

DO WE NEED A FIREBOAT?

The Fire chief has been quietly soliciting **a few selected** individuals in this community with a letter in an attempt to surreptitiously and quickly ram through his fireboat plan without the knowledge and consent of most of the members of this Community.

Information Release 2008 Budget – Capital Project

08-04-15

The fire department budget has passed the Regional Board and the numbers provided to me show that on a \$450,000 home the fire department portion of your tax will decrease by \$62.00. This will be the third consecutive year the fire department's tax rate has been decreased and it is now at the same tax rate level as it was in 1993. All equipment, facilities and capital projects are fully funded (including this boat and pump-emergency water supply project) and debt free.

It is mandated in our establishment and operational bylaws for the fire department to plan for an emergency water supply for fire suppression in the event that the existing sources for water are unavailable. None of the existing water systems within the district have emergency power available so in a wildfire situation, where the power is the first thing to go, the reservoirs (where they exist) and therefore the fire hydrant systems will be quickly depleted and no water will be available for the defence of the structures. **Lake access for the large trucks is very difficult and extremely limited and time consuming.**

The last piece of new operational equipment to complete the strategic plan for structural protection from wildfire is an emergency water supply. The plan for this is to operate a very **large capacity pump from a boat. This would allow us to supply water in volume anywhere in the district for resupply of the engines, tenders and bush trucks, run the sprinkler systems, and provide fire streams for structural suppression. It could also recharge or help to supplement the many different existing water systems that all originate at the lake.**

As with all other aspects of the service that the fire department provides to the public I am sure other mandates such as **marine search & rescue, mutual aid and the like** will be asked of us. No new service mandates can or will be implemented without proper training and equipment, community support and of course Regional Board approval.

The funds for the boat and pump as well as the storage facility are in the 2008 budget that has just been passed. The process for the acquisition of

this equipment is first to go for requests for proposals issued by the Regional District purchasing agent. This is to get the various manufacturers

to send ideas and pricing for what we want based upon our specs in the request. This information will be available to see at the fire hall upon request as and when we receive it.

This boat and pump are critical pieces of equipment that will provide a water supply to the fire protection assets tasked with the defence of all our homes. All Capital Projects of this nature need Regional Board approval to move forward even when like this project the funding is in place. Therefore **I am asking residents for their help to speed this project along by a show of their support to the Board.**

Attached is a form letter that states that you have read this information letter and wish the Regional Board to proceed with this project without delay and that it has your support as a resident and taxpayer in the North Westside Fire Protection District. This letter of support should be faxed or emailed to the Regional Director of this area Jim Edgson for him to take to the full Board. **To move quickly on this project the Board needs reassurance that there is strong public support.** As stated at the beginning of this letter this project is fully funded with a substantial decrease in the fire department taxes for this fiscal year. This money in the bank will not provide a drop of water in an emergency. With the way prices are going up on everything and with the current high level of the Canadian dollar delay will only add to the cost of the project.

Your fire department is looking for support on this project. Fire department strategic planning is public in nature and your input is welcome. Any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call or come to the hall and discuss them with me. I can be reached at 545-1195 Monday to Thursday. Thanks for all the support that you have shown over the years while the plan was developed and implemented.

Wayne Carson
Fire Chief
North Westside Fire / Rescue

This attempt to mislead people with specious arguments and propaganda unsupported by properly researched facts is reprehensible. Not only are people being conned into signing a

document **already filled out**, (see below), but the Regional District and Board are being conned into believing this “letter” represents the will of the people here. I certainly hope our Regional Director will research this matter thoroughly before he casts his vote on the Board. I expect that he at least will make himself informed.

I have read the fire department information letter dated 08-03-31 and agree with and support the strategy to proceed with the development of this emergency water supply.

I understand that this project has been budgeted for and paid from the 2008 fire department budget that has been passed by the Regional Board.

The projected tax requisition for the fire department in the district for this same 2008 budget will be \$62.00 **LESS** for a \$450,000.00 home than last year.

I would request Jim Edgson the Regional Director for this area to communicate this support to the Regional Board and urge them to proceed with the Request for Proposal (RFP) by the RDCO purchasing department in collaboration with the NWFR as the first step in the process from here and advance this project as quickly as possible.

DATE:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

SIGNITURE:

COMMENTS:

WE WANT THAT BOAT

For more information call Bob Slawson @ 260-6088
Or Fax to 260-3608 or EMAIL Jim.Edgson@cord.bc.ca

Is a person who can't even spell “signature” credible?

Below are my comments on this letter.

- 1- “lake access for the large trucks is very difficult and extremely limited and time consuming” My first fireplan discussion mentioned that properly designed bush trucks and CDF (interface fire) trucks would address this problem more effectively than a boat. An intelligently designed truck to replace Engine 102 (as voted for in the referendum for a \$50.00 tax surcharge) must be considered. It is dishonest to spend this money on any other apparatus, because the people were told that the surcharge was specifically FOR this replacement. Yet the chief wants to buy a LADDER TRUCK which is even bigger!
- 2- “The plan for this is to operate a very large capacity pump from a boat. This would allow us to supply water in volume anywhere in the district for resupply of the engines, tenders and bush trucks, run the sprinkler systems, and provide fire streams for structural suppression. It could also recharge or help to supplement the many different existing water systems that all originate at the lake” The question is: HOW??? A thousand foot reel of four inch hose would weigh tons. I can barely lift a fifty foot coil. How would the guys drag this weight off the boat and the necessary distance up the hill? Where would they drag it to? Once charged the weight of it would drag it (and them) back down the hill unless well secured. We would need an elephant for such a task. Common sense (and my fifteen years as a forest fire fighter) dictates that if possible, hose always be reeled **downhill** from a water station to the water source! Better to use maneuverable bush trucks to carry powerful portable pumps and hose where needed. Hoses could be reeled down to pumps stationed permanently all along the shore to protect the ten kilometer length of it. Forestry personnel and residents could operate them and recharge “bladders” and tender trucks where needed. This “army” of trained residents, forestry personnel, and the FD could move quickly and reinforce defenses where needed. Classic military strategy-mobility. The boat would only be able to protect a few meters of shoreline. What about fires down the road? How would it respond? The concept of supplying water “anywhere in the district” from a fireboat is unworkable. After the effort of dragging four inch line to God knows where, it would only be

able to supply ONE hydrant on it's four inch line if that hydrant was being drawn on. Water in equals water out. An attempt to draw water from other lines in a drained system would collapse the system. An attempt to increase pump pressure would blow the system and flood peoples' homes through their domestic lines. Of course the upper reservoirs which are supplied from the lower reservoirs would never be replenished. Since they supply most of the homes, the statement "water in volume anywhere in the district" is absurd. Has the chief spoken to engineers at R.D.C.O. or professional fire departments before devising this scheme? I strongly suspect that the engineers at the Regional District WOULD FORBID such a scheme because it would do irreparable damage to the system.

- 3- "marine search and rescue, mutual aid and the like" The training needed for this is extensive, and would divert our members energy and time from more urgent priorities. They need to work on becoming more familiar with the apparatus we already have, and their response to our more common calls such as medical emergencies, auto extrication, and interface fires.

In conclusion, let me state that the "Lake People" deserve the best and most effective protection they can get for the considerable taxes they pay. A boat does NOT give them that protection. The "Bush People" (those away from the lakeshore) do not wish to pay for a boat because it will not provide effective protection for anybody. We all certainly agree that everybody, including the lake people deserve the best protection possible. I urge people to get informed or at least ask questions before they sign any letters to the Regional District.

It would be a good idea if an independent, outside consultant could be commissioned by the Regional District to study the entire "strategic plan" of our fire chief to determine whether or not it is based on reality, and serves our needs effectively.