

The Fire Protection Commissioners for the District of Blandford

Annual Ratepayers Meeting

Minutes October 19, 2020

Blandford Community Centre Gym - Meeting called to order by Chair Sue Neilson at 7:30 pm

Commissioners in Attendance – Susan Neilson, Phil Lamont, Rick Bowering, Grant Schorn, Chuck Bennett (regrets Peter Fillmore)
Wendy Chase Administrative Assistant, Chief Mike Schnare, Deputy Chief Rick Schnare.

Ratepayers in Attendance– Heather Hector, Lloyd Publicover, Reid Broome, Ron Wilcox, Paul Dominey, Arthur Vardjas, Grigoras Catalin, Kim Hodgson, David Semel, Tim Smith, Christine Smith.

Introductions and Adoption of Agenda

The Commission Chair, Sue Neilson welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending, and introduced the current Commission.

The Agenda was adopted as circulated.

1. Minutes

Minutes from the 3 June 2019 Ratepayers Annual Meeting were approved, *moved by Rick Schnare, seconded by Ron Wilcox.* **Motion Carried.**

Business Arising from the minutes

There was none.

2. Finances

FY 2018-2019 Financial Statements

The Treasurer, Phil Lamont introduced the financial report, explained the requirements for Audited Statements, Wendy Chase presented highlights from the report. Their report is attached as Annex 1
(note: the Audited Financial Statements were approved previously by the Commission)
Copies of the complete Financial Report are available upon application to the Administrative Assistant.

FY 2020-2021 Budget

Was presented by Wendy Chase - attached as Annex 2.
(note : the 2020-21 Budget was previously approved by the Commission)

3. Reports

Annual Operations Report by the Fire Chief – Mike Schnare

attached as Annex 3

Annual Commission Report by Chair, Susan Neilson

attached as Annex 4

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19 October 2020

4. Election of Commissioners

The Chair noted that 2 Commissioners needed to be elected for 3 year terms, as the existing terms of two Commissioners (Chair Susan Neilson and Secretary Rick Bowering) had expired. Neither are re-offering. In response to a call for nominations:

Ted Duchene was nominated by Grigoras Catalin, seconded by Tim Smith for a 3 year term.

David Lawrence was nominated by Arthur Vardjas and seconded by Grigoras Catalin for a 3 year term.

Sue Neilson asked three times for any further nominations, and there being none, declared nominations closed, and recognized the nominated candidates as appointed Commissioners.

There being no other business, there was a motion from the floor by Ron Wilcox for Adjournment of this Annual Ratepayers' Meeting at 8:10 pm.

This year The Annual Ratepayers Meeting was held in the Blandford Community Centre gymnasium much later than usual, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic State of Emergency declared by the Province. Masks were required and Social Distancing protocols observed.

Recognition of Outgoing Commissioners

Commissioners were approached by interested parties pointing out that the meeting was remiss in not thanking the outgoing commissioners for their outstanding leadership and guidance through a difficult period. Both Sue Neilson and Rick Bowering have contributed their time, talents and experience to assist in the smooth and effective service provided by our members.

Phil Lamont, Acting Secretary
30 October 2020

Attachments:

Annex 1: 2019-2020 Financial Report
Annex 2: 2020-2021 Budget
Annex 3: Annual Operations Report
Annex 4: Annual Commission Report

Phil Lamont: Good evening and welcome.

The financial audit has been completed by Grant Thornton for fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. The introduction to their report follows:

Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Commission for Fire Protection for the District of Blandford and District #1, which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at March 31, 2020, and the consolidated statements of operations and net assets, net assets, 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 Commission as at March 31, 2020, and its consolidated results of operations and its consolidated cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Commission in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the consolidated financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We are fortunate to have an experienced Administrative Assistant in Wendy Chase. Wendy assists the Chief and Officers on budgets, purchasing and administration. She works closely with the Commission who approve budgets and pay the bills. At year-end she assists the Auditors to perform their work. She will explain the audited statements.

Wendy Chase Everyone should have a copy of the consolidated statement of operations and changes in net assets and Consolidated statement of Financial Position from Grant Thornton's Audited Financial Statements package. First is the statement of operations income as of March 31, 2020 comparing current year ending March 31, 2020 Budget to current year actual and previous year actual. I will review the totals - if you have any questions please ask following this report. I will focus on the current year, the middle column "2020 Actual" reports total income of rates levied, grants in lieu of & HST rebate total \$237,070; Expenses administration, firefighting expenses & building expenses totaling - \$111,064 producing a surplus of \$15,131.

Income is from our Municipal fire tax rate and grants in lieu of. As you can see from the statement of operations under Fire Station heading the category of amortization of property is \$85,038. this figure represents amortization of our assets that accounting standards require to be expensed over Canada Revenue Agency's specified lifetime of the equipment, fire truck, etc. We actually spent \$20,952 in Capital equipment, \$5,000 for scheduled bunker gear replacement, \$5,000 to SCBA replacement, \$10,000 to fire truck replacement, and a truck payment of \$57,143 leaving us with a surplus of \$1,905.16 for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

The second page is the Statement of Financial Position - Assets - Cash and cash equivalents totalling \$221,393 which includes our annual payment on July 1, 2020 to Municipal Finance Corporation of \$57,143 for the Fire Truck, and reserve monies for future capital purchases HST receivable \$4,910. Totalling \$226,303.

Liabilities – accounts payable \$22,168, Long term note debt is the annual payment of \$57,143 made to Municipal Finance Corp for the new fire truck which is a Long-term debt of \$171,428. This leaves us with 3 more truck payments.

Tangible capital assets are the capital items with the remaining net book value after amortization expenses totalling \$366,967. *Prepays* – expenses that we have paid prior to March 31, 2020 that are expensed for the current year, for example personnel insurance renewal, radio license renewal totalling \$11,607.

Leaving an Accumulated Surplus of \$411,281.

The Complete Financial Audit from Grant Thornton is on file and available for ratepayers to view upon request by appointment.

Thank you.

BUDGET

We have provided copies of the 2020/21 budget, with comparison figures from 2019/20, which was approved by the Commission in May 2020. Rates levied remain at \$0.13 per \$100. I will review the current year.

Commission for Fire Protection for The District of Blandford and District #1
Budget 2020/2021*

Annex 2

Current budget comparing to previous year budget

<u>Income</u>	2020/2021	2019/2020
Rates Levied	232,000	227,500
\$0.13 per \$100 of Property Assessment		
Other Income	10,100	20,100
Total Income	242,100	247,600
 <u>Expenses</u>		
Commission	19,150	20,400
Administration	17,100	17,200
Building Operations	24,450	24,660
Capital Fund Expenditures	83,750	85,850
Communications	3,100	2,600
Equipment Operations	18,850	17,850
Personnel Costs	35,300	37,000
Prevention	250	250
Telephone/Dispatch	6,300	5,950
Training	13,000	15,800
Vehicles	20,500	20,000
Total Expenses	<u>241,750</u>	<u>247,560</u>
Surplus	<u>350</u>	<u>40</u>
 Depreciation of Capital Assets	83,000.00	87,000.00

*Budget approved at Zoom Commission Meeting June 8, 2020

Presented at Ratepayers meeting October 19, 2020

Blandford and Area Fire Rescue

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blandfordcommission@bellaliant.com

Annual Operations Report 2019/2020

During the past year the Department had 12 calls for assistance – Fire 7, Alarms 3, motor vehicle collisions 1 and medical 1.

This has been, and continues to be a year unlike any other. Training was suspended from March until July, when a plan was put into place to mitigate the risks associated with Covid 19.

One of the most difficult things is watching an ambulance going through the district and us not being paged. Hopefully the Province will soon let us respond to medical calls again.

Our annual Equipment Tests and Maintenance were completed as usual.

We have a member enrolled in the Level 1 Firefighter Course put on by the Nova Scotia Fire School. We also have two members who will be taking the Medical First Responders course later this fall.

The Emergency Service Providers Grants were announced and we received \$12,463.13. This will be used to offset the cost of a hydraulic ram, primarily used in vehicle extraction.

In closing I would like to thank the Members of the Department, the Commission and our Administrative Assistant.

Mike Schnare
Fire Chief

Annual Commission Report, Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020

It goes without saying that this past year was like no other we and those around the world have ever experienced. The last in-person Commission meeting was held March 9, 2019 and, in accordance with the Provincial State of Emergency declaration, all subsequent meetings have been by videoconference. Considerable effort has been expended in establishing a 'new normal' for both the Fire Commission and Blandford and Area Fire Rescue (BAFR) operations. Some highlights and accomplishments experienced in 2019 – 2020 are:

- Southwest Cove Road water source is operational and snow clearing arrangements made.
- A Whaley boat was purchased and outfitted. This boat has major improvements over the previous BRIG inflatable boat. The Whaley is rugged, able to be dragged over rocks and woods without damage and is very stable and very safe. The BRIG was sold and the revenue applied to our operational costs.
- The Provincial government has implemented mandatory Workers Compensation Benefits (WCB) effective October 1, 2020, for all volunteer firefighters. The WCB proposal has proven to be an ongoing struggle, largely due to lack of information regarding specifics such as cost and conflict / duplication with our existing insurance coverage, Volunteer Firefighter Accident and Sickness Insurance (VFIS).
- All Officer positions are filled.

The Commission's focus for the upcoming year will continue to be succession planning for Officer positions within the Fire Service along with succession planning and recruitment for Fire Commissioners as we have a few of us with soon to expire terms.

- Continue to deal with the ongoing COVID - 19 pandemic, as it impacts BAFR operations, training, attraction of new members and deal creatively with an aging membership.
- Continue to seek more effective use of major capital procurements/investments across the seven (7) MODC Fire Department.
- Strive to sort out the issues surrounding the implementation of WCB insurance and eliminate any coverage overlap with our current insurance carrier.

In closing, the Commission wishes to publicly recognize the significant contribution to the community made by the Chief, Mike Schnare, the Officers, all of our Voluntary Firefighters, and by our Administrative Assistant, Wendy Chase.

Thank you all in attendance for coming, and for your continuing service and support to our community.



Susan D. Neilson, Chair

Fire Commission for the District #1 of Blandford