

Enthusiastic AGM paves way for increased funding for the Fire Department

Thirty one fire department supporters attended the Thetis Island Improvement District's AGM on Saturday April 23rd, 2016. Present were 6 Fire Department officers and members, 19 members of the general public, 4 trustees and 2 Improvement District staff members.

The formal part of the AGM included a review of 2015 expenditures and a summary of the audit report by Trenholme and Company. The budget for 2016 was presented, as were reports from the safety committee and the port commission. The re-election of one trustee (Dick Phelps) for a second 3 year term completed this part of the meeting.

Following the business portion of the meeting we reviewed the new Provincial Fire Safety Act and its implications for the Thetis Island Improvement District; government regulations requiring us to replace Engine One as the front line fire truck in 8 years, the current service level and equipment requirements, the new training standards that the fire department and first responders need to meet, and how by maintaining our semi-protected status with Fire Underwriters should keep our homeowners insurance premiums lower.

The review of the Fire Safety Act and future capital requirements led to the most important aspect of the meeting and that was the discussion on future funding options for the Improvement District and the TIVFD. This included a review of what other Volunteer Fire Departments have in the way of structure, services, Fire Underwriter's rating, and compensation for officers and firefighters. We presented a rough cut 2017 budget for attendees to consider. The budget assumptions were: develop a system to compensate volunteer members for attending drill nights, to also participate in weekend training, and to attend off island training during the work week. Provide our Fire Chief with a 'living' wage based on the 24/7 job requirement, and also provide reasonable compensation for the Deputy Chief, reimburse our Improvement District accounting and secretarial support staff to more closely reflect their time and effort, and to significantly increase the annual capital contribution in preparation for the purchase of a new fire truck. In order to accomplish this, the budget needs to increase from approximately \$150,000 annually to somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$280,000.

At the time of writing I have nothing new to report from the CVRD and their financial modelling of what it would look like to have the TIVFD become a CVRD Fire Department.

I will be giving an update of our planning/budgeting process and any new information from the CVRD at the June 23rd TIRRA General Meeting.

The entire PowerPoint Presentation is available at: <http://www.thetislandfire.ca/tiid-presentations.html>
Any questions please call or email me.

Keith Rush, Chair, Board of Trustees, Thetis Island Improvement District