

MINUTES

SHAWNIGAN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Meeting **Annual General Meeting**
Date Wednesday, April 19, 2023
Place Apparatus Bay - Fire Station No. 1

Present Chris Shields, Chair; Dean Freer, Vice-Chair; Dave Cech, Trustee; Mike Trotter, Trustee; Keith Shields, Trustee, Fire Chief; Karen Berezcki, Administrator; Cliff Evans, Returning Officer.

Call to Order 7:34 p.m.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chairman Chris Shields called the meeting to order, introduced the head table and welcomed members of the public.

I am reporting on behalf of the Shawnigan Improvement District Board of Trustees. At this time, I will outline what the Improvement District’s responsibilities are to the public.

The Shawnigan Improvement District derives its authority to operate under the Local Government Act and Letters Patent. Order in Council is then granted by the Provincial Cabinet, which provides legality to our function as an Improvement District.

The Improvement District oversees two functions; one being the Shawnigan Lake Fire Department and the second being street lighting. The Improvement District provides bylaws, policies, and finances to ensure safe and practical function of the Fire Department. On an Operational level, The Fire Chief coordinates the department personnel, organizes training, requests equipment, and is entirely responsible for all operational functions of the fire department. The Trustees work closely with the Chief to ensure the department has everything they need to be safe and operate to the highest standards.

The purpose of this Annual General Meeting is to provide the community with some insight on the status of the Improvement District as it relates to the Shawnigan Lake Fire Department. Also included in this meeting is the election of two Trustees and a public period where we can entertain questions from the public.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the April 27, 2022, Annual General Meeting were distributed to the attendees for advance review.

Moved: Sebastien Arsenault
Second: Brett Malcolm

Carried: **That the April 27, 2022, Annual General Meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.**

3.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Chris Shields

SUMMARY

FIRE TOLL RATES IN THE DISTRICT

Shawnigan Improvement District remains as one of the lowest tax rate Districts in the Cowichan valley. Very small yearly tax increases generally have to do with inflation and occasionally some larger capital expenditures that are included in a long-term budgeting process. Through methodical budgeting, SID will continue to support the purchasing of quality apparatus and rescue gear.

STREETLIGHTING

The Streetlighting in the District has had no significant changes since the last AGM. As I reported to you last year, all of the streetlights are now upgraded with more efficient LED bulbs.

FIRE APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT

Shawnigan Fire Department has recently put into service a custom fire boat that was designed and ordered last year from a local boat builder, Silver Streak. This vessel is unique in that it has the ability to flow a significant amount of water from a through-hull fire pump, can easily lower the bow to effect a rescue, as well as travel at 40 plus miles per hour. This is a great combination of speed, effectiveness during rescues, and water flowing capabilities. I will speak for the Trustees when I say that we are very happy with the outcome of this acquisition. Our next step, we will look for the right avenue to sell the older fire boat and recuperate funds back into the District.

For many years, the District struggled to find a reputable and consistent snow removal company that could operate as quickly as possible. After many failed contracts over the years, in 2021, the Fire Chief decided to budget for and purchase a snow plow to put on Wildland 1. With the multiple snow events this year, this piece of equipment has been an incredible addition to the District. I am not certain of the cost savings to date, but no doubt the plow has been paid for and we have saved thousands of dollars.

As a whole, the fire related equipment that is both on the trucks as well as in the station, is second to none in the Cowichan Valley. The Fire Chief spends a considerable amount of time doing research on specific fire based items and we, as Trustees always work with the Chief to support these purchases.

FIRE STATIONS

STATION 1

Station 1 is operating as designed. The landscaping always looks amazing, and we are looking at tidying up some of the larger trees by having them pruned this month. With regards to the general hall appearance, the Trustees were pleased to hear that there were over 20 members that came out to help during the spring cleanup day, and even a member or two staying until dark. I would like to thank all of the members for helping with these hall clean-ups, the fire stations really do look great. I would also like to thank our landscaper (Dawn) who takes care of the lawns and gardens at all of the stations. She has a passion for this work and she does an amazing job.

STATION 2

It is with great pleasure that I report to you that we completed the necessary process to secure a long term lease agreement for this property. This process started nearly four years ago, when the SID inquired about renewing the lease agreement for another long term deal with the province. Without going into too much detail, when our lease expired, we were told that we weren't able to renew it with another lease so we applied for a "License of Occupation". This allowed us to continue to operate but with no resolve to secure, long term usage of the land. As this application was being thrown around in the provincial system between many different people, we were instructed to have the land surveyed so we could put in for a subdivision application. After the survey was complete, the application was re-submitted, and a subdivision was accepted through the land titles office. The lease was then granted so we are now secured in a long-term agreement with the province and there is no threat of having land issues over at Station 2. Our Financial Administrator (Karen Berezki) put in an immense amount of work in dealing with this over the years, and her efforts, although frustrating at times, are greatly appreciated by the Trustees.

After completing this process for Station 2, the Trustees have inquired about obtaining a crown grant application for Station 1. We are currently in a lease agreement with the Provincial Government for Station 1, but time is ticking down on that agreement. The easiest resolve for this would be apply for a crown grant which would be fewer steps to obtain the same end goal as we did for Station 2.

STATION 3

Station 3 is operating as designed. In 2022, the District was waiting for the grant money to arrive (due to the flood in November, 2021) and midway through 2022, the District recuperated nearly all of the funds that were put out during the flood repair at Station 3.

BOATHOUSE

Recently, a few feet of extra length were added to the boathouse to accommodate the new fire boat. This alteration has not drastically changed the physical appearance of the boathouse, so I consider this a job well done.

TRAINING

Training appears to be picking up with spring fast approaching. The Fire Chief was mentioning some rope courses coming up in the next week or two, so it's nice to see the facilities being used for these courses.

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

According to WorkSafe BC, there has been a sharp increase in mental health claims for first responders and frontline workers in British Columbia. To combat this steep rise, many Fire Departments (paid and volunteer) are putting a significant amount of effort into mental health awareness, training, and program development. With volunteer numbers hovering around 40 here at SLVFD, the SID will be supporting the development and operation of a Mental Health Program, developed by SLVFD.

Creating a Mental Health program for smaller departments is relatively new for our area, so this is an exciting time moving forward. As of now, there are a number of members that have shown an interest in being a Peer Support member so this is a great start to

developing a program. The SID Trustees are unanimously committed to supporting the mental health of the volunteers and we are committed to providing the funds for whatever training needs to be completed.

With this in mind, the Trustees are strong advocates for all training, and training as much as possible. With a proactive department, there should be ample opportunities to extend your knowledge and improve your skills. Keep up the good work and take advantage of anything that interests you.

Once again, I would like to say a special thank you to the members who instruct such skill sets as First Aid, Swiftwater Rescue, and High Angle Rescue to name a few. Using their knowledge benefits the entire department and we should all be grateful for such a great resource.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering takes a lot of time, effort, dedication and in this line of work, it takes resilience and you should all be commended for that. I say this often, but I will speak for the Trustees when I say that we are very appreciative to have such a great group of Volunteers. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

The operational side of the Department is something we as Trustees put in the hands of the Fire Chief. There are many things that just get done, and are done right and we are beyond thankful for all that you do for the District.

As always, thank you very much for attending tonight's meeting and please be safe out there.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Brett Malcolm

Carried: That the Chairman's 2022 Annual Report be accepted as presented.

4.0 FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT - *Keith Shields, Fire Chief*

The fire department was dispatched 408 times for our 2022 fiscal year. This was up by 127 calls from the previous year. The breakdown is as follows:

- 44 Alarms activated
- 21 Assistance
- 34 Burning complaints
- 7 Chimney fires
- 1 Electrical Fire
- 213 Medical Aid
- 17 Hydro incidents
- 4 Small brush fires
- 2 Vehicle Fires
- 1 Rescue
- 43 Motor Vehicle incidents

- 2 Malahat Mutual Aid: 1 Vehicle Fire; 1 Motor Vehicle Incident
- 4 Mutual Aid Structure Fires with Mill Bay
- 2 Mutual Aid Rope Rescues with Cowichan Bay
- 4 Hazmat incidents
- 9 Structure Fires

There were 53 regular practises and 12 extra technical Rescue practises held. Twelve officer meetings were also attended. Numerous public events were attended including Canada day, Clean-up day, Remembrance Day, School lectures, Muscular dystrophy Drive and some Fire extinguisher training. We also handed out some fire prevention themed shopping bags.

Our Summit Rescue company held 5 four-day classes here and we also did a two-day Tower Crane Rescue course for Langford Fire and one for our own members down at Brentwood College.

Four members completed a Hazmat operations course and some did a Swiftwater Rescue refresher day as well as our usual First responder training and recertification classes.

The new digital sign outside station one, I believe, is a very worthwhile addition. The snow plow that was purchased in 2021 is really paying off. Our costs are a fraction of what other neighbouring departments are paying for snow clearing, and we have the opportunity to plow out our members so that they can respond to calls and also plow into calls if required.

The replacement boat that we budgeted for finally arrived earlier this year and is a huge improvement. Our boat committee started the process back in January of 2022 and a little over a year later we have it. A 21 ft Aluminum landing craft style boat made in Sooke, powered by a 200 hp outboard. A 700 gallon per minute pump was installed so we now have a pump and drive capability with a monitor mounted on the bow. Getting patients out of the water is going to be a lot easier with the ability to lower the ramp on the bow. Also, easier access to the islands, beaches and waterfront properties. Our boat house had to be extended to accommodate the longer boat with a pod and outboard Motor. The new boat is much more fuel efficient and a lot quieter.

The flood damage we had at station three is finally fixed up and money has been received from the province through the disaster assistance program.

Going forward our capital plan projects are as follows:

- 2023 Roof replacement on the Tender Bay and Hose Tower
- 2024 Replace Engine 2 (the process has started as to get a new truck it's up to two years or more)
- 2025 Roof replacement on Apparatus Bay Station 1
- 2026 Replace or refurbish Ladder one
- 2027 Replace Roof on patio areas Station 1

I'd like to acknowledge all the fire department members that put in so much time training and responding to calls throughout the year. There is no stop or quit on this team 24/7/365. It's not only the fire department members that make this huge sacrifice but their families as well, so a huge thank you to the ones that stay at home and hold the fort down.

None of this would be possible without the solid support of the Trustees. Having such an easy group to work with is a huge bonus and everyone benefits from it. Thanks to our two administrators for keeping us on the right path. Karen for the Trustees and Heather for the Fire department. Making sure we are equipped, ready and able to respond to just about any emergency in our District wouldn't be possible without the teamwork that the whole organization shows. It's very satisfying to work for this outfit with the solid support of all involved.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Sebastien Arsenault

Carried: **That the 2022 Annual Fire Department Report be accepted as presented.**

5.0 2021 FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT - *Karen Berezcki, Administrator*

As the Financial and Corporate Administrator of the District, it is a pleasure to present the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2022.

For reference, these statements are available for viewing on the District's website at www.shawniganimprovementdistrict.com. A limited number of paper copies are available here upon request.

The District's financial statements have been audited by Morine and Schindler LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants, as appointed by the Board of Trustees at its January 9, 2023, regular meeting. The Independent Auditor's Report sets out the Auditor's responsibilities, the scope of their examination, and their opinion on the District's financial statements.

The auditor has expressed its unqualified opinion, as follows:

AUDITOR OPINION

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Shawnigan Improvement District (the "District"), which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at December 31, 2022, and the consolidated statements of operations, changes in accumulated surplus, changes in net financial debt and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the consolidated financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the District as at December 31, 2022, and the consolidated results of its operations and consolidated cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

FUND ACCOUNTING

It is important to note that the District records accounting transactions using the fund accounting method. Money in each individual fund, and interest earned on it, must be used only for the purpose for which the reserve fund was established.

Disbursements are authorized by resolution or by Bylaw, passed by the Board of Trustees.

OPERATING FUND

Operations accounts for the day-to-day activities of providing services. Such as vehicle expense, building expense, repairs and maintenance, telephone, hydro, water, cable and internet, insurance, firefighter gratuity, training and administration costs.

Since inception (1950), the accumulated surplus in this fund at December 31, 2022, totals \$105,572.

RENEWAL RESERVE FUND (RRF)

Part 706 of the *Local Government Act* requires the Trustees to create a renewal reserve fund, and to adequately fund it so that infrastructure can be maintained and replaced. The District holds tangible capital assets at a total cost basis of \$9,191,471. The District's renewal reserve fund is set up to pay for the repair, maintenance or replacement of these existing assets as they reach the end of their useful life.

Annual funding for the RRF is budgeted, collected and expensed through the Operating Fund.

There were no expenditures from this fund during 2022.

The accumulated surplus in the RRF at December 31, 2022, totals \$940,457.

TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

Tangible Capital Assets include buildings and equipment. These are stated at cost less accumulated amortization. As noted above, provision for repair/replacement of these assets is planned through the Renewal Reserve Fund.

Capital Asset Acquisitions in 2022 totalled \$250,383, comprising firefighting equipment, turn out gear, training facility equipment, fire boat deposits, grounds equipment and building improvements.

The net book value in this fund at December 31, 2022, totals \$4,784,693.

NET DEBT

The net debt as at December 31, 2022 totals \$2,096,828 compared to \$2,280,571 in 2021.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT

Taking into account each of the funds reported, the consolidated accumulated surplus as at December 31, 2022 totals \$3,733,894.

2023 OPERATING BUDGET

The Shawnigan Improvement District continues to operate in a favourable financial position. This is largely due to good fiscal management and difficult decisions.

Every year the Board of Trustees goes through the process of setting budgets and reviewing costs. The goal is to ensure that operational and reserve funding requirements are adequately met.

The annual budget for the 2023 fiscal year called for a Tax Levy/Operations increase of \$100,000, from \$883,000 in 2022 to \$983,000 in 2023. Although many plus or minus expense items are evident, the tax levy increase of \$100,000 is mainly due to: 1) increased insurance premiums; 2) increased fuel costs; 3) increased fire fighter earnings and 4) capital expense items.

At this time, I would like to recognize the Trustees, the Fire Chief, the Administrative Assistant and the Fire Department Members, for their commitment to sustainability, continuous improvement and service to the community.

Moved: Chris Shields
Second: Sebastien Arsenault

Carried: That the 2022 Audited Financial Statements, and Financial Officer's report be accepted as presented.

6.0 TRUSTEE HONORARIUM:

Chair Chris Shields reported that the honorarium is currently set at \$14,000 per year. Each of the four Trustees receive \$2,600, the Chair receives \$3,600. The Trustees attend 12 regular meetings to conduct the business of the Improvement District, plus any special meetings as deemed necessary, as well as the Annual General Meeting where they report to the land owners.

The honoraria last increased from \$12,000 to \$14,000 in 2018.

Moved: Tiffany Newman
Second: Brett Malcolm

Carried: That the Trustee honorarium be set at \$16,000 for the 2023 fiscal.

7.0 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES:

Chair Chris Shields introduced Mr. Cliff Evans as the duly appointed Returning Officer.

The Trustees' terms of office were accounted for: Chris Shield's and Keith Shield's 3-year terms have completed. As such, there are two vacant Trustee positions comprising two three-year terms.

Tiffany Newman nominated Keith Shields. Accepted.

Brett Malcolm nominated Chris Shields. Accepted.

Further nominations were called three times by the Returning Officer, and when no further nominations were received, nominations were declared closed.

Chris Shields and Keith Shields were declared elected by acclamation.

Congratulations were extended to candidates Chris Shields and Keith Shields, who were thanked for letting their names stand for election.

The 2023/24 Board of Trustees was confirmed as follows: Dave Cech, Dean Freer, Chris Shields, Keith Shields and Mike Trotter.

8.0 PUBLIC PERIOD:

There was some general discussion between the Public and the Trustees with enquiries/comments made on: the Station 3 flood; water pumping areas; water storage at Station 2 and the new fire boat. An expression of thanks and appreciation was extended to the Trustees.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Kyle Jamieson

Carried: That the meeting adjourns at 8:18 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station 1 in the Board Room.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chairperson

Administrator