



Saturna's Emergency Services at a Crossroads

Saturna Island Fire Protection
Society Town Hall Meeting

June 20, 2026

Program



SIFPS, the CRD and Taxes



Current Financial Picture



To Commission or Not to Commission?



Questions from the Floor



SIR and the Future of Emergency Medical Response on Saturna



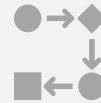
More Questions from the Floor



Goals for Meeting



To introduce new community members to our volunteer emergency services.



To seek your input on an important decision that could change the governance model of SFR.



To clarify the implications of this decision for SIR.



To encourage community members to become active as volunteers in our emergency services and in the work of SIFPS's board.





SIFPS, the CRD and Taxes



SIFPS manages on behalf of the community:



Saturna Fire Rescue
Chief Peter Clark

Rated for external fire fighting;
first responders, emergency
rescue; 28 firefighters,
7 firefighting vehicles



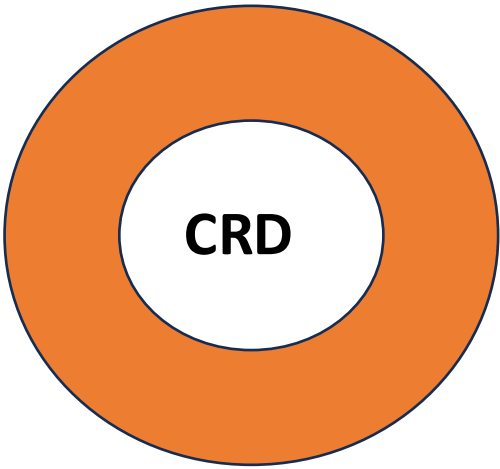
Saturna Island Rescue
Chief Samantha Fache

Emergency medical response;
medical transport; 10 active
EMR/FR crew members, 2
ambulances

What is the Saturna Island Fire Protection Society?

- In 1993, Saturna residents approved the adoption of CRD Bylaw 2165, establishing “a local service for the purpose of contributing to the cost of fire protection and emergency response services provided by others on Saturna Island.”
- SIFPS was incorporated as an independent, non-profit Society in BC on January 14, 1994. (It is also a charity registered with the Canada Revenue Agency.)
- SIFPS delivers fire protection services under a Service Agreement with the CRD. The current agreement expires at the end of 2027.
- SIFPS is authorized to provide emergency medical services and patient transportation (via SIR) under a separate collaborative agreement with the BC Emergency Health Service (BCEHS).
- Bylaw 2165 was amended in 2023 to allow patient transportation to be funded from property tax requisitions.
- A board of directors elected by the Society’s membership serves for a one-year term. Membership is open to any Saturna property owner, resident, or anyone with an interest in Saturna.

Property tax requisition



Tax appropriation

SIFPS is a non-profit society overseeing the delivery of fire protection services via SFR and emergency medical transport via SIR.

Saturna property owners pay property taxes to fund fire protection in the Saturna Fire Services Area.



Current Financial Picture



SIFPS –
Summary
Statements
of
Operations

		Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
Revenues:	Property Tax/PILT	\$ 337,238	\$ 314,837	\$ 267,809
	Third Party (VIHA, PC)	\$ 20,959	\$ 23,646	\$ 18,143
	Donations	\$ 34,640	\$ 10,328	\$ 16,095
	Interest Income	\$ 12,301	\$ 13,288	\$ 6,482
	Grants	\$ 21,102	\$ 3,785	\$ 18,486
	Total Revenues	\$ 426,240	\$ 365,884	\$ 327,015
Expenses:	Saturna Fire Rescue	\$ 146,870	\$ 110,349	\$ 122,231
	Saturna Island Rescue	\$ 85,420	\$ 83,102	\$ 65,416
	Buildings & Admin	\$ 57,290	\$ 56,266	\$ 54,416
	Total Direct Expenses	\$ 289,580	\$ 249,717	\$ 242,063
	Amortization	\$ 73,677	\$ 51,761	\$ 58,341
	XS of Rev over Exp	\$ 62,983	\$ 64,406	\$ 26,611



SIFPS – Key
Financial
Highlights

	Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Actual 2023
Key Direct Costs:			
Compensation	\$ 98,883	\$ 78,024	\$ 66,668
Training	\$ 21,453	\$ 38,814	\$ 19,369
Vehicles (Fuel, Repairs)	\$ 39,208	\$ 19,603	\$ 20,438
PPE	\$ 22,151	\$ 11,808	\$ 13,410
Capital Purchases	\$ 309,031	\$ 53,140	\$ 3,856
End of Year Cash Balance	\$ 401,677	\$ 567,088	\$ 501,770

Comments on Finances

- VIHA legacy support for SIR (approx. \$12,000) ended in 2026.
- Donations (from individuals and fundraisers) far exceeded expectations in 2025.
- In 2025, SIR's operating expenditures accounted for 26% of property tax revenue. Donations dedicated to SIR (\$29,992) were six times more than to SFR.
- In 2026, we reached the cap (.85/\$1000 assessed value) set by our bylaw on property tax revenue. To cover rising costs, that cap will have to be raised unless we identify other sources of revenue.



To Commission or Not to
Commission?

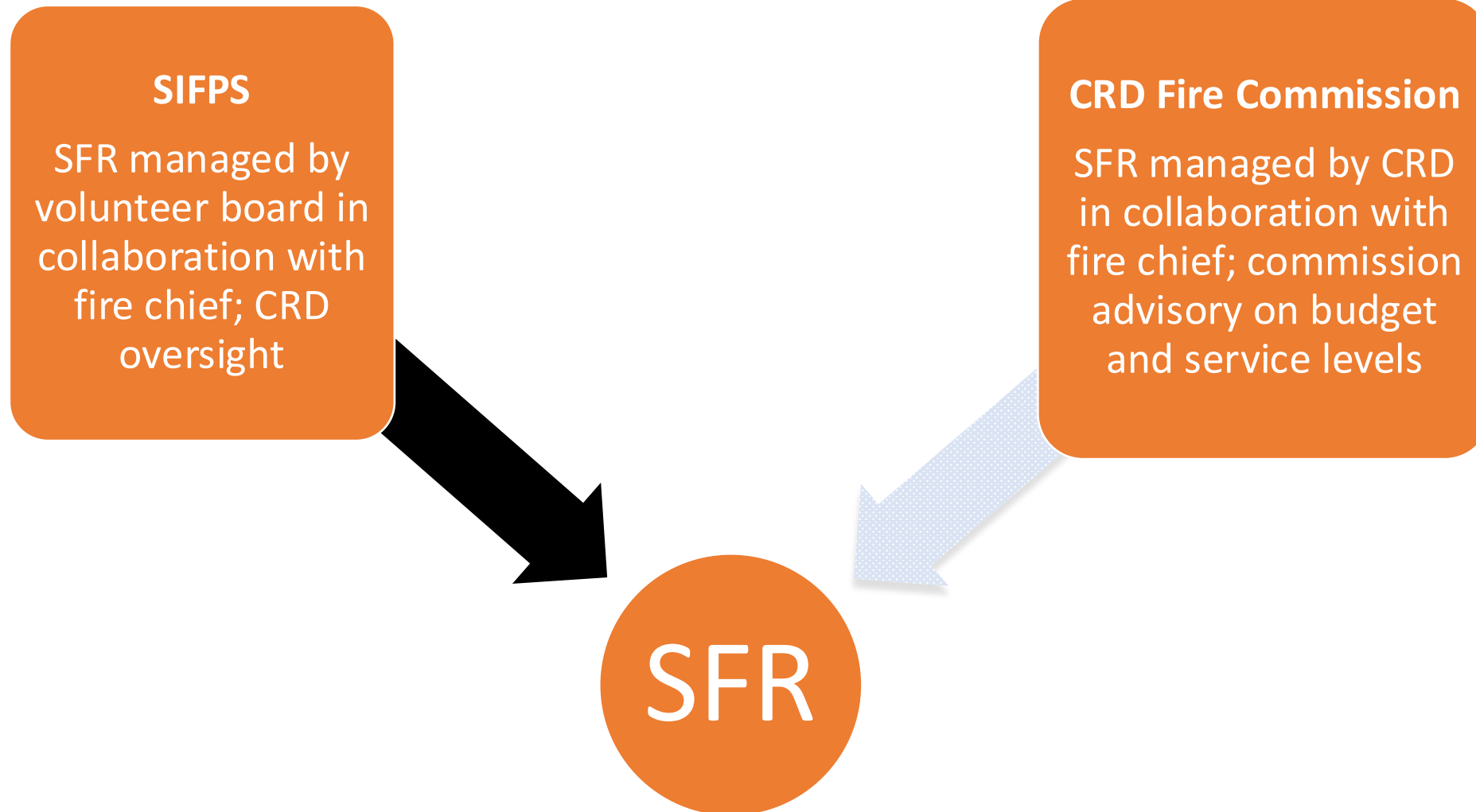


SIFPS and the CRD: Who Governs SFR?

CRD Fire Manager Chris Vrabel has raised two challenges to the status quo:

- According to a CRD legal review, our current operating bylaw does not authorize SFR, under the management of SIFPS, to supply fire protection services in the Saturna Fire Services Area.
- Saturna (along with Pender) is an exception in operating its FD through a non-profit society rather than a CRD Commission as happens in eight other rural FDs.

Society or Commission?



Preserving the Status Quo

If we remain a Society, SIFPS's obligations will be significantly expanded in a new Service Agreement to include:

- A clear and legally established governance and authority structure
- Alignment with current legislation and provincial standards
- Defined roles and responsibilities for service delivery and oversight
- Appropriate risk management measures, including indemnity and insurance
- Formal accountability mechanisms, including reporting and compliance requirements

CRD Commission Model

CRD Responsibilities

- Manager, Fire Services leadership
- Governance & compliance systems (e.g. OH&S, WorkSafe BC)
- Insurance & liability structures
- Financial accountability & administration (e.g. HR, Procurement, Finance)
- Budget preparation & approval
- Employer of record & payroll processing

Local Responsibilities

- Fire Chief as operational leader
- Fire delivery service level
- Firefighter response & operations
- Maintain community relationships
- Retain local identity and culture
- Assist with annual budget
- Longer-term planning input
- Work within CRD established budgets, policies & procedures

Other CRD Committees and Commissions on Saturna



LYALL HARBOUR/BOOT COVE
WATER LOCAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE



SATURNA ISLAND PARKS
AND RECREATION
COMMISSION



SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY
COMMISSION



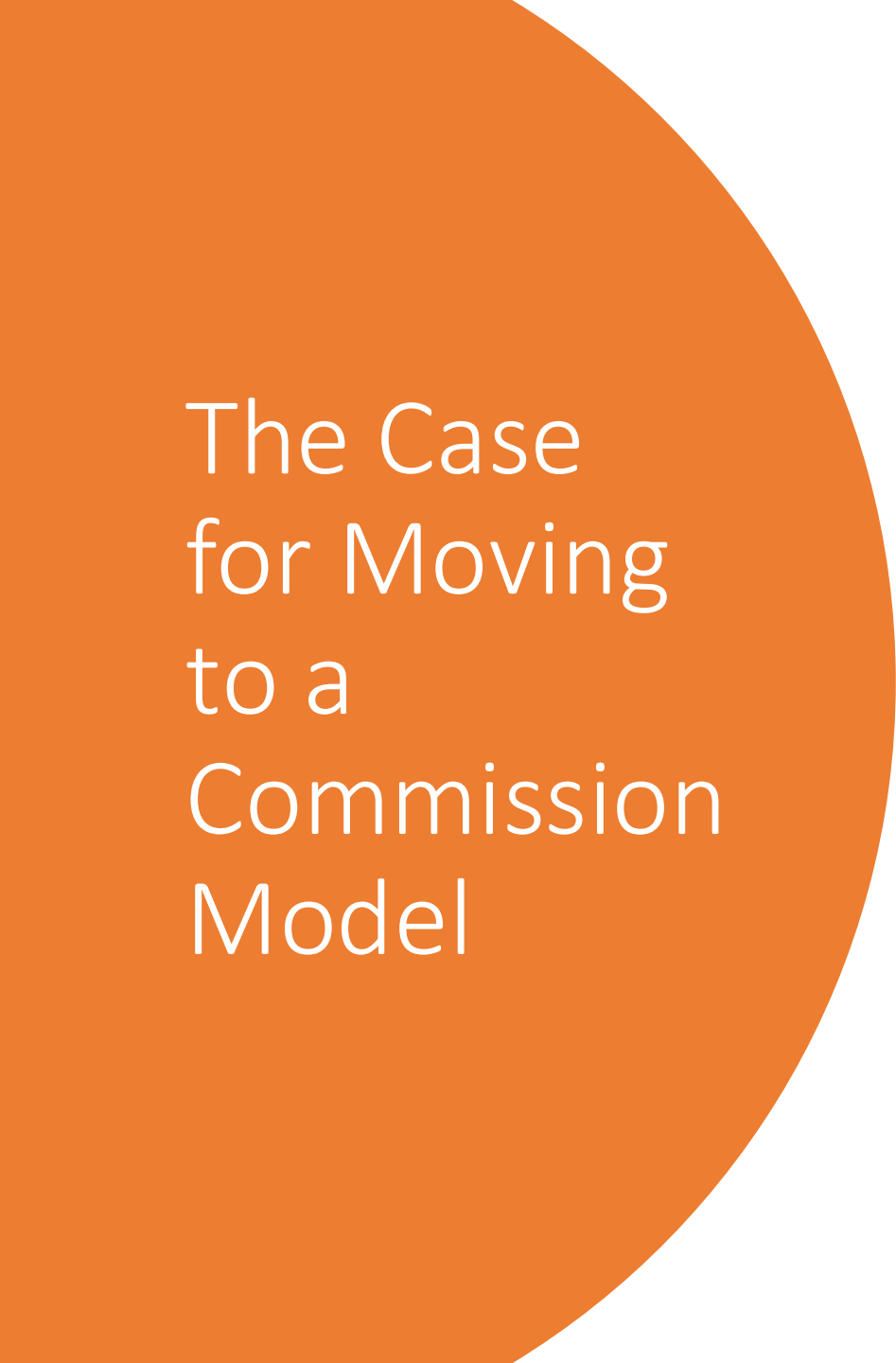
SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS
ELECTORAL AREA
EMERGENCY ADVISORY
COMMISSION



SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS
HARBOURS COMMISSION



SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS
PUBLIC LIBRARY
COMMISSION

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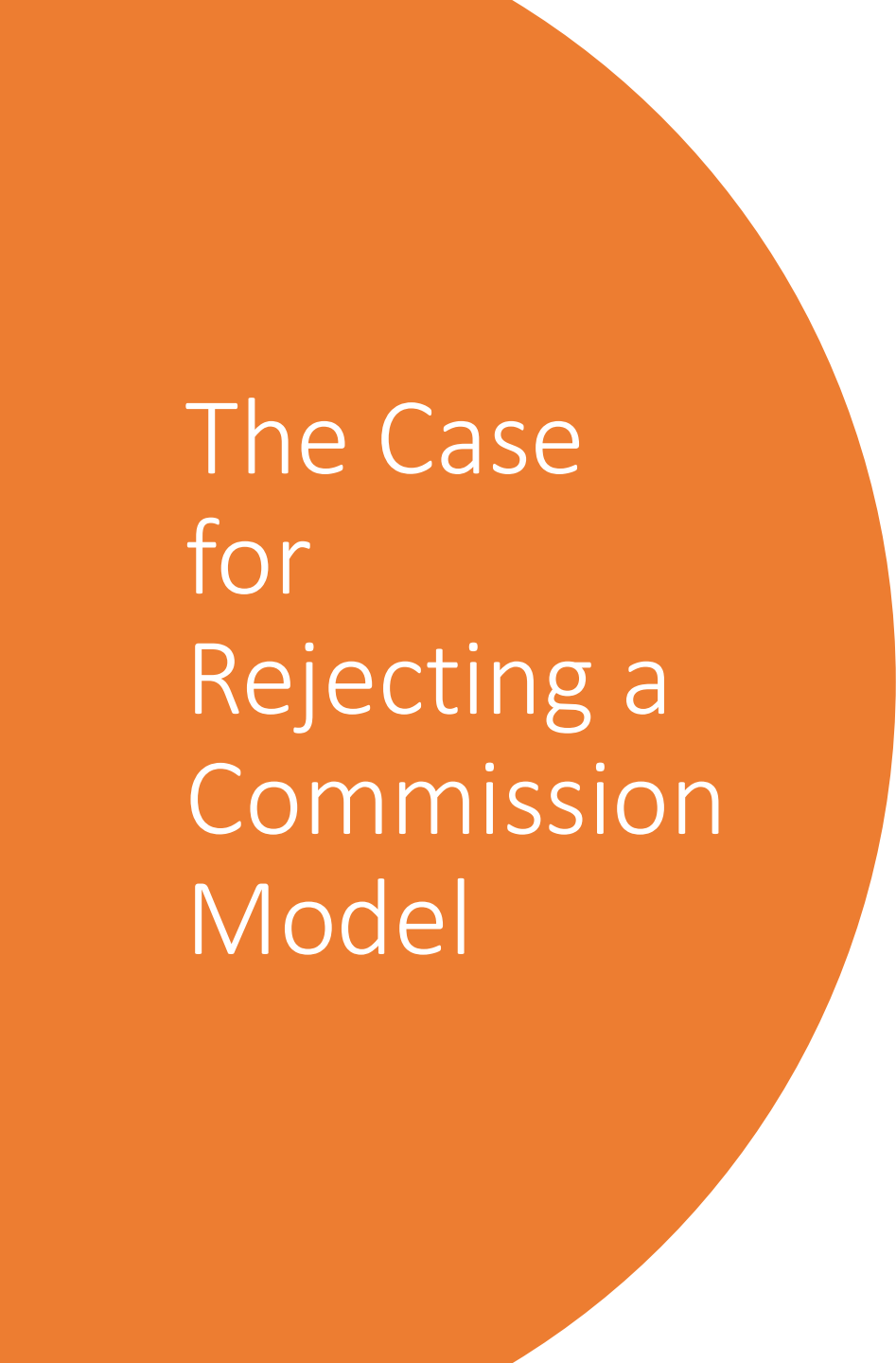
The Case for Moving to a Commission Model

As a Society, SIFPS will face an increasingly onerous set of requirements involving liability insurance, and HR and OH&S monitoring and reporting.

Can we sustain a volunteer board with the expertise and time for this work, which otherwise would be done by CRD staff? It will also impose new demands on the time of the SFR chief.

On the ownership of assets, Vrabel has accepted that SIFPS can remain the title holder on ESB 1 and 2, and our current vehicles. New assets, procured through property taxes, would belong to the CRD.

Alongside a new Fire Commission, SIFPS would continue to exist as the owner of the two halls, a fundraising organization, and the manager of SIR.

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The Case for Rejecting a Commission Model

Some loss of autonomy for fire chief, who will report to the CRD Fire Manager.

Uncertainty about the future of SIR (we will return to that).

We lose direct control over SIR's budget, which will be prepared by CRD staff.

Implications for taxes? Will additional CRD costs be absorbed by Saturna taxpayers?



SIFPS's Position

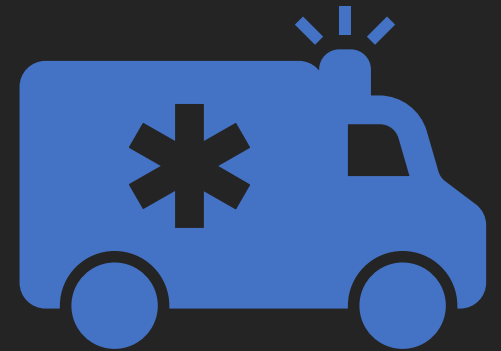
Our operating bylaw will have to be rewritten to acknowledge the CRD's jurisdictional authority over the provision of fire protection services on Saturna.

This means SIFPS will be recognized as a non-profit society contracting with the CRD to deliver fire protection services in the Saturna Fire Services Area.

SIFPS's Service Agreement with the CRD expires in December 2027. Before then we will have to decide the Commission question.

We have not yet reached a conclusion on whether it is in Saturna's interest to transition to a CRD Fire Commission. Here we seek your input.

SIR and the Future of Emergency Medical Response on Saturna



SIR Today

- In BC, emergency medical response is a provincial responsibility, administered through BCEHS. **Saturna receives no financial support from BCEHS** and only minimal material support. The bulk of SIR's funding is from the CRD, through the diversion of taxes earmarked for fire protection.
- The outpouring of charitable giving last year shows how highly Saturna residents (and visitors) value the work of our emergency medical responders.
- It is a priority for SIFPS to preserve the level of service currently offered by SIR and if possible increase it. The question is how this can best be done.

SIR's Future: Three Options

If the governance of SFR moves to a Fire Commission, what happens to SIR?

- **Option 1:** SIR's operations are subsumed under CRD Fire Protection Services. We reject this.
- **Option 2:** BCEHS commits to establishing a permanent ambulance station on Saturna or makes a significant contribution to the funding of SIR. This is our preferred option, which we are actively pursuing.
- **Option 3:** If Option 2 fails, we will have to get creative. If rejected by BCEHS, we will push to continue the diversion of CRD property taxes to SIR as an independent service.