

Correspondence Walker-Hill

September 23, 2016

Andrew Peat

From: Derek Hill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: September-24-16 12:44
To: trustees@saltspringfire.com
Subject: Fwd: The Fire Service Budget

Regarding 2017 Budget.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Richard Walker <[REDACTED]>
Date: Fri, Sep 23, 2016 at 3:20 PM
Subject: The Fire Service Budget
To: [REDACTED]

Without prejudice

I read with interest, the article in the Driftwood last week. As you know, I am a land owner, tax payer and I was involved in the Fire Service Review some 18 month ago. The result of that work was a very large, and very comprehensive document that contained multiple recommendations for changes that were needed to help move the Board and the Fire Service forward. While there were many specific recommendations, the consistent theme throughout that exercise was the maintenance of the quality of service provided to islanders, the limiting of cost and getting a fire hall to replace the one downtown. People that I spoke to want to ensure that the fire service continues to deliver the high standard of service that islanders have become accustomed to over the years. They also have a strong desire to limit the cost of those services to something that the community could afford. Finally, there was recognition that there must be progress on the development of a fire hall to replace the one in Ganges. While these three priorities appear to be in opposition, I think that the Trustees can achieve some very solid middle ground by seeking direction from the community on the broader issue of the level of operating funds allocated to the Fire service. The Trustees need to have a clear mandate from the electorate with respect to their desires and goals. The Trustees need to know ... Do the rate payers of Salt Spring want the Fire Service budget to remain fixed at it's current level; do they want to allow an increase year to year based on the Board's best judgement; or do rate payers want to see the fire service budget reduced to some other level below the current 2016 operating budget. I think that it may soon come to the point where the Trustees need a referendum or some other polling mechanism to get those answers and obtain the mandate they need to move forward.

Richard