

To: Board of Trustees
From: CAO Andrew Peat
Date: 02 June 2017
Subject: LGMA Conference (April 7-9, 2017)

Chief George and myself recently attended a three-day workshop in Victoria co-sponsored by the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC, Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC and the Local Government Management Association of BC. The purpose of the workshop was to address the perceived need for knowledge, skill development and admin/financial leadership by Fire Chiefs and CAOs to carry out their responsibilities in providing fire services to their community. The program was aimed at smaller communities operating predominately volunteer or smaller paid-on-call/composite fire departments. Sixty-four people registered to attend representing mostly smaller municipalities including a good representation from improvement districts. It is estimated that there are approximately 300 rural fire services in BC and of these 36 are provided by improvement districts.

Key Take-aways

- Compared with other fire services SSI Fire/Rescue is progressive with adequate resources (budget and apparatus) and trained personnel (both Career and paid-on-call) to respond to community needs.
- Volunteer/POC recruitment and retention is a chronic problem for many communities. Compared with many jurisdictions our POC compensation/benefits are very good
- Reminded that spouses and families come into the mix with POC members. Some Fire Services have a "spouses group" that meets on a regular basis.
- Need for clear organization chart – Board, CAO Fire Chief delineating roles and responsibilities. For a municipality, roles and chain of command are clearly defined – the fire service as a department reports to the CAO who in turn reports to council and councillors do not interact directly with the Fire Chief. For an improvement district, matters are "blurred".
- Point made in the general discussion that in a municipality, the Fire Service has to compete for \$\$ with other departments and council has to balance needs/wants against the electorates' capacity and ability to pay. For an improvement district with a narrow mandate, boards can easily forget about the other demands on the "tax dollar" and concentrate on "what is best for the fire service".
- Importance of determining "Community Needs/Risks" and "Capacity" to meet these needs. Has to be an on-going exercise - identify hazards (threats to life & safety), determine risk (chance of it happening) and consequences (impact & vulnerability if it does). Risk assessment establishes priorities that are constrained by capacity to deliver which will determine what Services are provided. Remember that we are on an island and to a large extent "on our own" and if not done by SS Fire/Rescue who will?
- Tab 4-04 Indemnification Bylaw from Fire Chiefs Association of BC. Use as template

- Fire/Service cannot solve all problems- if SSFR not trained, capable and equipped it cannot be done. We need to educate public.
- Reminder that Fire Service is accountable to the public including service excellence, financial reporting, human resources, and appropriate policy/elector approvals. Reminder to COMMUNICATE, EDUCATE and PLAN.
- Need for Five Year Operating & Ten Year Capital Plans. Tab 5-16 “Business Case Template” for projects and small capital expenses. Tab 5-17 Evergreen Replacement Schedule for PPE/SCBA.
- Importance of Human Rights legislation, not only vicarious liability of employer that fail to meet HR obligations but also an impact on morale and damage to department’s reputation.
- Compare our cell phone and social media policies with examples from Pitt Meadows (Tab 5-02 & 5-03).