

**East Sooke Fire Protection and Emergency Response
Service Commission**



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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2011**

Present: Richard (Dick) Braunschweig; John Corsiglia; Erik Lund, Chair; James Scott;
Chris Statham; Peggy Dayton, CRD; Lucille Barfield, secretary

Fire Dept.: Roger Beck (Chief); Dave Bigelow (Deputy Chief)

Absent: Layton Engwer

Public: 42

Erik called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. He welcomed the public, introduced the Commissioners and staff, and introduced Kara Middleton, newly elected E. Sooke representative on the CRD Land Use Committee.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by James Scott, **Seconded** by John Corsiglia, that the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF November 15, 2010 AGM

Moved by James Scott, **Seconded** by Chris Statham, that the minutes of the November 15, 2010 annual general meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON AGENDA ITEMS - nil.

4. CORRESPONDENCE - nil.

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Erik gave an overview of the Commission and reported that he asked Director Hicks to change the bylaw from a quorum of 4 to 3. Director Hicks said he would do this. He spoke on the purchase of the land for the new fire hall and said that the Commission had provided a third option as there were people who did not want the new hall built on the ball field or where the community hall stood. It was now up to the new Commission to seek public consultation to decide the needs of the fire department and where the hall would actually be built. Erik said that as many public objections as possible should be dealt with before a borrowing is put to the public through a referendum. One objection that may surface would be the concern that a municipality may annex East Sooke after

the fire hall is built and the public would be stuck with not only the borrowing but the debt of the municipality as well.

He thanked the Commission for a productive year and the Fire Fighters for their work in the community dealing with emergencies, training, etc. He commended the Fire Brigade for all their community involvement and noted that they need the Commissioners' support.

6. REPORTS

(a) Fire Chief's annual report - Roger Beck, Fire Chief

A. Call outs to date.

To date this year we have had 64 call outs. We have averaged 5.82 calls per month, down slightly from 6.00 calls per month last year.

Calls are itemized below.

1. Mutual aid in support. 1.
2. Illegal open burn. 8
3. Motor Vehicle Incident (MVI). 8
4. Smoke sightings. 2
5. Medical First Response. 20
6. False alarms. 4
7. Tree blocking roadway. 2
8. House fire. 3
9. Ambulance assist. 2,(1*)
10. Power line fires/problems. 4
11. Brush Fire. 2*
12. Chimney Fires. 1
13. Duty Pages. 7

* Denotes "in East Sooke Park"

It should be noted that East Sooke Park is now within East Sooke Fires protection district so we are no longer delayed at the borders of the park while waiting to get a PEP number to allow our personnel to enter as we were required to do in the past.

B. Special events.

1. The annual soap box derby. On September 17th fire brigade closed part of Coppermine road and hosted the annual East Sooke soap box derby.
2. In conjunction with the soap box derby we also held a fun fair in Coppermine Park. This was held as a result of the success we had with our 25th anniversary celebrations last year. The fair featured children's bouncy houses, children's games, fire trucks displayed, live demonstrations, a dunk tank, a slip 'n slide, the fire safety house, a silent auction and a concession stand. Like last year, the event was widely enjoyed.
3. The Halloween celebration. The Fire Brigade hosts a gathering at the hall every Halloween where children and adults can gather in a safe environment to partake in some of the fun points of the day. We put on a fireworks display, a bon fire, offer free hot dogs and hot chocolate and ensure the children get their share of candy in the "Candy line". Our brigade also assists with the Eerie

Acres haunted house display on Woodcock Road where funds are raised for a charitable cause and food is gathered for the Sooke food bank.

4. The fire truck light parade. Every December the Langford chamber of commerce hosts a fire truck light parade where they and neighboring communities decorate one or two of their fire trucks and parade through the streets of Langford. East Sooke will be decorating and entering a truck again this year.
5. The annual Santa run will be held this December; on the day before the fire truck parade we drive through the district with Santa Claus and some elves on the fire truck. We will be giving out candy canes and accepting donations for the food bank.
6. The Brigade did a flu clinic in the Fall.

C. Training.

In the past eleven months we have continued with training to International Fire Safety Training Association (IFSTA) firefighter 1. This is an internationally recognized program where firefighters complete 9 separate training modules in order to attain a standard firefighter certification. This standard is required to enable firefighters to carry out all basic firefighter duties.

In this past year;

- 4 firefighters have successfully completed level 1 and 2 vehicle extrication courses
- 4 firefighters have successfully completed their air brakes course.
- 4 firefighters have successfully completed a level 1 live fire fighting course.
- 5 firefighters have successfully completed an S215 wildfire course.
- 3 firefighters have successfully completed IFSTA modules 1,2 and 3 enabling them to obtain pagers and begin attending calls.
- 2 officers have successfully completed a Fire Instructor course and 1 officer completed a fire evaluators course enabling us to carry out certified fire training for most IFSTA modules.
- 4 firefighters have successfully completed module 8 of the 9 module IFSTA standard.

Our goals for the coming year are:

- To continue with the IFSTA module training and get as many personnel as possible trained to module 9.
- 4 firefighters to complete the vehicle rescue technician course to gain their gold seal in vehicle rescue.
- Train 1 more officer as a fire service evaluator.
- Get a basic rope rescue course to all of our fire fighters.
- Transfer our Justice Institute First responder program to the Canadian Red Cross Societies First responder program and train our personnel to that more advanced standard.
- Have all of our firefighters trained to the basic Hazmat awareness level.

There is also the requirement to maintain the proficiencies of all the firefighters from the Chief right down to the newest recruit.

This year's training has been very successful due mostly to the efforts of our Deputy Chief who keeps on top of keeping training manuals in stock, updating training materials and booking all of the department's out of house training.

D. Personnel.

We currently have 24 serving personnel. This number allows us to function but more volunteers would help greatly, especially people available during the day time.

An Administrative assistant has joined the department to keep us up to date on filing and paper work as well as assisting with radio communications.

2 senior fire fighters have retired this year taking with them a combined total of 37 years experience. Their contribution to the community is greatly appreciated.

2 of our fully trained firefighters have chosen to make fire fighting their careers and were hired on full time with the Vancouver fire department. We will miss their enthusiasm and knowledge but are happy to know that they will continue to serve their fellow British Columbians with pride and professionalism.

E. Hours.

Volunteer hours dedicated to callouts this year, not including response time to and from the hall or clean up of the trucks and gear, added up to 591 hours. Post call out clean up of the trucks and gear added up to 101 hours; Thursday night training added up to 1,921 hours; extra practices added up to 460 hours; courses added up to 1,740 hours, and special events added up to 417 hours.

This adds up to 5,230 hours of volunteer time dedicated to serving the community. To put it more clearly, if 3 employees worked full work weeks, 40 hours a week, 48 weeks per year, it adds up to 5,760 hours.

This number does not include the uncounted hours that the brigade puts into personal fitness, administrative duties, hall maintenance, truck maintenance, gear maintenance, etc.

F. Purchased equipment.

Hazmat containment and clean up equipment and supplies have been purchased and put into service. This gear is a "Minimum requirement" enabling us to handle any small (180 liters or less) hazmat spill. This meets the requirements of due diligence for immediate response but we would still have to call the CRD hazmat team if a large incident took place.

We have fitted out the wild land fire fighting trailer with enough gear to attack and contain most brush fires. The credo for fighting brush fires is "Hit it hard and hit it fast", we now have the equipment to carry out that type of attack plan. Considering that both of the brush fires we had this year were in East Sooke Park the purchase of this equipment comes not a moment too soon. The firefighters have been fitted with uniforms, wild land fire fighting clothing and safety boots. This has increased our level of safety within the hall and at wild land fires while adding a sense of professionalism to the firefighters.

G. Concerns.

Pagers. In many areas within our district our paging system fails to reach our fire-fighters' pagers. Due to the high iron and copper content in the rock the signals from the transmission towers can't reach our entire district. I have been investigating the possibility of issuing the firefighters with cell phones instead of pagers. It seems the commercial interests of cell companies making money with maximum coverage trumps the people's willingness to spend money on towers to reach emergency pagers. This being the case cell coverage in the district is far superior to our pager system. Cell phones are also cheaper than pagers and give the ability for two way communications if inside a burning structure and a radio is out of reach.

Radios. The radios that are in use in the CRD are CREST radios. The majority of our radios are in excess of 12 years old and need a repeater system functioning in order to work with the CREST system. It will take an expenditure of \$20,000 to \$25,000 to replace our outdated radios with compatible CREST radios. It will take significantly more money to equip every firefighter with a radio. While the current radios are working we can function even with the time lag caused by the repeater but within the next 2 or 3 years we can expect to see more and more of our old radios fail and the need for replacements will be upon us. The concern is that these old radios may fail at the wrong moment and put fire fighters' safety at risk.

Hall. Our current hall presents an ongoing safety problem. The room between the trucks is insufficient as is the room in front and behind them. Our outdoors storage for our first responder vehicle is irresponsible at best. Keeping life saving equipment in freezing conditions in winter and very hot conditions in summer is a recipe for disaster. The cage on the other side of the hall where the emergency trailer is kept has regularly been referred to as “An accident waiting to happen” and is actually infringing onto the neighboring property. Engineers have surveyed the building and have pointed out that it reaches about 40% of code, this in a building that, being a post disaster building, should be 150% of code. The list of safety and code violations goes on and on but the main issue is not with the safety concerns but with the hall’s capacity. We currently have 3 main apparatus, 2 smaller trucks and a trailer. We require a second engine in the district that will need to be purchased within the next 3 years. This totals a requirement for 6 full bays and the capacity of this hall is only 3 truck bays. I commend the entire Commission for already purchasing a piece of land that is ideal for a replacement hall to be built on but the public needs to be educated as to the reasons that there is a requirement for a replacement hall.

Of further concern regarding the hall is the fact that the school bus drops children off right in front of the hall. Admittedly the pavement in front of the hall offers a safe seeming pull out but teaching the area kids that the landing for emergency vehicles is a “Safe place” is in my opinion unwise.

If we had a fire hall built around the corner, on the property already purchased by the Commissioners, turned this building over to Parks and had it turned into a community hall outright, the safety concern for the school bus would be a non issue.

(b) Financial report

Chris Statham thanked Peggy Dayton for attending the meeting. He reviewed the financial report (attached), and commended the Fire Chief for handling his budget well.

Peggy reviewed the financial report and explained transfers made to cover the land purchase for the proposed new fire hall. She said the Commission will decide what to do with the surplus at the beginning of next year, noting it should be in the Capital Reserve Fund for equipment purchases, eg. a new truck.

Chris summarized that we are in good shape but need to keep expenses down.

Questions from the public included:

Q. Re training on vehicle extraction – do we have a Jaws of Life?

A. Roger: Yes.

Q. Asked to clarify “Labour Consumption”.

A. Peggy said this is CRD staff dealing with real estate and engineering.

Q. Real Estate officers?

A. This is CRD staff working on real estate services, ie. the land purchase. They do not receive extra pay for real estate work, it is just charged back to the Commission.

Q. Why do we require these services?

A. There is a lawyer on CRD staff to manage legal aspects, such as the land purchase.

Q. I heard of an association that owes us money for hall rental that hasn’t been paid.

Comment: Erik suggested this item be discussed after the meeting to track down the debt.

Question re "Fees"?

A. Chris noted the \$12,000 budget figure and the \$6,300 spent on underpinnings of the property purchase. Peggy noted that \$5,100 of the budget has not been spent.

Question re the "Vehicles \$19,000" budget figure?

A. This is for fleet vehicles' expenses – gas, etc.

Q. What if we buy the land and the fire hall doesn't go through?

A. Erik said this will be debated next year by the new Commission. We are buying the property for the potential new hall.

Comment from the public: The property was assessed at \$230,000; \$30,000 was set aside for conveyancing. If the new hall does not proceed, the owner has the option of buying the property back.

Public Comment: Protection of the community will suffer if there is no new fire hall.

Public Comment: The Commissioners were thanked for their service to E. Sooke residents.

Peggy Dayton left the meeting at 8 o'clock.

6. OLD BUSINESS - nil

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – (covered under item 5)

8. ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners with expiring terms are Erik Lund, Layton Engwer, Dick Braunschweig and James Scott.

Dick Braunschweig, Rick Lambert, George May and Rhonda Underwood were nominated and spoke briefly. Dick Braunschweig, George May and Rick Lambert were elected by ballot vote for 2-year terms.

Nominations for a 1-year term included Vicki Beck, Rhonda Underwood, Anita West and Brian White, with Brian White being elected by ballot vote for a 1-year term.

Erik will inform the CRD of the new Commissioners, who will assume their positions in January. James was thanked for his years of service on the Commission, and Erik was also thanked.

Moved by John Corsiglia, **Seconded** by Chris Statham, that the ballots be destroyed.

CARRIED

The Fire Fighters were thanked and applauded by the public for their "astonishing report".

9. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.