

DATE: April 17, 2015**FILE:** 7200-01**TO:** Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Services Committee**FROM:** Debra Oakman, CMA
Chief Administrative Officer**RE:** Feasibility reserve funds, Mount Washington fire service

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to request that electoral area “C” feasibility funds be committed to investigate the feasibility of a fire protection service on Mount Washington.

Policy analysis

Regional districts may operate any service that the board considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the regional district, under section 796 of the *Local Government Act*. Prior to establishing any service a feasibility study should be conducted to determine factors such as purpose, scope and financing requirements.

The approved 2015 budget includes \$35,000 in the electoral area “C” feasibility fund.

The board approved Integrated Resort Community Plan (IRCP) contains the objective:

“To, over time, ensure adequate fire protection to the permanent and seasonal population, visitors, and employees and to the buildings and structure within the resort community.”

Executive summary

Since 2009 four structures on Mount Washington have been destroyed by fire. There is no fire protection service on Mount Washington. The Mount Washington Alpine Resort and a number of concerned citizens are requesting the regional district investigate the feasibility of establishing a fire protection service

Recommendation from the chief administrative officer:

THAT \$35,000 from the electoral area “C” feasibility fund be committed to investigate the feasibility of a fire protection service for the Mount Washington community.

Respectfully:

D. Oakman

Debra Oakman, CMA
Chief Administrative Officer

History/background factors

In 2002 the Mount Washington Residents Association requested the regional district to petition the property owners for the establishment of a fire protection service. The petition was not successful.

In March of 2009, a structure fire on Mount Washington destroyed a rental chalet. No persons were injured in that fire.

In February of 2015 a structure fire spread to two adjoining structures destroying three residences and bringing the matter of fire protection to the forefront again. No persons were injured in that incident.

Since that time, the electoral area director and staff have met with the owners of the Mount Washington Alpine Resort heard their request to investigate the feasibility of establishing a fire protection service for the Mount Washington community.

Currently staff is gathering the names of residents that are expressing an interest in assisting in the development of a fire service by providing input by way of a chief administrative officer (CAO) steering committee.

Further, staff is currently developing the scope of work for the engagement of a consultant to review historical and relevant documents, explore and compare service options and prepare a final report with recommendations toward establishing a fire service.

Options

Staff have determined the following options for the board's consideration:

1. Commit up to \$35,000 from the electoral area "C" feasibility studies fund to investigate the feasibility of a fire protection service on Mount Washington.
2. Not proceed with further investigations at this time.

This staff report provides information in support of option 1.

Financial factors

The electoral area "C" feasibility fund, function #151 has \$35,000 available for the establishment of a new service.

Legal factors

Under section 796 of the *Local Government Act* the regional district may provide any service it deems necessary or desirable, subject to certain conditions and restrictions.

Sustainability implications

The Comox Valley sustainability strategy objective 7.1.4 states "Effective emergency health response services are provided for all residents". The investigation of feasibility of a fire protection service for the Mount Washington community supports this strategy objective.

Intergovernmental factors

The scope of work for the consultant will include a component that seeks to interview the fire chiefs and CAOs of member municipalities in development of the final report and recommendations.

Interdepartmental involvement

This report was developed by community services staff

Citizen/public relations

Although the initial 2015 request for investigation of a fire service was brought forward by the Mount Washington Alpine Resort, staff have fielded many phone calls and emails from concerned residents that have volunteered to participate in the CAO's steering committee. These volunteers represent the various stakeholders on Mount Washington and will assist in the development of policy recommendations to the board.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

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