

**GABRIOLA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
GENERAL MEETING - March 06, 2024**

A General Meeting of the Gabriola Fire Protection District was held March 06, 2024 with seven Trustees, Corporate Officer and Fire Chief in attendance.

Attendees: Paul Giffin (Chair) via Zoom, Diana Moher, John Moeller, Chris Windess, Charleen Wells, Kent Moen, Erik Johnson, Jessie Longo (Corporate Officer), Will Sprogis (Fire Chief)

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

Chris Windess gave the opening greeting, "The GFPID acknowledges that we are gathering within the traditional lands of the Snuneymuxw Nation"

Motion #24-G12 Chris Windess motioned for John to Chair. Erik Johnson seconded. CARRIED.

Motion #24-G13 Diana Moher motioned to accept February 07, 2024 minutes. Chris Windess seconded. CARRIED.

Correspondence: N/A

Financial Report: N/A

Communications Committee: Discussion around misinformation and disinformation. Trustees asked the Community if they have questions about what is said in the Community to please bring them forward for clarification.

Planning Committee: The Committee apologized for the error with the QR code, which was rectified as soon as possible. There were 38 respondents for the Long Range Planning questionnaire.

Finance Committee: Chairman of the Finance Committee met with staff to review statements that will be presented to the auditor.

Business Email Committee: Diana Moher asked to table the internal trustee email use policy draft until after the election.

Election Committee: Committee now dissolved.

Motion #24-G14 Paul Giffin motioned to ask the Corporate Officer to remove the election committee as an agenda item. CARRIED.

Guest Speaker: N/A

Fire Chief's Report:

Calls for the month: 38

Motor Vehicle Incident- 1

First Responder - 25

Public Assist - 5

Alarms Activated - 3

Power Lines Fire - 1

Misc. Fire - 1

Burn Complaint - 2

The retest for the superior tanker accreditation is scheduled for Saturday, April 6 and will have to retest on the residential and commercial status. membership and the equipment is ready for the test. The practice session is planned for next week and will run between Camp Miriam and Pilot Bay.

I have posted the position for the Deputy Fire Chief. It's posted on the BC Fire Chiefs Association and will be on our website and link to social media. The position will now be a full-time position. The deputy will be managing training, fire prevention, and will be part of the operational team.

Saturday, May 11 Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting an open house. The theme of the open house will be emergency preparedness week. Focusing on getting your properties fire smarted for the coming summer and to meet all the agencies involved in emergency preparedness.

Recruitment drive is underway for Fire Hall number two. Hall 1 is currently full. If you're interested, please go to our website at www.gabriolafire.ca scroll down to recruitment where you will find the application. The recruitment will close on May 12 just after the open house.

Geoff will chat about fuel consumption and our carbon footprint.

On February 7 our ladder truck was involved in a motor vehicle incident in the 2400 block of North Rd, no injuries were reported. The firetruck was a donation to the fire department by an Anonymous donor. and was insured for the value paid. The vehicle has been written off. Contributing factors to the incident was the road surface. It's a very uneven surface with patches over patches which narrowed into a soft shoulder that broke away once the ladder truck moved over for an oncoming car.

Long range plan will be to replace the ladder truck with something similar. The ladder truck was 28 years old and was considered a back up truck. Main advantage of it is an elevated master stream and elevated platform to work from. The loss of the ladder truck will not affect insurance ratings.

I would ask the residence of Gabriola to write letters to Moti about road surfacing and the narrow roads with very little shoulder. It's time for Gabriola to receive some new service before we see a fatality due to these conditions.

I would like to ask the trustees for a resolution to use insurance money from the ladder truck, and 21,000 of the deployment funds to purchase a type six wildfire engine to replace the #9 of the ladder and to better prepare us for this coming wildfire season. The resolution would state we would spend up to \$ 40,000 on a truck and equipment.

Pause in the Fire Chief's report for discussion. Discussion Points:

- Use the \$19,000.00 insurance money received from the write off of the ladder truck and an additional \$21,000.00 from the deployment funds to purchase a truck.
- Truck would be equipped with pumps and lights.
- It would be deployable; help earn extra money
- Finances to be reviewed before releasing additional deployment funds
- Release just the insurance money (\$19,000.00) to purchase a truck. Discuss equipping it at another meeting.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

Motion #24-G15 Charleen Wells motioned the Fire Chief is allowed to use \$19,000.00 insurance money to purchase a new truck with the idea it will be outfitted at a later date subject to financing. Chris Windess seconded. CARRIED.

Fire Chief's report continued:

GVFD was successful with BC Grant for 3 EV charges. However, \$3,000.00 would be needed to move forward.

Fuel Consumption report read aloud by the Fire Chief:

In 2023 the Gabriola Volunteer Fire Department consumed over 8,500 litres of fuel and 12,000 litres of propane to operate apparatus and assist heat in the fire halls. Total dollar value of this fuel was in excess of \$33,000.

Aside from the propane used to partially heat the halls, the largest fuel consumption is by Command 6 with an estimated 3,500 litres of gasoline burned at a cost of \$6,500. This vehicle was driven 20,400 kilometres in 2023 as it is used to respond to every one of the 562 calls the GVFD received last year. The second most driven vehicle, and hence the second largest fuel consumption, was by Med 7 as this vehicle responds to most FR calls. Kilometres driven on Med 7 amounted to 8,000 with 1,322 litres of fuel costing \$2,385 consumed during the year. See Table 1 below for details.

By comparison, in 2022 Command 6 was driven 17,623 kilometres and consumed \$5,404 in gasoline. Med 7 was driven 7,875 kilometres and consumed \$2,163 in gasoline.

Electric Vehicle Initiative

In an effort to meet the federal initiative on greenhouse gas reduction, electric vehicles are replacing internal combustion engine powered vehicles throughout the public and private sector. Police departments across the country are switching to EV for patrol cars, fire departments are using EV

pumper trucks and electric delivery trucks are becoming more frequent.

One of the drawbacks to broader acceptance of electric vehicles is the lack of charging infrastructure. The BC government has an incentive to provide funding for electric chargers in the form of rebates. The GVFD applied for and received a grant to install up to four chargers. Once complete the authorized rebate to GVFD amounts to \$6,114. The purpose of installing the Level 2 chargers at the fire halls is to encourage members to transition to EV as well as to prepare GVFD for EV command and first responder vehicles in the near future. Annual fuel and maintenance savings of \$15,000 would equate to the entire value of the command vehicles over the projected 10 year life cycle of these front line units providing substantial savings to GVFD.

After the report was read discussion took place. It was decided the EV Charging station will be tabled until the next meeting.

Training Report

Five officers are participating in the coming Engine boss course.

March 23 in Errington BC. They will be learning how to lead an engine company with the most effective strategies for wildland firefighting. The course is taught through BC Wildfire service.

The fire department will be putting on wildfire training to certify our 5 newest members for this coming wildfire season. We are also going to be offering spots in the course for Mudge Decourcy Island.

upcoming practises for the month

live fire and CPR March 5

superior tanker citation practice March 12

Structural protection wildfire March 19

ladders, HR platoon practice March 26

Association: N/A

Old Business:

Election Policy Amendment: Request to remove the eligibility of the nominator in the policy and on the nomination form.

Motion #24-G16 Diana Moher motioned to remove amended changes. Kent Moen seconded. CARRIED.

Privacy Act: The following report was read aloud by Paul Giffin.

PRIVACY ACT REPORT MARCH 6 2024:

The Board and I have been counseled that we cannot confirm or deny the identity of any person who has made an application under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. Should an individual indicate they are an applicant we are not able to confirm or deny their comments.

Due to public comments regarding timelines of requests following the January 2024 meeting report, I will reiterate my statement made in the January report that “once the OIPC is involved that increases the

time it takes to resolve the request as all the material must go to Victoria for review.” This means we are then working on Victoria’s schedule, not ours.

I was contacted by the Life on Gabriola Media Society and advised by them that they had received correspondence with respect to the use of the word ‘rebuffed’ in my January report in regard to trying to set up a meeting with an applicant. I stand by the use of the word. The point being the meetings never happened.

On the 5th of February, 2024 as a result of the work of the GFPID, Privacy Works and in consultation with the OIPC, roughly 100 pages of documents were released to an applicant. The bulk of the release consisted of invoices from a third party. Also released were in-camera meeting minutes portions of which were redacted. This release occurred in addition to a release of material on the same request dated June 2, 2023. Noteworthy on this request as well was that the Board had to make inquiries and await responses to ensure that an individual's personal income tax information was not being released.

On the 12th of February 2024 we were advised that the applicant had submitted correspondence related to the release of February 5th 2024. Upon our review, it was found that on one invoice the unit price and quantity of an item but not the total cost had been redacted. This was an error and it was corrected. However also on the same invoice was the personal information of several people that was correctly redacted.

On the 19th of February 2024 the Board closed the front office of the fire hall to the public. Several considerations were taken into account prior to making this decision. Generally speaking this is the slowest time of the year for both phone calls and public attendance at the hall. By taking this action we hoped to relieve the pressure caused by the multiple FOI’s on the corporate officer. It is hoped that the FOI issue will be resolved by the time the busy season starts in the spring and we can reopen the office.

On the 20th of February 2024 correspondence was received from the OIPC from a new investigator regarding a complaint from an applicant. This involved materials from June 2023 (a separate request from the one previously noted)and it appears there are now two different OIPC investigators working on the same file. We are continuing to work with Privacy Works to sort this out.

The information contained in this report is not intended to get into a “he said, she said” situation. It is to show the public what their tax dollars are being spent on. These funds were not budgeted, the situation has gotten to the point where local expertise has been exceeded, and there is no clear end in sight. The Board is working with the Privacy Works and the OIPC and in so doing is trying to prevent these matters from going to a hearing in front of the Privacy Commissioner which would cost even more in both time and money.

This entire situation which has been going on for 22 months is having a negative impact on the fire department. The corporate officer continues to work in an environment that is both frustrating and exhausting. In addition to all the work that must be done to address the multiple FOI’s, the day to day administrative operations of the fire department must be handled. The last two years have seen notable increases in calls for service received by the fire department thus increasing the administrative workload. Volunteer hours also continue to increase as we work through this issue.

The invoice from Privacy Works for February 2024 was \$4,987.51 bringing the total thus far for 2024 to \$9,513.51 (January \$4,526.00/February \$4,987.51)

New Business:

Service Level Policy:

Motion #24-G17 Paul Giffin motioned the Fire Department is operating at the level of full service and a policy be created to cover the service levels of the fire department and that policy be presented at the April 2024 meeting. Kent Moen seconded. CARRIED.

Hiring Committee:

The Board received a letter of resignation from the Corporate Officer.

Motion #24-G18 Paul Giffin motioned to form a hiring committee consisting of John, Diana, Kent, Chris and Paul. Erik Johnson seconded. Discussion. Paul Giffin amended the motion to include authorization for the hiring committee to advertise the position. Charleen Wells seconded. CARRIED.

Late Items:

The Board thanked the Corporate Officer for their hard work and the amount of notice given.

Motion #24-G19 Erik Johnson motioned to adjourn. Chris Windess seconded. CARRIED.

Adjournment: 5:01 pm

Minutes approved at the April 03, 2024 General Trustee Meeting