

# Directors Report August 2024

## Update - Campbell River Fire Protection Service

This legacy Fire Service Agreement was established in **1979**. While **sharing a 7% operational costs** and **capitol expense cost** made sense how many years ago, it has become very clear that such an agreement can easily create unpredictable yearly costs and unexpected tax increases as the needs of The City of Campbell River continue to evolve and become more complex.

In **2021** there was a **Campbell River Fire Protection Service Review** and this report was presented to the Board in **Sept 2021**. While this report did find value with the Campbell River Fire Protection Service when compared to the costs of Area D having its own firehall, that report **did not contemplate** that the **City of Campbell River** would be asking **Area D Residents** to **contribute** upwards of **Three Million Dollars** towards their new firehall just a few years later.

It should also be mentioned that the previous **Board** did not act on the **key recommendation** of this report. That **key recommendation** was that Area D should have a **flat rate service agreement** instead of the current agreement that see's Area D paying 7% of all costs including capitol expenditures such as firehalls.

***Being billed on a flat rate would provide more predictable costs from one year to the next.***

Over the summer I have been investigating Fire Protection Services. I am well aware that the cost differences between the Oyster River Fire Service and the Campbell River Fire Service are rather significant. While I am still in the very early stages I am looking at all options that could perhaps one day see Area D have its own Firehall and Fire Department.

It is also worthy to mention that many insurance companies now consider for fire insurance reasons that Firehalls should be within eight km . This fact makes it rather compelling to continue investigating what options are available to see a firehall and fire department that is located in central Area D.

While it is important to continue this investigation and staff will be returning an updated service review it is also imperative that a new service agreement with the City of Campbell River needs to have priority and ideally completed before the next tax cycle.

***Are you concerned with the rising costs of this service? Would you like to attend a townhall meeting to learn more about this service in early Oct? Would you support a petition to express your displeasure with the rising costs of the Campbell River Fire Service?***

Send me your emails to [jrice@srd.ca](mailto:jrice@srd.ca) to let me know where you stand!

## **Update - Wood Chipping Service**

There is considerable interest in the community to explore a yearly wood chipping service.

This free service in the past has been provided thanks in part to Provincial Funding. This funding has been limited, and it has been a challenge to disperse those funds across the entire Strathcona Regional District in an equitable manner. This year there was no money to provide this service to Area D residents despite the considerable interest.

SRD staff have been tasked to create a report outlining a potential service with costs. I expect that the costs of this service will be very reasonable and it could provide considerable value to the community. Such a service could play a critical role as properties in the community work towards being fire smart and perhaps limit the open burning that happens each year.

All services do require voter approval before being finally passed.

## **Update - Strathcona Gardens**

I am happy to report that the Strathcona Gardens Staff have voted in favour of a new Three Year Collective Agreement. This new Collective Agreement offers a fair wage increase and compares well to other recent Collective Agreements while still respecting that the Strathcona Gardens is funded largely by tax dollars from the City of Campbell River and Area D.

After years of talking about it I am happy to report that construction of the New Aquatic Centre will kick off with a Ground Breaking Ceremony on **Sept 10<sup>th</sup> 2024 at 1:30 pm**. This event will be held at the Strathcona Gardens.

***Have a Happy and Safe Long Weekend !***