

RICHMOND COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

April 20, 2021 7:00 PM

Location: St. Peter's VFD Fire Hall, St. Peter's, NS

Present: Deputy Warden Michael Diggdon, Councillor Brent Sampson, Mr. Brett Hershey, Mr. Raymond Ferguson, Mr. Blair Stone, Mr. Kelvin MacKay, Mr. Mark Skinner, Mr. Colin MacPherson, Mr Douglas Morrison, Mr Paul Shears.

Absent: Potlotek, Louisdale, District 10, L'Ardoise

Guests: Mr. Jim Cavanagh, Strait Area Mutual Aid,

Call to Order:

Chairperson, Mr. Brett Hershey called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Items Added:

1. Review of Governance of Committee - Deputy Warden M Diggdon
2. Dry Hydrants - P Shears

Review of Minutes: March 23, 2021:

Moved by Mr. Mark Skinner, seconded by Councillor Brent Sampson that the minutes of March 23, 2021 be approved. Motion carried.

Business arising from minutes:

Burning Enforcement & Local Assistants.

Mr Brett Hershey explained that after a conversation with the interim Fire Marshal and the deputy for the region, they had agreed that a local assistant to the Fire Marshal has the rights and privileges to enforce any exiting legislation as it pertains to burning within their districts of Richmond County. It was recommended by the deputy Fire marshal that the municipality should develop a burn by law that would empower the fire departments to do so. A draft of a possible burn by law had been developed and was currently being review by the deputy fire marshal as a favor.

Mr Blair Stone responded by commenting that "So they just want to down load this on us now?"

Mr Brett Hershey explained that this was the answer to his line of questioning, over concerns raised by some of the Fire Chiefs about not having any authority to halt improper burning and no mechanism for repeated false alarms due to smoke from improper burning.

There were general comments about how badly it can go when you have to tell neighbors what to do, or that nobody wants to have to issue tickets.

The matter was concluded by consensus and may be revisited in the future.

Driving privileges and insurance

Mr Brett Hershey received confirmation from Insurance that only drivers holding the correct license can drive emergency vehicles back to the station after a call. Mr Brett Hershey was asked to get that in writing from the Insurance Company. Some departments have come to different conclusions, citing that the emergency is over when the vehicles are back in the hall, ready to respond again. It was pointed out that regardless of the decision of the Insurer; the chiefs were responsible to ensure that any driver was capable of the safe operation of the vehicle, regardless of licensure.

Mutual aid is attempting to arrange a licensed instructor to allow more firefighters get the correct driver's license.

Post Note the insurance provider has issued a statement, if not a letter, reversing their earlier decision. All fire fighters, even inappropriately licensed ones shall be insured in the event of an incident from the time the vehicle leaves the hall until it returns to the hall. This is a reversal of their previous statement. This has been passed out to the departments for their records.

Agenda Items:

- 6.a Boat Ramp - Parks Canada is still working on this. Initial submission sent to Parks Canada with a letter and map indicating the general positioning of the ramp
- 6.b Levy Payment/Annual Registration - New policy is being reviewed by CAO D Marchand and CFO J Martell. The policy outlines the responsibilities of all parties and that annual paperwork must be received by the finance department before levy funds will be released.
- 6.c Fire Safety, Wildfire Burning public education - Burn season has begun. Burning rules can be found on the website novascotia.ca/burnsafe/. Carla to research Provincial Fire jpgs and add to website and facebook to remind the public.
- 6.d Extrication Demonstrations - Are people interested in conducting demos at local high schools? This received general nodding of heads, but no actual discussion. Under the current pandemic restrictions, this is an unlikely endeavor.

6.e Letter Endorsing the Funeral Cost Reduction Initiative - a motion was made to accept the letter of support written by Mr. Brett Hershey. Motion made by Mr Colin MacPherson, seconded by Mr Paul Shears. Motion carried.

Item added to Agenda:

Governance of the Fire Services Committee: Deputy Warden M Diggdon. Discussion is happening with Warden Mombourquette around the governance of the Fire Services Committee.

Dry Hydrants: The issue of dry hydrants is with Council and the budgeting process now. A motion was made to start the process of paperwork etc for one of the broken hydrants + 3 more in case funding is approved. Moved by Mr Colin MacPherson, seconded by Mr. Mark Skinner. Motion passed.

New Business:

Mr Paul Shears made the comment that these meeting are not very productive and that these are volunteer hours being used. He explained that after three years of asking about Dry Hydrants and not making headway that he was wondering what would happen if he went to the media about this issue.

Mt Brett Hershey pointed out that there has been some headway and that regardless of any decisions made by council, it was being addresses. He also pointed out that funding is at the discretion of council; the council has the right through legislation to decide how they will manage fire safety.

Deputy Warden Michael Diggdon made the statement that some departments are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars for new trucks and equipment when some of that money could be used to fund dry hydrants. Questioned if it was a really safety issue or about the dollars.

Councilperson Brent Sampson indicated that it was this continued focus on dry hydrant, to the exclusion of other concerns that the departments may have that is causing great difficulty in finding members to attend the committee meetings.

A loud disagreement ensued, with some tempers getting out of hand. Mr Brett Hershey, as chair did not maintain order quickly enough and some left the meeting before adjournment.

Next Meeting:

Based on the terms of reference, the next meeting date is scheduled for May 19, 2021.

Adjournment:

There was no official adjournment as members had walked out.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

MINUTES RECORDED BY: Carla Martell