



The Region of BC's Best

Community Services BOARD REPORT

TO: Chair and Board of Directors **DATE:** January 31, 2018
FROM: Director of Community Services
SUBJECT: TNRD Administered Fire Protection Services

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT staff be authorized to commence the formal process of establishing TNRD-administered fire protection services in Little Fort, Loon Lake, South Green Lake and Tobiano by holding public information meetings to determine if there is general support for service establishment.

RON STORIE
Director of Community Services

Approved for
Board Consideration
CAO

SUMMARY:

In 2016/17 the TNRD received requests from four of the TNRD's six financial contribution service fire departments that the TNRD take over service delivery. Consideration of the requests was postponed pending receipt and review of a fire service delivery report prepared by consultant Dave Mitchell & Associates. The report has been received and reviewed by the TNRD Board, staff as well as the fire protection services and it is now time to consider the requests.

BACKGROUND:

The TNRD has established six volunteer fire departments that are not administered by the TNRD but instead by independent societies. The TNRD has collected funds through taxation to assist those

societies in operating their fire departments. These have been referred to by the TNRD as financial contribution fire departments. Since the implementation by the Province of the fire department *Playbook*, some of these independent fire departments have expressed concern by the liability of fire department operation and maintenance as well as the increased workload associated with operation, administration, reporting, training etc. and have requested that the TNRD take over the fire departments and operate them in a manner similar to the three TNRD-administered fire departments (Blackpool, Pritchard and Vavenby).

A fire services review was conducted by the firm of Dave Mitchell & Associates with participation by a number of the TNRD, member municipality, improvement district and financial contribution fire departments (11 of 26 volunteer fire departments). The report and its recommendations have been reviewed by the participants.

DISCUSSION:

Subsequent to receipt of the Fire Services Review, the report was presented to the TNRD Board of Directors and discussed with each of the TNRD's financial contribution volunteer fire departments. Those departments are located in Little Fort, Loon Lake, McLure, 70 Mile House, South Green Lake and Tobiano. Subsequent to the report, four of those six fire protection services have requested that the TNRD consider takeover of the service. Those fire departments are located in Little Fort, Loon Lake, South Green Lake and Tobiano.

Staff met with representatives of the four financial contribution fire departments that requested TNRD administration of the fire service on January 21st. Each of these fire departments has confirmed in writing that they would like the TNRD to start the legislative process for service establishment.

Next Steps:

1. Board approval for allocation of staff resources to commence communications with each of the four communities and to conduct public information meetings to determine if there is adequate support from each of the communities to carry out a public assent process to establish a TNRD-administered fire service.

2. Set up meetings with each fire department's proponent group, the electoral area director and staff to discuss proposed service areas, budgets, communication plan, public meeting dates, etc.
3. Send out communications to each community inviting participation at public information meetings, the purpose of the meetings, etc.

A report will be provided to the Board following the public information meetings advising of the outcomes and recommendations for next steps. If supported by any or all of the communities, the next steps will include proceeding to public assent (either formal petition or referendum).

ALIGNMENT TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

This process aligns with the strategic plan by:

- focusing on providing services that increase value to our ratepayers
- focusing on community and public safety
- focusing on communication with stakeholders

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

Legislative Requirements to Consult: Board Policy 6.1.1 *Establishment of Service Areas* sets out the process for consultation when establishing new services. Board Policy 14.1.4 *Establishing a TNRD-administered Fire Service* includes reference to Policy 6.1.1. A copy of each is attached for reference.

Number of residents affected: The number of properties in the four financial contribution service areas totals 1,211.

Geographical area affected: Little Fort (Area "O") , Loon Lake (Area "E") , South Green Lake (Area "E") & Tobiano (Area "J") financial contribution fire service areas

Level of Financial Implication of the change to service: These figures will be determined through the initial stages and will be reported to the Board following the public information meetings.

Public Consultation Strategy Outline:

The communication plan will be developed in consultation with the proponent groups but will include mail-outs to property owners and residents and public information meetings (in person and possibly live-stream/video). Additional communication options may be set up depending on community needs and preferred methods.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC:

The decision of the Board of Directors regarding this item will be communicated to the public:

- in the minutes of the meeting at which this item will be considered by the Board of Directors; said minutes to be included in the next regular Board of Directors' meeting agenda on the TNRD's website; and
- by notification in The Current newsletter following the regular Board of Directors' meeting;
- by publication of a press release following the regular Board of Directors' meeting.

Attachments

- Board Policies 6.1.1 and 14.1.4



THOMPSON-NICOLA REGIONAL DISTRICT Board Policy Manual

Adopted by Board of Directors Effective Date February 18, 1988	POLICY NO. 6.1.1
Amended by Board of Directors Amendment Date(s): March 4, 2004; November 20, 2014	File No: Click here to enter text.
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE AREAS	
Category: Legal Matter – Service Establishment	

PURPOSE: To provide guidance with regard to the process to determine establishment of a service area

APPLICATION: This policy applies to the Board of Directors and staff

REFERENCE: Recovery of Assent of Elector Approval Cost Policy 6.1.2

POLICY

1. If a proposal is deemed to be generally feasible by staff and by the Director(s) who represents the proposed service area(s), the boundaries of the proposed service area must be clearly established on a map. A map of the proposed service area is prepared.
2. Assessment information with regard to value of land and buildings applicable to the proposed service area is compiled.
3. The Director(s) must recommend the method of taxation for the proposed service:
 - (a) land only;
 - (b) improvements only;
 - (c) land and improvements; or
 - (d) parcel tax.
4. Determine if fees are required to contribute to the cost of the proposed service.
5. A budget is prepared (by the Director(s), resident proponent groups and staff) to determine the capital debt requirement, as well as operational and maintenance costs applicable to the proposed service.
6. Once the method of taxation has been determined and a budget has been prepared, the requisition rate (rate per \$1,000 of net assessed value of land and improvements) for the proposed service is established.

7. If there is some question as to the feasibility of a proposal, a feasibility study carried out by consultants may be necessary. The completion of a study must be approved by the Board of Directors in advance.
8. The Director(s) must recommend the method of assent to be used:
 - (a) assent voting (referendum);
 - (b) alternate approval (available only in circumstances set out in legislation);
 - (c) petition; or
 - (d) director consent (available only for service types identified by legislation).

and Board approval must be received prior to conducting the public assent process.

9. Following preparation of a map, completion and review of a feasibility study (if warranted), preparation of a budget and the establishment of the requisition rate, an informational presentation is prepared by staff.
10. The Director(s) representative of the jurisdictions in which a new service is proposed to be established, along with Administrative staff, will hold an open public information meeting with residents of the area requesting the service, or with a proponent group representing those residents to outline the procedure and determine the general acceptance of the proposal.

The presentation at the meeting must include examples of what the cost to the taxpayer would be on:

- (a) a residential property;
- (b) a business property;

as well as any other information pertinent to the service.

11. At the public information meeting, general acceptance of the proposal may be determined by either a straw poll or a show of hands to indicate residents' interest in establishing the proposed service. The tone of the meeting should enable the Director(s), in consultation with administrative staff, to decide whether it is in the best interest of both the local area residents and property owners as well as the Thompson-Nicola Regional District to proceed with a public assent process.
12. If there is strong support from residents at the public information meeting and if the Board has given advance approval to conduct a public assent for the proposed service through petition, formal petitions may be distributed to property owners at the public information meeting.



THOMPSON-NICOLA REGIONAL DISTRICT Board Policy Manual

Adopted by Board of Directors Effective Date December 14, 2017	POLICY NO. 14.1.4
Amended by Amendment Date(s):	File No: Click here to enter text.
SUBJECT: Establishing a TNRD-Administered Fire Service	
Category: Fire Protection	

PURPOSE: To provide a framework for the establishment of TNRD-administered fire departments.

APPLICATION: This policy applies to the Board of Directors and staff

REFERENCE: Establishment of Service Areas Policy 6.1.1
Recovery of Public Assent Process Costs Policy 6.1.2
Local Government Act
Workers Compensation Act
Fire Services Act

POLICY

1. Establishment of TNRD-administered fire services will only be considered after a comprehensive feasibility study and risk assessment has been carried out.
2. After a request for service establishment has been received, staff will request that the Board approve access to feasibility study funds to carry out the study/assessment.
3. The feasibility study and risk assessment will include, but not be limited to:
 - a) the boundaries of the proposed service area and the number of properties and structures therein
 - b) a detailed summary of the specific service(s) or scope of services proposed (eg. structural fire suppression, fire protection, public education, medical first responder, road rescue)
 - c) a list of the required infrastructure, apparatus and equipment required to carry out the proposed service
 - d) the number of volunteers required to carry out the proposed service(s)
 - e) a summary of the training levels required to carry out the proposed service(s) in accordance with the Fire Services Act and the Workers Compensation Act
 - f) the availability and sources of a water supply in the proposed service area
 - g) the capacity to provide communication systems (eg. 9-1-1 dispatch)
 - h) a budget to establish and maintain the proposed service(s) (start-up and ongoing costs)
4. If the feasibility study shows that the proposed service(s) are authorized and the fire service is intended to meet the minimum standards set out in the Fire Underwriters Survey criteria, service establishment will be carried out in accordance with Service Establishment Policy 6.1.1.
5. Staff will work with the proponent group to assist in the conduct of the feasibility study and service establishment process.