



**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREA SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2013**

SUBJECT POTENTIAL RELOCATION OF THE SALT SPRING ISLAND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE TO THE EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING

PURPOSE

The Salt Spring Island (SSI) Fire Department is currently considering the construction of a new emergency services building. The potential exists for the program to lease space in the proposed emergency services building. The SSI Emergency Program requires more suitable space for the local Emergency Operations Centre (EOC).

BACKGROUND

The CRD is the local authority for the SSI Emergency Program as defined under the *Emergency Program Act* and as such, is responsible for emergency management on the island. This responsibility is operated through a locally deployed emergency coordinator, supported by both CRD emergency management staff and many local volunteers. Additionally, a local SSI Emergency Program Advisory Commission provides direct local input into the program's annual strategic plan and operating budget.

An identified need of the emergency program has been the relocation of the EOC to address concerns related to lack of seismic stability and challenging communications. At this time, the emergency program is in a year to year lease tenancy as staff look for a viable alternative.

The SSI Fire Department is proposing construction of a new emergency services building. In discussions with the SSI Fire Department, an opportunity to lease space in the proposed building was presented. The committee overseeing the proposed emergency services building have asked for a formal indication from the CRD regarding interest in relocating.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Staff be directed to meet with SSI Fire and Rescue and to enter into discussions for the purpose of negotiating a potential lease in the proposed emergency services building.
2. Staff be directed to continue to look for alternative locations for the EOC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently the program's operating budget includes overhead expenses for lease of building space. The annual cost for 2013 for the lease is budgeted to be \$10,280. Staff would look for a lease arrangement consistent with current budget, with allowance for enhanced communication capability and improved seismic stability. Additionally, financial efficiency may be found over time in sharing resources that are currently managed independently by each agency (fire service, search and rescue and the emergency program) including: radio communications equipment, administrative equipment and training room equipment.

OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Relocation of the EOC to the proposed emergency services building would allow for more efficient and complete integration of emergency program support with local first responders. In major or minor emergencies, the local fire service is often the first on scene and is the group most often supported in major events by the emergency program. This support includes communications, requests for off-island resources or direct support to community members displaced due to emergencies such as house fires or floods.

SUMMARY

The SSI Fire Department is proposing construction of a new emergency services building on SSI. It is staff's opinion that this would be a better location for the EOC for the purposes of better integrating program support with local first responders. The new building would also address concerns related to seismic stability. A number of key efficiencies may be gained by becoming a tenant in this new building including improved communication and sharing of resources.

The current EOC location is on a year to year lease and staff is looking for a more suitable location. This new building appears to have potential to meet the EOC's needs and it is recommended by staff that the CRD enter into negotiations to explore leasing appropriate space.

RECOMMENDATION

That Electoral Area Services Committee recommends that:

1. Staff be directed to meet with SSI Fire and Rescue and to enter into discussions for the purpose of negotiating a potential lease in the proposed emergency services building.

****ORIGINAL SIGNED****

Travis Whiting
Senior Manager, Protective Services

Marg Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Acting General Manager
Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence