

CFLLA Meeting February 19, 2020

Informal meeting to update status of fire department and potential changes to regulations governing volunteer departments.

Present: Mark Savard (president), Jacinta D'Andrea (sec/tres), Amandah Cullum (VP) and Allen Schadd (Fire Chief)

Start: 7pm

Meeting planned in response to email correspondence from Allen regarding fire department changes in local government which may effect status of Chimney/Felker Fire Department.

Chimney Lake is currently a recognized fire department on the list of the Office of Fire Commissioner (OFC). The society needs to describe what level of service we propose to provide:

(1) Full Service; (2) Interior; (3) Exterior

A letter from the society is required.

Chimney Felker Fire Department is able to provide level 3; exterior protection only.

Office of Fire Commissioner is asking Regional Districts (RDs) to recognize all fire departments; while the RDs are asking the province (OFC) to be responsible for regulating fire departments/responders. Regional district likely to wash hands of little (non-RD) fire departments so they are not liable. Does not make sense for them to spend the millions of dollars needed to upgrade all small community fire trucks to meet current standards. There are currently 12 Fire Departments in the CRD, with a wide range of "response-ability." Chimney, while relatively high on the list as far as resources, equipment and training, is concerned, still needs to address a number of improvement areas.

Questions:

Does it make sense to continuously spend money on upgrading fire trucks, equipment, when we have relatively few calls?

How many properties are being protected?

What is the "value" of ones home?

How do we protect our community if a fire does break out? As an exterior fire responder, the CFL FD will not be saving individual homes, but protecting the neighborhood from the spread of fires.

Could OFC force us to close our doors?

There is a large financial cost to keep up to date. Fire department ascertains that "low" CFLLA membership dues cannot maintain a fire department that meets regulatory requirements. They should have a 3rd truck so personal vehicles are not used to get members to the scene. Fire Chief, Al Schaad has found used BC Hydro trucks on BC Auction, which could serve this purpose.

But how many members do we have able to respond? 2-12

There were 3 calls this last calendar year. There are rarely more than 5-7 people out at practice.

Originally many people in the community opted to support local fire department as they received a break on home insurance. This is not necessarily the case anymore. There are a number of different insurance companies with various brokers, so it is important that individuals discuss this with their various providers. Insurance costs and coverage will vary greatly based on many factors, such as assessed value of the home; woodstove, ect.

Unfortunately, Allen Schadd says "if people don't see the value and pay dues, the fire department may be forced to close." They are doing their best, but have to cut corners – fire truck has had one oil change in 10 years...???

Non-members pay \$500/truck/hour if the fire department called to fire of non-member.

Other important considerations:

What of Wildfires? Can we have a community of trained responders able to respond locally if our community is threatened or able assist provincial fire fighting crews?

What of First Aid and other community related emergencies? Vehicle accidents? Heart attack? Fall on ice?

There are many advanced responders in our community. How do we all link this important service to the FD and our members?

Do we need a constitution amendment? Can we be a CRD Department?

-need referendum

-what/how would taxes increase?

We have 2 OFC trained instructors, but need 10-12 active trained members to be considered "exterior response" capable.

Other Business:

Alarm system – currently on hold. AI only member not supportive.

Hall Expansion and greening – currently on hold. Allen had assessment done and there is no room to expand towards road.

Plan:

Reassess after meeting with CRD in March to see what is coming down the line regarding local fire departments

Get information from insurance companies on value added by local FD from a financial perspective.