

MINUTES

SHAWNIGAN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Meeting **Annual General Meeting**
Date Wednesday, September 8, 2021
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 Berezki, Administrator; Cliff Evans, Returning Officer.

Call to Order 7:31 p.m.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chairman Chris Shields called the meeting to order, introduced the head table and welcomed 31 members of the public.

Mr. Shields advised that he is reporting on behalf of the Shawnigan Improvement District Board of Trustees. He outlined what the Improvement Districts 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 its 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 it needs to be safe and to 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 one trustee to serve for a three-year term, and a public period where the Board can entertain questions from the public.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes of the October 28, 2020, Annual General Meeting were distributed to the attendees for advance review.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: **That the October 28, 2021, Annual General Meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.**

3.0 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Chris Shields

SUMMARY FROM THE LAST YEAR

Fire Toll Rates in the District

Shawnigan Improvement District continues to have one of the lowest mill rates in the Cowichan valley. We continue to include properties into our District due to minor developments in the area. With our current budgeting practices and proper forecasting for large expenditures, we hope to maintain a low rate for the foreseeable future.

Street Lighting

This is a first for me, we actually have some news about the street lights in the District. We were recently contacted from BC Hydro saying that they will be replacing the older light bulbs and replacing them with new LEDs. We were given a large number of choices for brightness of the lights, but of course, any upgrade costs money. The Trustees voted to keep the lights as close to the existing brightness as to not upset any residents. This upgrade will not cost the District any money. It is unknown as to when the upgrade will take place.

Fire Apparatus/Equipment

The Improvement District took possession of a new one-ton utility truck that replaces the older Dodge pickup. The new truck is now fully outfitted and the older Command 1 (C1) has been designated as Battalion 1 (B1). Reassigning this vehicle has proven to be incredibly valuable as now the Deputy can respond with lights and siren, which adds an element of safety when responding.

I am very impressed to see the quality of equipment that is both on the trucks as well as in the station. The fire service is a fast-changing industry with new and improved items constantly becoming available. The Fire Chief and the Officers are very proactive in budgeting for these items and we, as Trustees are always there to support them to make things more practical and safer.

FIRE STATIONS

Station 1

This station appears to be in fine operational form. With the first section of the roof completed in 2020, we should be looking at replacing the rest of it in the near future. Also forecasted for this coming year, is an addition to the training prop in the rear of the building. This will add some more space for training and provide a shelter for training during winter months. As always, I would like to thank all of the members for helping with the Hall clean-ups throughout the year. The fire stations always look great, but when the clean-ups happen, every station appears to shine a little brighter. Thank you!

Station 2

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Station 2 property, the property around the Hall, approximately 180 acres has been offered to the Malahat First Nation as a part of the Reconciliation Agreement. Our License of Occupation on the small piece of land expired a few years ago and we haven't been able to secure a long-term lease agreement to our liking. I reported on this over the last few years and yes, progress has been extremely slow. As it sits, we are currently in a short-term Licence of Occupation for the usage of the property. After a lot of leg work, we were able to secure the licence until August 31, 2025. We are exploring all options to secure usage of the land in the future. At the present, we are waiting on a completed land survey so we can submit that to Land Titles. Once in Land Titles, we are hoping we can get the hall property leased long term from the government or we can possibly put in an application for subdivision to break apart that small piece from the other.

Station 3

Station 3 is operating as designed and members have been keeping it clean and tidy, so thank you for your time in doing so.

Boathouse

The Boathouse continues to operate as designed, and no immediate expenditures are expected.

TRAINING

With COVID-19, training has been limited since the last AGM. Intermittent rope courses have been held at the station over the last number of months which is a movement forward. The Fire Chief has been operating to keep members trained but also being mindful of the current pandemic around us. It is nice to see the members being proactive in training and in some cases certified in many different aspects of the volunteer work. There are many courses available and we as Trustees enjoy seeing the progress of each and every one of you. We encourage you all to take advantage of this training as it makes you all better at what you do.

I would like to say a special thank you to the members who instruct such skill sets as First Aid, Swiftwater Rescue, as well as 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

There have definitely been some challenges over the last year with regards to COVID and the way that Fire Departments operate. There is always a threat of contracting the virus and this can weigh on everybody's mind. You have all put yourselves in vulnerable positions to do better for people around you. I can speak for the Trustees when I say that we are very humbled to have such a great group of Volunteers that have chosen to put themselves in difficult situations to help other in need.

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

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: That the Chairman's 2020 Annual Report be accepted as presented.

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

The fire dept was dispatched 260 times in 2020. The break-down is as follows:

- 20 - Alarms activated
- 24 - Assistance calls
- 54 - Burning complaints
- 4 - Bush Fires
- 10 - Miscellaneous fires
- 2 - Hazardous materials incidents
- 27 - Hydro Line Incidents
- 63 - Medical aids
- 7 - Mutual aids
- 35 - Motor vehicle incidents
- 2 - Technical Rescues
- 12 - Structure Fires

This was the third highest call volume in the valley surpassed by South End and Duncan.

Because of COVID our regular practises were put on hold. Instead, for quite a few weeks we just had small groups checking trucks weekly.

We then decided the training must go on so we broke into small groups and practised at different times and days. At times this was 4 days a week. We were still able to continue with some courses such as RIT, traffic, forcible entry, First Responder, EVO, Hazmat ops and new to us Swiftwater Rescue. Plus, any of the online courses.

Even though we follow the NFPA standards for Firefighter qualifications in house we offered the accredited course to members that qualify. The first group blasted through in about 4 months. The second group just finished and the third group is just starting. This is through VIERA out of Nanaimo.

All of our other meetings such as Cowichan Valley Chiefs, training officers, etc. all turned to Zoom. We were also challenged with sourcing all the personal protective equipment recommended by the health authority. Gloves, Tyvek suits, masks and hand sanitizer were all in short supply. For a while the call volume dropped off to almost nothing. 2019 saw 146 medical aids while 2020 dropped to 63 for the year.

Our Summit Rescue rope and confined space rescue courses had to be put on hold for a while but they are back up and running now. I believe word is getting out as we now have attracted firefighters from as far away as Campbell River, Saltspring, Sooke, Metchosin and Langford and the classes are filling right up.

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

- 2022 - Boat and boathouse upgrade
- 2023 - Roof replacement on Tender Bay and hose tower #1 Station
- 2024 - Roof replacement on apparatus bay #1 Station
- 2025 - Replace Engine #2
- 2026 - Replace Ladder 1

Our membership stands at 41 with two resigning and taking on three new members. For the most part it has been steady.

I would like to extend my extreme gratitude to the officers and members of the Department and of course their families that sacrifice so much to make Shawnigan Lake a safer place to live. The number of hours spent is incredible along with the hard work and effort by all. These firefighters take their training very seriously and it shows.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the solid support of the Improvement District Trustees and our administrator Karen Berezcki. On the Fire Department side Heather Plumb keeps our records straight and compliant and I'm very grateful for a job well done by all.

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: That the 2020 Annual Fire Department Report be accepted as presented.

5.0 2020 FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT - *Karen Berezcki, Administrator*

Shawnigan Improvement District (the “District”) was incorporated by letters patent issued on October 27, 1950, and operates under Part 17 of the *Local Government Act (BC)*. The principal activities of the District are to provide fire protection and street lighting within its boundaries.

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, 2020.

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.

Recognizing that the District is now nine months into the 2021 fiscal year, there will be some references made to both the 2021 and 2022 fiscals.

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 12, 2021, 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 financial statements are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. 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, 2020, and the consolidated statements of operations, changes in accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets (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, 2020, 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, hydro, water, insurance, firefighter gratuity, training and administration costs.

The accumulated surplus in this fund at December 31, 2020, totals \$215,452.

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 \$8,683,250. The District's renewal reserve fund is set up to pay for the repair, maintenance or replacement of 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 2020.

The accumulated surplus in the RRF at December 31, 2020, totals \$533,745.

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 2020 totalled \$199,055, comprising a new command vehicle, firefighting equipment, turn out gear, and building improvements.

The net book value in this fund at December 31, 2020, totals \$5,129,622.

Net Debt

The net debt as at December 31, 2020 totals \$2,458,593 compared to \$2,636,123 in 2019.

Consolidated Statement

Taking into account each of the funds reported, the consolidated accumulated surplus as at December 31, 2020 totals \$3,420,227.

2021 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.

As in fiscal year 2020, the budget in 2021 called for a tax levy amount of \$793,000. Taxpayers saw a decrease in the local services rate of approximately \$0.05 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The 2020 rate was \$0.51212 and the 2021 rate was \$0.46036.

The 2022 operating budget is currently a work in progress, for consideration by the Board of Trustees at its September meeting, followed by review and approval at the October meeting, then submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for registration by the Inspector of Municipalities.

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 continuous improvement and service to the community.

Moved: Chris Shields
Second: Mike Trotter

Carried: That the 2020 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: Brett Malcom

Carried: That the trustee honorarium remain as is and be set at \$14,000 for the 2021 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: Mike Trotter's term has completed. As such, there is one vacant Trustee positions comprising two three-year terms.

Brett Malcom nominated Mike Trotter. Accepted.

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

Mike Trotter was declared elected by acclamation.

Congratulations were extended to candidate Mike Trotter, who was thanked for letting his name stand for election.

8.0 NEW BUSINESS: (nil)

9.0 PUBLIC PERIOD: (nil)

10.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Moved: Chris Shields

Second: Dean Freer

Carried: That the meeting adjourns at 8:02 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station 1 in the Board Room.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chairperson

Administrator