

# SATURNA ISLAND FIRE PROTECTION SOCIETY

## Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Monday, January 22, 2024 @ 4:00 pm - ESB #1

**Present in Person:** Ron Monk (President), Stephen Hardy (Treasurer), Vanessa Verbitsky (SIR Chief), John Wiznuk, Don Rutherford, Tex McLeod, Byron Fritzler, Keith Preston

**Present by Zoom:** Liz Gilliland (Vice President)

**Regrets:** Peter Clark (Fire Chief), Melanie Watson (Corporate Secretary), Ian Gaines, Doug Roy

1. **Call to Order** – welcome new recording secretary, Lisa Wall
2. **No guests**
3. **Moved** to approve the Agenda. **Carried.**
4. **Moved** to approve Board meeting minutes from Nov. 20, 2023. **Carried.**
5. **Business Arising From Previous Minutes**
  - a. Initiatives for approaching VIHA & BCEHS remain in progress.  
Ron submitted a letter to BC Emergency Health Services Executive Vice President and Chief Ambulance Officer Leanne Heppell requesting a meeting to discuss the future of Saturna's emergency medical services. He also attended a meeting on January 11th with Shannon Brayford of BCEHS and CRD Director Paul Brent regarding possible models for continued emergency medical response.
  - b. **Moved** to accept Privacy Policy #13 revisions, including intention to incorporate additional personal information that needs to be collected for compensation purposes. The amended Policy to be posted to the website. **Carried.**
6. **Correspondence**  
No correspondence
7. **President's Report - RM**
  - a. **BC Gaming Grant applications**  
A provincial Capital Gaming Grant, of \$130,000 has been awarded to the Fire Department to purchase of a replacement water tender. Thanks to Chief Clark, Melanie Watson and Stephen Hardy for the successful application.
  - b. SIR's application for a Program Grant through the Community Gaming Grant Program will be announced February 2024. Applied for ~\$68,000.
8. **Finance Committee Report- SH**

a. **January – December 2023 internal financial statements (full year).**

Revenues exceeded budget assumptions due to increased donations and receiving a grant for firefighter training.

Revenues were \$312,000 compared to a budget of \$279,000, a positive variance of \$33,000. Total expenses were \$243,000 compared to a budget of \$268,000, a positive variance of \$25,000. Therefore, net operating income was \$58,000 higher than budgeted.

Operating expenses for SIR underspent compared to budget as did firefighting expenses after considering the training grant income offset.

b. Health savings account – As there is a time lag between members earning and using HSA credits which is an ongoing situation, an accrual was booked in December of approx. \$20,000 which will be retained as a static accrual on the balance sheet.

c. **Cash Position**

- i. Total operating cash balances amounted to \$367,000 as of December 31 with most of the funds held in various GICs.
- ii. In addition, the \$130,000 funds received from the gaming grant is held as restricted cash in a separate bank account. The Society is required to maintain detailed records of how grant money is utilized in compliance with the Gaming Corporation rules.
- iii. Capital purchases in the year were minimal and included replacing four pagers and acquiring two snow blowers.
- iv. All bank accounts were reconciled as of December 31, 2023.

d. **Grant Thornton (GT) Compilation Engagement**

GT has quoted a 5% increase in their fees for 2024. **Moved** to proceed to engage GT to compile the financial statements for 2023. **Carried.**

e. **2024 Budget**

Nothing new to report. The detailed 2024 budget was previously circulated.

f. **Compensation**

Payroll processing was done manually in 2023 and is labour intensive. An outsourcing proposal has been obtained from a local provider in Victoria, PayTrak. The cost is expected to be less than \$1,000 for the full year. With the introduction of firefighter compensation there will be potentially up to 30 volunteers some form of compensation. It is proposed to move the compensation cycle from quarterly to monthly. PayTrak will prepare pay stubs, arrange payments to volunteers, and submit withholdings to the CRA. **Moved** to engage PayTrak to perform payroll processing services and change the compensation cycle to monthly. **Carried.**

9. **Fire Chief's Report – RM on behalf of PC (Regrets)**

- a. 2023 was another record year with 60 calls.
- b. A system now in place for tracking Firefighter hours and managing turnout of ESB2 crews at Duty (medical) calls.
- c. Plan for snow management was engaged during the recent storm.

- d. A constructive first meeting to review a recent CRD governance report was held with Tim Pley (Pley and Associates) and Chris Vrabel (CRD Fire Services Manager) also attended by President Monk and Treasurer Hardy.
- e. Three students are taking 1001 training on Pender this year, which means having three more volunteers meeting all the standards of professional firefighter training.
- f. Plan for Water Tender Replacement – Seeking to source locally, then expand search beyond BC, if unsuccessful. This is a priority.
- g. SCBA's - deferred

#### 10. **SIR Chief's Report – VV**

- a. Status of EMR shift coverage – Busy time with the effects of the January snowstorm. More volunteers and support are needed at such times.
- b. New trainee recruitment and development–SIR desires to recruit more volunteers.  
**Action steps:** Advertising and Scribbler article to be pursued by Vanessa.
- c. Vehicle damage to the building door of the SIR bay at ESB1 has made the door inoperable and remains in the closed position. A quote for repairs is required and an insurance claim to be considered. Enlarge the door opening is a longer-term option.
- d. Class 4 driver strategy – The SIR Chief to urgently pursue helping and encouraging more volunteers to obtain their Class 4 driver's license.

#### 11. **Operations/Asset Management Report – JW/BF/IG (Regrets)**

- a. General – modified last year's contract for the cleaning and maintenance contractors. Awaiting receipt of signed contract.
- b. Sign replacement at ESB1 – John Wiznuk to pursue a final design and quote for replacement.
- c. Snow removal from ESB1 & ESB2 – A volunteer is available to remove snow at ESB1 but not at ESB2. Training is required for starting the generator at both sites when there is a power outage.
- d. Gensets – These are covered under the property insurance.
- e. Annual Maintenance schedule – Chiefs need to collaborate to develop a workable vehicle maintenance schedule. In process.
- f. Landscaping and cleaning contracts –Tree trimming is needed at ESB2. An offer to limb trees was made.

#### 12. **Corporate/Administration Committee – RM on behalf of MW (Regrets)**

- a. Insurance renewal updates – Iridia contract renewal has been completed.
- b. Contract renewals – Parks Canada contract signed and returned. They will be contributing \$2,000 a year for the provision of services.
- c. Coast Capital account revisions – It was **Moved** to add Ron Monk and Liz Gilliland to the gaming account mandate and add Liz Gilliland to the operating accounts.  
**Carried.**

**13. Communications Committee –**

- a. Status of website update (TM, DR) – Initial site design was welcomed by the Board. URL needs to be transferred to the Society. Website will soon be ready for launch and is currently awaiting transfer from the old site. Many thanks to Don Rutherford. **Action steps:** Ron to review current content on the site and make suggestions of what is to remain on the new site. Other Directors encouraged to do so as well.
- b. Communications on website and other media – **Action steps:** A message from the Board sharing updates from SIFPS to be drafted and Vanessa to draft a piece on recruitment.

**14. Human Resources – KP**

- a. Counselling program update – The program is being utilized.
- b. Recruitment and retention – Recording Secretary position accepted by Lisa Wall & contract signed.

**15. Occupational Health and Safety Joint Committee – KP, BF**

OH&S Inspections of ESB 1 & 2 – Have received a few quotes for filling potholes for and electrical work. This will come out of the building maintenance budget. If work is preventative in nature, costs should be charged against the OH&S budget.

**16. Health Spending Account Committee Report – KP**

Six new volunteers are qualified for HSA credits as of January 1, 2024.

**17. Nominating Committee**

Nominations for Board Directors next year are welcomed. Nothing new to report.

**18. CRD Fire Governance Review – RM, SH, LG, DR, PC**

By the end of January, 2024, the CRD will have completed initial consultations with all Societies and Commissions included in the report. By the end of February, the CRD has requested input from all respective parties. Of note for the Society, the CRD report highlighted some deficiency concerns regarding the current Service Agreement and Bylaw. The President will send a letter of response to the CRD acknowledging receipt of the governance report and that the Society is in the process of reviewing its contents.

**19. New Business**

BCEHS update – RM

Ron will touch base with the local committee prior to pursuing next steps.

**20. Next Meeting – March 25, 2024 at 4:00 pm at ESB1**

**21. Motion to adjourn @ 5:53 pm. Carried.**

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by: Lisa Wall