

News from the Thetis Island Improvement District

Submitted by Keith Rush,
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In September Chief Jeannine Caldbeck, Deputy Chief Peter Luckham and I attended a seminar hosted by the Local Government Management Association of BC (LGMA), the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC and the Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC, called: Working Together: Effective Fire Service Administration for Fire Chiefs and Local Government Chief Administrative Officers. The key program themes were: fire service leader and CAO roles and responsibilities; fire service administration and management best practices; fire service leader and CAO mutual understanding; fire service leader and CAO networking and needs and capacity based service planning.

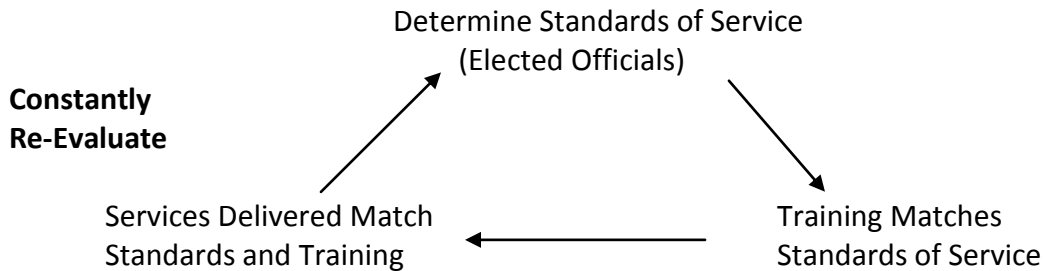
As mentioned above, one of the many purposes of the seminar was to outline to local governments or Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), which in our case is the Thetis Island Improvement District, **what the process is to select and declare the level of firefighting service we want for Thetis Island.**

Following the deaths of several volunteer firefighters in BC, new minimum training standards for firefighters have been introduced by the Province through the Fire Services Act and Office of the Fire Commissioner. The training requirements as set out in the "Playbook" vary depending on the level of fire service that is being delivered to the community. "Each AHJ must select and declare its firefighting **Service Level** in order for the AHJ to determine which set of minimum standards are to be met. This declared **Service Level** needs to be fully reflected in the fire department's operating guidelines and policies. The AHJ's decision should be based upon:

- Local conditions;
- Consultation with representatives of local fire service delivery organization (TIVFD);
- Availability of resources and the ability of those resources to respond;
- The realities of the community in terms of demographics, travel distances, fire hall locations, and staffing models; and
- The ability of the jurisdiction or organization to financially support the operations and meet all applicable safety and operational requirements."

The Playbook establishes and describes the minimum competencies required of firefighter roles in the following three categories (service levels): Exterior Operations Level Firefighter; Interior Operations Level Firefighter; and Full-Service Operations Level Firefighter. In addition, the Playbook establishes three new supervisory responsibilities with related training competencies or responsibilities. These are: Exterior Operations Level Team Leader; Exterior Operations Level Risk Management Officer; and Interior Operations Level Team Leader.

In summary, it is up to the elected officials (Improvement District Trustees) with input from the community to determine the fire service levels. Whatever service level we choose, we must ensure that we train our firefighters to that standard and also ensure that we equip the fire department to deliver that service.



Currently the TIVFD delivers the following services:

- Structural (room and contents)
 - Interface
 - Hazardous Materials
 - First Responder Medical
 - Road Rescue
 - Technical Rescue
 - Marine Fire Suppression
 - Search and Rescue
 - Confined Space
 - Electrical
 - Public Assists
 - Junior Fire Fighter Program
 - TIVFD Auxiliary Training
 - Aircraft response
 - Disaster planning
 - Post disaster building inspections
 - 911 hang Up Assist to the RCMP
- Fire suppression (includes dumpsters)
 - Structures/forest protection
 - Awareness Level
 - FR III with endorsements
 - Vehicle fires/rescue/auto ex. (locally)
 - Low bank/low angel
 - Shore based
 - Initial search only
 - Awareness level
 - Awareness and fire response
 - Community service
 - Rest and rehab
 - Emergency scene traffic control
 - Water supply transport

The question myself, the rest of trustees and the fire department are wrestling with is this too little, too much or just right, and is the community prepared to support and fund this level of service? On that note, the trustees recently approved the 2016 Operating Plan, which saw an increase of 5% over last years plan. Some of the increase is for additional funding for firefighter training to meet the new standards of the Playbook.

There are so many more details that need to be shared with residents of Thetis Island. The board of trustees would like to have a community meeting in the spring to review what our current service levels are, our plans for the future and the expected costs associated with these plans. I will be providing more details on this subject over the next several months in the Quarterly, the Blog, eSPOKES and the local Thetis Island website.