

MINUTES

SHAWNIGAN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Meeting **Annual General Meeting**
Date Wednesday, October 28, 2020
Place Apparatus Bay - Fire Station No. 1

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

Absent Dave Cech, Trustee.

Call to Order 7:43 p.m.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chairman Chris Shields called the meeting to order, introduced the head table and welcomed 36 members of the public, of which 24 were registered voters.

Mr. Shields advised that the meeting was called for the following purposes:

- (a) To receive from the Trustees a report on the conditions of the works and a statement of the financial position of the Improvement District;
- (b) To discuss with the Trustees any matter relating to the works or finances of the Improvement District;
- (c) To fix the honorarium of the Trustees for the ensuing year;
- (d) To elect two Trustees to each serve for a three-year term.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the April 24, 2019, Annual General Meeting were distributed to the attendees for advance review.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Tiffany Newman

Carried: That the April 24, 2019 Annual General Meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.

3.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - *Chris Shields*

I am happy to report to you all on behalf of the Shawnigan Improvement District Board of Trustees. Before I discuss what the District has accomplished in 2019, I will provide you with some background information about the Improvement District and the Trustees responsibilities to the public.

The Shawnigan Improvement District derives its authority to operate under Part 17 of the Local Government Act (BC) 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. With regards to the Fire Department, the Improvement District provides bylaws, policies, and finances to ensure safe and practical function for this community service.

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.

NOTE: Before I continue with an Improvement District summary of the past year, I would like to make a mention of the District's response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 and the District's Response

We are all experiencing some interesting times with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of us have had to alter our lives in different ways. In recent years, the AGM would have been held in April; however, this was not an option for us during that time as meeting guidelines were not clearly established by the province. What you see here tonight adheres to the protocols set forth by the Provincial Health Authority and I would like to extend a special thank you to trustee Mike Trotter, Chief Shields, and Returning Officer Cliff Evans for their diligence in setting up the space for the meeting.

SUMMARY FROM THE PAST YEAR:

Fire Toll Rates in the District

The trustees are very proud to have one of the lowest mill rates for an improvement district in the lower island. We strive to keep this rate as low as possible, yet not cutting any corners that can affect the operations of the fire department. To help keep the mill rate low, we are very active in including new properties into the District and in some cases extending our area boundaries to include these properties. As we know, there are a few private schools in the district that are significant contributors to fire tolls in the area. We have had to re-visit our fire toll agreements with these schools because of recent property assessments. We do expect future expansion of these schools, which would then provide more funds to the District. I would like to thank the fire chief for his diligent work in contacting landowners in the area and to administrator Karen Berezki for submitting the appropriate paperwork for inclusion into the district.

Fire Apparatus/Equipment

A new Tender was scheduled to arrive late in the 2019 calendar year, however, due to some technical issues with the build, the tender arrived a few weeks into 2020. The new apparatus replaces the old tender, which was sold for more than what was expected. Next purchase to be included in the District fleet, will be a new Command 1 vehicle. The older command 1 will then be re-tasked in the District.

Station 1

The building itself appears to be in good working order and the grounds are relatively maintenance free. Replacement of a portion of the flat roof was recently completed.

Looking forward a few years, there are other sections of the roof that will also need to be addressed. At this time, I would like to thank all the members that participated in the hall clean-up days throughout the year.

Station 2

Our provincial land lease ended in August 2020 for our number 2 station. I will provide some background information regarding the 2 hall land; the land that the fire hall sits on has been offered to the Malahat First Nation by the Provincial government as a part of their Treaty Agreement. For the last couple of years we have been working with Malahat First Nations and Provincial mediators to come to a long term agreement for use of the property. Currently, we are not locked into a lease agreement for the long-term as negotiations have stalled. We are presently holding a License of Occupation on a month-to-month basis. We have explored Government grants, the lease renewal process, as well as possible purchase of the land from the Ministry. We have spent countless trustee/administrator hours on this issue. There is a significant frustration with this process and there is currently no timeline for completion. We do not know what the end result will look like but I sure hope we can complete this in due time.

As you all have seen, the landscape of 2 station has changed. In 2019 (as the lease holder), we were able to apply for a License to Cut Timber from the land. The idea was to remove trees from the property that could have a negative effect on the building and any other structures during winter storms. The cost to fall, clean the land, and stack the logs was paid for by the SID. Since the land has been offered to Malahat Nation, there was no cost recovery for the District. The stacked timber was allocated to the Malahat Nation.

Station 3

Hall 3 appears to be functioning quite well and remaining very presentable to the public. Members that respond to this hall are keeping the building clean and tidy, so thank you for your efforts. We do not forecast any large expenditures in the near future.

Boathouse

The Boathouse continues to operate as designed, and no immediate, large expenditures are expected. Routine maintenance of the walkways will be required in the next couple of months.

#4 Training

With the current COVID concerns, out of District training and/or large training groups have been limited. As stated in years past, we encourage all firefighters to complete as much training as they can accommodate into their busy schedules, but we encourage you all to do so cautiously. We do understand that there are many volunteers that are eager to get more training. Please be patient, and, in time, the training will be back to normal.

The trustees were very pleased to see that the Fire Chief had separated practice nights into several nights during the week and with smaller numbers of volunteers. Firefighting is an essential service, so training has to continue, and this is a great way to continue with that.

The Summit Rescue program has been operating for a couple of years and has been a great addition to the District. Summit Rescue has been beneficial for many reasons; instructors gain experience from instructing, SLVFD members receive this training for free as well SID collects the remaining proceeds of the course. The District is a proud supporter of the program and we look forward to further advancements in training.

Volunteers

Program development and proactive members of the fire department are the main reasons for the retention of volunteers. As mentioned in the past, Chief Shields operates a challenging program for the volunteers and we support him in all aspects. The trustees would also like to extend a thank you to the elected officers who work hard to provide excellent training exercises throughout the year.

We are very grateful to have each and every one of you in our District.

I would also like to thank the Trustees for their time giving back to the community; (Vice- Chair) Dean Freer, Mike Trotter, Dave Cech, and our financial administrator Karen Berezcki. We have all spent a considerable amount of time on special projects this year with great results, so thank you.

In closing, the trustees appreciate all of the volunteers' hard work and dedication throughout the year and we would like to thank everyone in attendance at tonight's meeting to show your support for the community.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Derek Porter

Carried: That the Chairman's 2019 Annual Report be accepted as presented.

4.0 FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT - Keith Shields, Fire Chief

The fire department was dispatched 287 times in 2019. The breakdown is as follows:

- 13 Alarms Activated
- 19 Assistance Calls
- 26 Burning Complaints
- 9 Miscellaneous Fires
- 2 Hazardous Materials
- 17 Hydro Line Incidents
- 146 Medical Aids
- 5 Mutual Aids
- 39 Motor Vehicle Incidents
- 2 Technical Rescues
- 9 Structure Fires

We held 52 practises, 12 tech rescue practises and 12 officer meetings. In addition to this we were involved in numerous community events, tours and demos. Members also attended live fire, instructor refresher, forcible entry, first responder, structure protection,

community risk reduction and rope and confined space rescue classes. Meetings for Fire Prevention, greater Victoria training officer, Cowichan Valley Fire Chiefs and BC Fire Chiefs Association were also attended. With all of this we are well in excess of 10,000 hours logged and this doesn't include the hours the individual members put in practising for testing. As I've said before I don't believe there is any other volunteer group that puts in as much time as this group of dedicated individuals.

Our membership stands at 42 right now. We could really use some more members at #3 Station if anyone knows of anyone interested.

I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the officers, members and their families for the continuing sacrifice they make for our community.

The rope and confined space rescue division we started is doing well. The classes have been well attended by a variety of departments. A milestone that we have achieved is becoming an approved training agency for the BC Technical High Angle Rope Rescue Program. This is a program that is under WorkSafe BC's umbrella. There were quite a few hoops to jump through but we've done it and are one of the six training companies with the designation in the Province and the only one on Vancouver Island.

Some of the upgrades we've done in 2019 are the new generator at station two that powers everything with a protective shelter over it. We also had the training prop out back painted all one colour to tidy it up. The replacement for water tender #3 that was supposed to show up in 2019 was a bit late but showed up in early January of 2020. We sold the 25-year old water tender for a great price and it ended up in the states.

Our capital plan projects going forward are dynamic and are subject to change as the need arises. Our current plans are as follows.

- 2021** Add another 40-foot sea can to our training prop out back
Add a pick-up truck to the fleet
- 2022** Boat and boat house upgrade
- 2023** Roof replacement on Tender Bay and hose tower
- 2024** Roof replacement on main apparatus bay #1 Station
- 2025** Replace Engine 2

None of this would be possible without the solid support of the Shawnigan Improvement District Trustees. It's reassuring to know when the fire department presents an idea or project to the Board that they take it seriously and give it due consideration while maintaining a very reasonable taxation rate. At the heart of the Trustees is our administrator Karen Bereczki. Karen has done a lot to keep our books balanced and communicating with the ever-challenging Province in some of our endeavours.

On the Fire department side keeping our training records, incident reports and general paperwork operations running straight and compliant is Heather Plumb. Thank you for a job well done.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Tiffany Newman

Carried: **That the 2019 Annual Fire Department Report be accepted as presented.**

5.0 2019 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - *Karen Berezcki, Administrator*

As Financial and Corporate Administrator for the District, it is a pleasure to present the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019.

Recognizing that the District is now ten months into the 2020 fiscal year, there will be some references made to the 2020 and 2021 fiscals.

The District's financial statements were audited by Morine & Schindler, Chartered Professional Accountants LLP, as appointed by the Board of Trustees at its January 13, 2020 regular meeting. The Independent Auditor's Report outlines the auditor's responsibilities, the scope of their examination, and their opinion on the Improvement District's financial statements.

The financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The auditor has expressed an opinion that the statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of the Shawnigan Improvement District as at December 31, 2019.

These financial statements are available for viewing on the District's website www.shawniganimprovementdistrict.com. There are also a limited number of paper copies available here upon request.

The Improvement District records accounting transactions using the fund accounting method. As such, highlights of these Financial Statements are set out by individual fund as follows:

Operating Fund:

Operations accounts for the day-to-day activities of providing services.

The 2019 Statements show an accumulated Operating surplus of \$130,029, compared to prior year surplus of \$149,813. Representing a net 2019 operating loss of \$19,784.

Renewal Reserve Fund:

The District holds tangible capital assets at a total cost basis of \$8,683,250. The 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.

The balance of the Renewal Reserve Fund as at December 31, 2019 was \$381,465, compared to the prior year balance of \$266,896. Funding of the Renewal Reserve Fund has been ongoing at an annual amount of \$150,000.00. It is recommended that this annual transfer be incrementally increased to ensure resources are in place for repair/replacement needs in the future.

Expenditures from this fund are authorized by Bylaw passed by the Board of Trustees, and then submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for official record.

There were no expenditures from this fund during 2019.

Tangible Capital Assets:

Tangible Capital Assets include buildings and equipment. These are stated at cost less accumulated amortization.

Capital Asset Acquisitions in 2019 totalled \$590,783, comprising a new fire truck, firefighting equipment, turn out gear, and buildings and grounds improvements.

Including the 2019 amortization expense and capital asset acquisitions, the net book value of tangible capital assets totals \$5,264,213 compared to \$5,002,364 in 2018.

Net Debt:

The net debt as at December 31, 2019 totals \$2,636,123 compared to \$2,330,403 in 2018.

Consolidated:

The Shawnigan Improvement District continues to operate in a favourable financial position. Taking into account each of the funds reported, the consolidated accumulated surplus as at December 31, 2019 is \$3,139,586 compared to \$3,048,672 in 2018.

2020 Operating Budget:

The budget in 2020 called for a tax levy amount of \$793,000, compared to \$730,000 in 2019. The increase of \$63,000 was mainly due to: 1) a reduction in fire tolls revenue; and 2) increases to administration costs, vehicle expense, fire fighter earnings and insurance premiums. The impact to taxpayers was minimal with an increase to the local services rate \$0.0033; or less than 1/3 of one cent per \$1,000 of assessed value. The 2019 rate was \$0.50882; the 2020 rate was \$0.51212.

Projections to the year-ended December 31, 2020, have determined that a small surplus will be realized. There is no tax levy increase planned in the 2021 budget.

While the District continues to be well managed financially, improvements are always possible. I would like to recognize the Trustees, the Fire Chief, the Administrative Assistant and the Fire Department Members, for their commitment to continuous improvement and service to the community.

Moved: Chris Shields
Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: That the 2019 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: Chris Shields
Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: That the trustee honorarium remain as is and be set at \$14,000 for the 2020 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 Shields and Keith Shields terms have completed. As such, there are two vacant Trustee positions comprising two three-year terms.

Mike Trotter nominated Chris Shields. Accepted.

Dean Freer nominated Keith 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 each candidate, who were thanked for letting their names stand for election.

The 2020/21 Board of Trustees was confirmed as follows: Trustees Dave Cech, Dean Freer, Chris Shields, Keith Shields and Mike Trotter.

8.0 NEW BUSINESS: (nil)

9.0 PUBLIC PERIOD:

- 1) An enquiry was made respective to street lights, and process to have additional lights installed in the community.

Chair Chris Shields advised that SID managed street lights are inventoried by BC Hydro. Any resident requests for additional street lights would be considered by the Board and presented to BC Hydro accordingly. Chief Keith Shields further advised that the CVRD has a critical location street light initiative for this purpose.

- 2) An enquiry was made respective to initiatives designed for retention of firefighters; for example, a long service premium benefit.

Chair Chris Shields advised that the Board would consider any proposal as presented to the Fire Chief and brought forward to the Board. Chief Keith Shields advised that currently 5, 10, 15-year service is recognized annually by way of a long-service premium.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Moved: Chris Shields
Second: Sebastien Arsenault

Carried: That the meeting adjourns at 8:17 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station 1 in the Board Room.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chairperson

Administrator