

**GABRIOLA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
GENERAL MEETING - April 05, 2023**

A General Meeting of the Gabriola Fire Protection District was held April 05, 2023 with seven Trustees, Corporate Officer and Fire Chief in attendance.

Attendees: Paul Giffin (Chair), Sean Lewis via Zoom, Fred Apstein via Zoom, Diana Moher, Chris Windess, John Moeller, Jessie Longo (Corporate Officer), Will Sprogis (Fire Chief)

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Chairperson Paul Giffin

Diana Moher gave the opening greeting, "The GFPID acknowledges that we are gathering within the traditional lands of the Snuneymuxw Nation"

John Moeller motioned to accept minutes from March 01, 2023. Chris Windess seconded. Carried

**Correspondence:** N/A

**Financial Report:** N/A

**Communications Committee:**

At the request of the author, Paula Mallinson, Chairperson Giffin read aloud their letter:

GFPID

Attention: Paul Giffin, Chair

I attended the March 2023 Trustee Meeting and was enjoying the way it was moving along so smoothly. Unfortunately two things were brought up which I feel the Trustees need to address.

1) At a Trustee Meeting prior to March, Bob Rooks had his employee toss copies of Robert's Rules on the table in front of each Trustee, when asked what he wanted he said for the Trustees to act as professionals and do their jobs. Yet, he himself totally disregarded the rules when he invited a select few Trustees to a meeting of contractors who were going to be discussing the Burning Bylaw, the Chief had volunteered to go to this meeting and was told he wasn't invited. Our Bylaws and Robert's Rules state requests of this kind are to go through the Chairman, therefore no Trustee should have attended this meeting without informing the Chair and the other Trustees. The proper procedure would have been for Bob to go through the Chair and request a delegation be sent to this meeting, he could request certain Trustees but it would be up to the Board. I heard the comment that "I went as a private citizen" and Fred Apstein stated

that Trustee's can go to anything as "private citizens", this is true as long as topics about the Fire Department or GFPID are not on the table for discussion, otherwise the Trustees are not acting as a whole, as stated in the Improvement District manual.. In the past few years this belief has been stated before so I believe it is time for a policy to be written in order to avoid confusion in the future. Topics could include, has procedure been followed, what is the topic under discussion, would I have been invited had I not been a Trustee.... I am sure that Sean and the other Trustees that were invited to attend this meeting did not realize the Fire Chief had offered to go and was rebuffed as they would have realized that their attendance would be undermining the Fire Chief and show Bob Rooks that he can flaunt the rules and get away with it. As to the public's perception of a Contractor asking a select few Trustees to a meeting, it looks bad and questions could be asked as to why these Trustees and what was the purpose, this is especially true for Sean as Bob Rooks has already asked, in a public meeting, for Sean to be the person to inspect his burn piles instead of the Fire Chief, Sean explained that this was not possible, but Bob's continued attempts to bypass the Fire Chief is concerning.

2) Fred Apstein, once again brought up what should have been an in-camera topic into the public meeting, this should never happen. This has been under discussion for over a year and quite frankly everyone is tired of it, especially as some people are coming in at the tail end so have no idea what it is all about. It is unfortunate that Fred doesn't like what the majority of the Trustees decided, as noted in the in-camera minutes, but for him to go on a rant against the Chair, stating he doesn't trust him and calling for a 3rd party to be brought in is what makes people say the Trustees are dysfunctional. As far as I understand, from the meetings I've attended, is that this matter is finished with, I would suggest that this be laid to rest as it is making the meetings unnecessarily long and putting distrust of the Board into the Public's head. Allowing in-camera information into a public meeting is setting a dangerous precedent, it could be argued that anyone who was not happy with the results of the Board's decision to their complaint could bring it to a general meeting to be re-visited, while it has always been accepted that in-camera stay there it would seem that a policy needs to be done for this as well.

Yours truly,  
Paula Mallinson

**Planning Committee:** N/A

**Finance Committee:**

Diana Moher motioned "Add Paul Giffin to signing authority to allow continuity and confidentiality in the event Sean and Diana are not here as there is an election." John Moeller seconded.

Discussion.

For - John Moeller, Diana Moher, Paul Giffin, Chris Windess, Fred Apstein

Opposed - James Arends

Sean Lewis abstained (no answer via Zoom)

Carried.

## **Business Email Committee:**

No current updates.

## **Fire Chief Report:**

Calls for the month: 37

False Alarms - 1  
Brush Fire - 1  
Burn Complaints - 5  
Chimney Fire - 1  
First Responder - 25  
Hydro Related - 1  
Investigations - 3

April 1 is the start of the fire season and we have had our first grass fire. This is a reminder any fire larger than a campfire requires a permit. All fires require property owners to have water on-site.

BCEHS has given the Gabriola Fire Department a service agreement to provide emergency medical responder services to Gabriola Island. Currently our medical director is reviewing the agreement. Gabriola Island is one of the first in BC. to have an agreement in the works.

Spruce Rd had three motor vehicle incidents over the winter months. I have been in talks with MOTI for more signage, to slow traffic as well as physical barriers on the corner near rivers place to stop vehicles from ending up in the very deep ditch.

After a communication outage at the end of November, I have been working on ways to improve communications. I have found a repeater frequency which will work in all parts of Gabriola for the emergency agencies to stay in contact if phone and internet are not working.

FireSmart drop-off days were a huge success, removing 400 yards of debris from residents' yards, improving the fire safety in priority zone 1 which is 0-30 feet out from a home.

The Structure Protection Trailer that we established through the emergency preparedness fund is ready to protect Gabriola this summer. We are finalising the rest of equipment and storage before it's out in the community to do more training.

The bush truck is now ready for summer - #4. The bush truck just switches from winter mode as a snow plough to summer mode as a bush truck for summer.

B.C. Wildlife service will be coming over to Gabriola for a couple days to do some maintenance of fire access roads that run through the 707 park. This is an annual event where we host the service at the fire hall and run cross training evolutions.

### **Training Officer Report:**

#### **EMR Update:**

- Several members have passed their EMR practical exams and are awaiting license to arrive.
- Some members were not able to attend the practical exam date, and Jenn is working on having another evaluator attend to finish the rest of the class.

#### **Regular Training:**

- Wildland Fire Training for the entire department all month. 10 new members qualified for BC wildfire Certification, and all other members passed required annual re-training
- All members now qualified as Emergency Traffic Controllers by BC Municipal safety association (taught in house to external standards and accreditation)
- Live fire training was held at the south end behind Hall 2. This live fire evolution allowed our members to fully qualify as structural wildland firefighters, and give us a chance to try out our new pumps and equipment trailer.

#### **Other:**

- new recruit class - 10 members have been registered with Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy for in house 1001 firefighter training and have begun our 1-1.5 year training program.
- Glenys and Oliver Bussler are both newly qualified 1001 as professional Firefighters- GVFD trains to industry standards and is accredited by "Proboard" which is the North American Standard for Firefighting- This means our frontline Firefighters are recognized as Fully qualified Firefighters, the same as any Career department requires.
- 16 members of GVFD, 2 from Mudge, 4 from Decourcy, 3 from North Cedar participated in 115 - Structure Protection Sprinkler Course put on by BC Wildfire and held at GVFD hall #1.

#### **Association:**

Nothing to report.

#### **Old Business:**

#### **Town Hall Meeting:**

The Fire Chief reviewed the events of the Town Hall Meeting. 7 department members helped set up the displays (FireSmart, fire equipment and the new wildfire trailer). There were 2 Wildfire attendants, fire department trustees and an estimated 20 community members in attendance.

## **Fire ByLaw:**

Diana Moher motioned to introduce the first reading of ByLaw. John Moeller seconded.

Trustee discussion points:

- Include an FAQ in ByLaw
- Website for FAQ

In favour of first reading - Paul Giffin, Chris Windess, Diana Moher, John Moeller.

Opposed of first reading - Sean Lewis, James Arends, Fred Apstein.

Carried. Motion passed for first reading.

John Moeller motioned to pass for second reading. Chris Windess seconded.

Trustee discussion points:

- No urgency to pass tonight
- Amazing amount of work, done extremely carefully, living document, can be tweaked and changed
- RDN - fire size
- Significant number of Trustees worked on the ByLaw, 2 town hall meetings

In favour of second reading - Paul Giffin, Chris Windess, Diana Moher, John Moeller.

Opposed of second reading - Sean Lewis, James Arends, Fred Apstein

Carried. Motion passed for second reading.

Diana Moher motioned for a third reading of the ByLaw. Chris Windess seconded.

In favour - Paul Giffin, Chris Windess, Diana Moher, John Moeller

Opposed - Sean Lewis, James Arends, Fred Apstein

Carried.

Chairperson Giffin advised the ByLaw passed and will be sent to Victoria municipalities for review.

## **New Business:**

**Trustee request for information on email subject line “Concerns from a long time resident”**

- a. Chain of command**
- b. Use of confidential information**

Trustee Arends told the Chair to move the agenda item in-camera as it's proceeding to litigation.

Chairperson Giffin moved the item to in-camera.

## **Late Items:**

Chairperson Giffin asked for any objection to add communication from Steve Earle to the agenda.

Steve Earle from Gabriola Talks spoke to hosting an All Candidates Meeting and asked for financial support for an ad in the paper / rental of a hall. Discussion.

John Moeller motioned "Board of Trustees permit an all candidates meeting to be held at #1 Fire Hall for candidates in the 2023 election." Seconded by Chris Windess. All in favour - Carried.

Steve Earle advised they would need to contact the candidates via email. It was decided Steve Earle would send an email to the Corporate Officer and the Corporate Officer would forward his email to all candidates.

Discussion to add previous agenda item "Letter requested by the Board retracting correspondence of May 2022 regarding Fred Apstein/Fred Apstein's email dated Feb 01, 2023 regarding "Letter of retraction"." After lengthy discussion John Moeller motioned "to table this" Diana Moher seconded.

In Favour - John Moeller, Diana Moher, Paul Giffin, Chris Windess, James Arends

Opposed - Sean Lewis, Fred Apstein

Carried.

Chris Windess Motioned to adjourn. John Moeller seconded.

Adjournment: 5:23 p.m.

*Meeting minutes approved at the May 03, 2023 general meeting.*