

Recommendation to Fire Trustees made at the AGM, 18 April 2016

Regarding the contract dilemma apparently binding both parties, in negotiating the 2017 contract, that unless both parties are in agreement the current contract with provisions for matching increases corresponding to Saanich +2% shall prevail. If this is correct, or even close, I find:

-compared with: - fire fighters elsewhere in the S. Gulf Islands or comparable,
- RCMP whose work is somewhat akin, albeit more risky,
- trades/service/technician personnel on Island in general
that fire-rescue personnel are heavily overpaid in relationship.

-consider having a professional evaluative assessment done of duties, skills, qualification requirements to determine a quantitative indication of how fire-rescue on SSI ranks against other professions rankings by same measures.

Recommendations:

1. Total Incident Breakdown (Operations 2015 Report, back of p. 4, pie chart):
12 classes of reported types of incident. Is 12 sufficient? Decide what classification/
division of reporting best reflects your objectives>

Having done that, separate Fire and Rescue as two major categories of reporting.
In each of the categories (12?) maintain a record of the call particulars: date,
duration (station to station), time of day 24:00, no of manhours detailed, cost
of same. Very telling, useful planning and management data for refining operational
limitations.

Enter into serious discussion with RCMP, Search & Rescue, BC Paramedics, etc
with a view to simplifying, reducing no of responders, costs. Parties may be
contracted or be willing to pay for some responder services they themselves might
budget for. By budgeting for them yourselves, as above, you have your numbers
and negotiating budgets.

Consider increasing user costs for certain types of call outs, eg. someone who
intentionally violates the law, gets in trouble, has to be rescued... eg. marine
or mountain recreationists, dispute resolutions involving human or property assault.
Promote legislation change provincially where appropriate.

2. Invite by register letter all extant members of the Board which approved the current

footprint of this contract (2006?), to attend a special in camera meeting with the current Board to discuss answers to questions previously circulated to them as to how/why the contract was approved in such generous, long-standing commitment. Not a witch-hunt, a fact-finding one.

3. Repeat the invitation by registered mail to those failing to respond indicating your intentions as above, and the following:

4. Go Public with the results of your efforts, naming names if necessary, though not reqd, with a series of articles in the Driftwood and online SSEXchange, reporting on the details and conclusions of your findings and current efforts of negotiation with employees.

5. In the event of an impasse, an unsatisfactory obligatory contract renewal or willingness of the membership to bargain in good faith and perspective to the costs to the taxpayer, write a letter to the Premier of BC and relevant Minister(s) seeking clarification, publically, to "who is responsible for managing the Fire Protection District (incl. contract obligations).... the elected Trustees or the Union of BC Fire Fighters?

Publish this in the Driftwood and on line SSEXchange.

The Outcome: public engagement; employee engagement; better understanding and decision making.

Who, for example, determines the ratio of fully trained personnel v. volunteer, lesser-trained personnel cost effectiveness in responding to calls?

To conclude, without malice, prejudice or intent I openly wish all parties to look at the common challenge and work together for concessions and compromise to achieve a package of service which taxpayers will support. Taxpayers are not presented with the option of support when their tax bill is delivered. The government of BC is complicit in the process and cycle of improvement district budgeting, acceptance of the status quo and perhaps needs give thought to the matter.

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