \$5000.00.
- The Gabriola fire department will be receiving \$20,000.00 from the RDN. This money will be used for coordinating Fire smart activities. our focus this year will be on fuel management and fuel management solutions. In addition to the \$20,000.00 we will be receiving three roll off bins for the island for those neighbours that get involved in Firesmarting. I have also included the prevention report about how successful the drop off days were.

TRAINING OFFICER REPORT:

- Recruits doing the last of exterior practicals
- New members integrating in-Water supply training
- 2 Wildland training sessions in the south end to complete our WSPP-WFF-1 certification
- EMR licensing- I had a face-to-face meeting with Dr. Allan Holmes, our new medical director. Jenn, Will, and I to meet with him again in a month as Jenn navigates setting up the program. Explain the process for selecting Jenn to be in charge of the program.
- T.O completed Fire Service Instructor Level 2 program at JIBC
- Intern to arrive 2nd-week f June- will have to do 3 months of training/probation
- Duty officer training took place for all duty officers- this is to ensure that all duty officers are consistent with high-risk activities as set out by the province for our upcoming fire season. Gabriola follows BC Forestry's recommendations for High Risk activities just like the other gulf islands in our area. The management of this position requires specific training from the fire chief.
- Emergency Vehicle Operations Training is took place this month as per NFPA requirements for annual evaluations.
- 10 members participated in 2 days of Team leader/strategies and tactics.
- 9 members participated in 2 days Incident Safety Officer course.
- We are contacting some outside providers for Marine and Marina specific training information in response to the Silva Bay Marina upgrades and fuel dock fire.
- We have had phone meetings with Cedar Fire department, and have a joint training session scheduled for June
- Evan dealing with personal issues so we have promoted Alex Dewar into an acting officer role, and Elisha Bandel to Acting Captain. They will receive specific training for their roles. (Explain the officer selection and voting process, give information specifically related to Jenn being elected as an Officer and how Will recused himself).

Capt. Kitt Stringer

ASSOCIATION REPORT: N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

Kitt Stringer complaint:

Chris Windess made a proposal that before a letter is sent out that he would host a lunch at his house and see if they could come back with a decision to the Board with the matter resolved for both parties. Would you gentlemen attend? Both Fred and Kitt agreed.

The Chair tabled the complaint until the next meeting and suspended the requirement of what is in the letter.

Sean Lewis moved that if they sort something out that and the complaint is resolved that Kitt could formally stand up and cancel his complaint, seconded by James Arnes, carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Business by email:

Diana presented a draft policy and explained her reasoning behind it with the following points brought up:

Our handbook states that we work under the principle of collective decision making.

- as our bylaws state that we can only have 2 people attend meetings electronically (all others must be present), discussing Trustee business through emails on a consistent basis appears to go against established policy, as it could be seen as a separate form of electronic meeting.
- as such, email discussion prevents the attendance and participation of public in matters being discussed by the trustees which is contrary to our bylaws.

The following issues have been identified in other government/work sites where personal computers are used to conduct business:

- record retention and deletion
- privacy and breaches of confidentiality
- data breaches: accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure of, or access to sensitive [Trustee] information
- ensuring the removal and deletion of [Trustee] related material from personal computers once a [Trustee] is gone.

The possibility that we are in breach of the BC Privacy Act which says that conducting private/confidential business via email on servers that may cause our emails to leave Canada is illegal.

So far, emails have tended towards long, convoluted threads with loss of focus, making it difficult to keep track of who and what is being said, answered, corrected or repeated. Problems include:

- long rambling comments
- repeated comments
- missed or overlooked comments or emails
- new emails started on the same subject
- tone

- infringement on staff and Trustee personal time. The “Right to Disconnect” is a large labour movement to reduce and limit the expectations of responding to electronics, i.e. email and texts, beyond a certain time of day and on days off.

Rarely, as Trustees, do we deal with issues that cannot be dealt with at a meeting. As such:

DRAFT POLICY

Policy Regarding Limiting Use of email to Conduct General Business

This Policy is intended to cultivate and develop a healthy and functional working environment for the Trustees and Firehall employees. Emails regarding Trustee business should be limited to critical and/or time sensitive situations, including (but not limited to) passing a motion for financial needs, notices, agenda items, the need to call a special meeting and simple special requests. Every effort should be made to avoid late evening and/or weekend emails requiring a response. All requests for information and correspondence should be directed through the Chair.

Short discussion.

The Chair suggested contacting the Office of the Privacy Commissioner regarding legality issues and bring it back to the Board.

- Sean Lewis agreed and asked about Zoom meetings.
- Diana stated that Zoom internal, it is illegal to send information outside of Canada.
- Would all emails between Trustees be accessible for FOI requests? Yes. Would that also apply to the Review Committee? Yes.
- Fred Apstein asked for guidance on how Trustees communicate between each other, can they discuss things together?
- Rick Jackson, member of the audience, stated that the Improvement District Handbook tells you how to deal with it and if you are working outside of it you are not covered by indemnity insurance.

Charitable Receipts:

It was noted that the Auditor had suggested the Trustees should have a policy regarding what items should be accepted and given charitable receipts for.

Fred Apstein stated he had experience with that.

The Fire Chief noted he had discussed this with the Auditor.

Diana Moher moved that Fred Apstein and the Fire Chief work on this, seconded by Sean Lewis, carried.

Recording equipment for meetings:

The Chair noted that the Board has recently started recording the meetings and would like to ask for the Chief to do some research on the best equipment for this room, he said it's not bad if the room is fairly full.

Discussion.

Moved by Fred Apstein that the Chief look into it, seconded by James Arends, carried.

Steve Toews letter:

The Chair stated that as this had been received 7 days prior to the Agenda being sent out it would need a motion to be added to the meeting.

Moved by Fred Apstein that the letter be discussed in the meeting seconded by Chris Windess, carried.

Liz Ciocea asked to hear the letter, it was read it out loud.

Hello,

In reading the half page sales pitch our fire chief wrote for the May 18th edition of the Sounder I'm left to wonder how appropriate it is for the fire chief to be meddling in BC EHS affairs.

It becomes particularly concerning to me when I know that his household stands to gain from this campaign. His spouse is a BC EHS paramedic currently working under the SOC system. Not only would this change afford his spouse a full time position, adding income to his household, it would also remove the requirement that they need to be on call for part of their shift.

This, to me, is the very definition of conflict of interest.

He seems to be okay with enriching his household as is evidenced by asking for donations to train his first responders to EMRs and then hiring his spouse to train them.

My wife is also a paramedic at that station but using my position at BC Ferries to pressure BC EHS would never have occurred to me and I would have been censured by my company if it had.

The fire chiefs issue with the occasional need to assist our ambulance service by providing a driver is particularly galling to me seeing as this is a very wealthy department made so by my and every other rate payers taxes.

Steve Toews

Discussion:

- John Moeller noted that at the last meeting the Chief had asked for support letters to request the ambulance become full time on the Island and would like to hear his thoughts on the letter.
- The Fire Chief stated that he was outraged, my wife already holds a full time job with the ambulance. The department goes to calls and the ambulance doesn't show, shouldn't we be asking for better service? Time and time again we have to drive the ambulance and firefighters have paid to upgrade the driver training to ensure the service is there, it saddens me to see this. The SOC position is way harder to staff, a full time station is how we should go.
- Doesn't Steve Toews wife also work on the ambulance so she would be in the same position as you?
- Diana Moher stated that she went through the paper looking for an Ad and finally found the article. The Chief made this request in the May meeting asking for support, I am confused why the vitriol?
- Fred Apstein suggested that even though it is tempting to respond a letter be sent stating "thank you for your input."
- The Chair asked if there was any objection to him replying stating that "thank you for your input?, non forthcoming.

Kitt Stringer noted the Corporate Officer was retiring and thanked her for all her help.

Rick Jackson added his thank you stating that not only has she always been on the ball she was the department psychologist to many over the years. He continued on to say the Trustees have to work together. They do not have individual mandates to investigate or make changes, they work as a Board of 7 and work together as 7 for the good of the community. When it comes proper contact the public should get in touch with GFPID Chair. The Trustees should read the manual and if you understand the rules it is easy, all the problems will go away.

Review Committee:

The Chair asked Howard Houle who was on the committee now? HH - Carol, James, Glenys and Howard, it is the same make up as the Terms of Reference?

Discussion:

- Would like to continue with the 4 people.
- How many meetings left? HH - One.
- So close to the end and it won't make an impact on the report.

Fred Apstein moved to keep the Committee the way it is, seconded by Chris Windess, carried.

Communication Committee:

Sean Lewis moved that any select Committee that has 4 or more Trustees on it be treated as a Board as a whole, seconded by James Arends.

Discussion:

Fred Apstein noted Communications Committee is sort of already implementing this, keeps us from having extra meetings, that is what's driving this.

The Chair stated that after reading Sean's complaint his intention was to list all the Committees on the agenda, if there is no report there's no report and that solves the problem. Sean Lewis said "thank you"

Chair called for a motion to adjourn, James Arends asked if the motion had been voted on, Sean Lewis and Fred Apstein said yes. (In review of recording no question was called.)

Moved by Fred Apstein that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Chris Windess, carried.

6:03 p.m.