

Mountain Fire Protection District

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

June 22, 2021

Call to Order Neil Nelson called to order at 6:02 pm. Clem Remillard second. MSC.

Introduction

- Trustees Neil Nelson, John Gregson, Tony Wright, Clem Remillard, and Mike deWit. Accountant Sarah Zubkowski. Charles Pinker (in attendance for Maureen Young) from RDN. Fire Chief Russ McMann, Deputy Fire Chief Dave LeNeveu, Assistant Fire Chief Russ McCallum various other members of the fire department. Residents and non-residents of the District as per sign in sheet.

Prior Year AGM Minutes:

- Neil Nelson asked for questions on prior year AGM minutes. None.

Financial Report:

- Sarah Zubkowski discussed financial statements for 2019 and 2020. Called for questions.
- Wayne Morgan asked about 2015 truck loan and when this was completed. Sarah Zubkowski stated that the loan will be paid in full in 2029.

Improvement District Report:

- Neil Nelson noted that the water tanks project was completed.
- Clem Remillard discussed street lighting in the District. Only a few lights were out during the year. Please call if you see any street lights out so the board can get these repaired.

Fire Department Report:

- Russ McMann introduced himself and Dave LeNeveu. 33 members currently including their first female member.
- 2019 35 callouts – 40% MVI, 26% burning complaints and the remainder are a mix of medical aid, hydro lines down, fires, alarms activated, and assistance.
- 2020 26 callouts - lowest amount in calls in a number of years. 19% alarms activated, 19% burning complaints and the remainder are a mix of medical aid, hydro lines down, fires, alarms activated, MVI and assistance.
- Average firefighter 15-20 hours per month of time put in and chiefs put in 20-30 hours per month.
- Office paperwork and filing has been updated for WCB and NFPD standards over the last year.
- As noted, water tanks placed in the ground at the firehall. A lot of work was done to design and organize the project by the firefighters.
- Automatic aid agreement with Lantzville in place in order to get the super shuttle service. This allows callouts for East Wellington Fire Department to Lantzville and vice versa.
- Super shuttle accreditation was completed within 2 years from 2019 AGM.
- Training continues under the playbook.

- 1988 fire truck needs to be replaced and there are a few quotes that have been obtained. Current quote is approximately \$350,000 for a Ford F750 with attachments. More quotes to be obtained and the Board will need to make a decision.
- Russ McMann feels the taxes need to be increased for next year due to the new subdivisions built by his company and by John Gregson's company. This has increased the number of residents paying property taxes. The last couple of years the District budget has only increased by approximately 3-5%. More residents in the District means that it would spread an increase in the budget out. Russ McMann feels that it is necessary to increase the firefighter budget in the next years. Steve Atkinson stated that he doesn't agree that the taxes should increase as this is real money for the residents. Steve Atkinson believes there is currently good value in the current budget. Russ McMann said that the current increases in the budget are less than inflation. Steve Atkinson stated that 5% is more than inflation and anything above 5% is too much. Dave LeNeveu stated that the provincial levy on the property taxes increases based on our budget in addition to other items. Dave LeNeveu feels that the number of new houses in the District should help cover the increase in the budget for the District. Steve Atkinson asked if the budget is spread out over the new houses in addition to the old houses. Sarah Zubkowski stated yes. Dave LeNeveu noted the increase in the budgets over the years has not been increasing with the number of new residents in the District. Clem Remillard noted the number of taxable properties for 2020 was 461 and the number of taxable properties for 2021 is 501. He noted that the property taxes include RDN levies as well. Bruce Erickson stated that if we increase the budget by more, the government will give the money to the District. Steve Atkinson stated that the money should increase if it doesn't affect taxes and will be absorbed by the new residents in the District. Russ McMann stated that the District needs to increase the firefighter budget. Russ McCallum stated that we need to increase it just based on the number of houses in the District. Bruce Erickson stated that the RDN reduced the taxes by 2% so if the District increased its budget the residents will just be taxed more. Russ McCallum stated that the new homes have more electronics and therefore are causing more calls at all hours of the night which causes the District more cost. Russ McMann stated that the firefighter budget needs to be increased based on this information. Russ McMann wanted the residents to hear it from him and wanted to get their reaction. Steve Atkinson stated that we should definitely increase the firefighter budget as a 10% increase there will not equal a 10% increase in taxes.
- Charles Pinker asked about mutual aid with the City of Nanaimo. Russ McMann stated that there has been no progress for 2 years.
- Russ McMann stated that the RDN has started using Surrey Dispatch instead of Fire Comm for fire calls. Roger Dubyna asked if calls are routed through Surrey. Russ McMann stated yes. Russ McMann is worried about the number of dispatchers to calls received. Darcy Morgan stated that we had no option and had to make the move. City of Nanaimo is also using Surrey. Roger Dubyna asked if the City is saving money by making the change. Russ McMann stated yes. Roger Dubyna asked if the service is going ok. Russ McMann and Dave LeNeveu stated that yes they have been so far.
- New position in fire department as Burning Permit Liaison Wayne Morgan. Wayne Morgan thanked the residents for applying for burn permits. All burning permits will go through Wayne Morgan now. Pictures will be required and give him a heads up on what is being burned. Clem Remillard has been working on getting the burning permits online working better. Wording has been changed online to be clear on whether the permit is accepted or not. Protocol of BC Forest Service is being followed. Currently no burning except for campfires. Depending on the time of year, the most important part is that you

call Wayne Morgan on the day that you are going to burn. He then puts this out on dispatcher so that if Surrey receives a smoke complaint it can be dealt with in house and reduce the number of callouts. 2020 79 burn permits issued. 2021 78 burn permits issued so far. No callouts for burning complaints recently. Hopefully the new system makes it clearer for residents and burning.

- Roger Dubyna thanked the firefighters for everything they do. He lives down from Mountain View school and the smoke travels his direction. Smoke from wood and other materials smell differently. What are the rules with different items being burned? Wayne Morgan stated that a campfire is half a metre. 3 feet by 3 feet by 2 feet are category 2 (hand pile). Anything bigger is considered industrial burns and needs additional permits. Charles Pinker asked if you can burn on long weekends? Clem Remillard stated they would confirm. Dave LeNeveu stated that there are rules with specific materials. Wayne Morgan stated that there are rules for how big the items in the burn are (i.e. stump size). Roger Dubyna stated that there are new residents who don't always know the rules. Wayne Morgan stated this has been a problem for years. Steve Atkinson stated that he is happy with the sensible approach by the fire department and thanked them again.
- Clem Remillard stated that the website is currently a work in progress and they are trying to work out the problems. Please go to the website for bylaws, minutes, contact information, and other news in the District. www.mountainfireprotection.ca

Elections:

- John Gregson and Neil Nelson were up for renewal on 2020. Tony Wright is up for renewal in 2021. Mike de Wit moved out of District and needs to be replaced.
- Neil Nelson passed it over to Charles Pinker to run the elections as he is up for renewal and this may be a conflict of interest.
- Charles Pinker asked for nominations for Neil Nelson's position for a 3 year term. Clem Remillard nominates Neil Nelson. No other nominations. Neil Nelson will stand and is now in for a 3 year term.
- Charles Pinker asked for nominations for a John Gregson's position for a 3 year term. Neil Nelson nominates Harold Kamikawaji. No other nominations. Harold Kamikawaji will stand and is now in for a 3 year term.
- Charles Pinker asked for nominations for Tony Wright's position for a 2 year term. Clem Remillard nominated Tony Wright. He will stand. Wayne Morgan nominated Steve Atkinson. He said he will not stand. Tony Wright is now in for a 2 year term.
- Charles Pinker asked for nominations for Mike de Wit's position for a 2 year term. Deb Remillard nominated Dave Stewart. No other nominations. Dave Stewart is now in for a 2 year term.

Questions:

- Neil Nelson asked for questions.
- Steve Atkinson said thank you and feels we are very well served in this community. Thank you.
- Clem Remillard wanted to thank outgoing board members John Gregson and Mike de Wit.
- Dave Stewart asked about satellite tanks in the District. Russ McMann stated they are talking to a couple of residents with ponds. Witchcraft Lake is also in the process but far away.
- Steve Atkinson asked how the insurance decrease works. Neil Nelson stated that the Certificate of Accreditation can be given to the insurance company and it also noted with

the underwriters. Clem Remillard stated that firefighter did a great job on the day of testing and he was impressed. Neil Nelson noted that he had a \$460 savings personally.

- Darcy Morgan stated that the District does a lot for the community. The fire department also puts a lot of work in the community., He feels that there are firefighters that have been with the hall for a number of years (30, 40, 50 years) and that the community can do more to recognize the volunteers in the community. Millions of dollars have been saved over the years due to volunteer efforts. He asked residents to consider making a comment/thank you on the website.
- Clem Remillard stated that the District had to postpone the 75 year anniversary party.

Adjourn meeting

Neil Nelson adjourns the meeting at 6:59 pm. John Gregson seconds. MSC.

Charles Pinker presentation. He can be contacted at 250-802-3618 or by email pinker.charles@gmail.com.