
TO: C. Mason
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 14, 2006

FROM: N. Avery
Gen. Mgr., Finance & Information Services

FILE:

SUBJECT: Bylaws to Establish a New Fire Service Area

PURPOSE:

To introduce the following bylaws:

Meadowood Fire Protection Service Establishing Bylaw No. 1509, 2006

Meadowood Fire Protection Service Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 1510, 2006

Dashwood Fire Protection Service Capital Charge Bylaw No. 1511, 2006

BACKGROUND:

Property owners residing in a neighbourhood developing along the Englishman River in Electoral Area 'F' have approached the Regional District to establish a new fire protection service. The new area will include over 470 properties currently without fire protection. The proposed concept is to construct a new firehall within the neighbourhood boundaries but to operate the firehall in conjunction with the existing Dashwood Fire Department which provides services within portions of Electoral Areas 'G' and 'H'.

The bylaws introduced with this report will establish a service area to borrow funds to construct the firehall and purchase vehicles and equipment. Additionally a capital charge will be imposed on the area (to be funded under the loan authorization bylaw) in recognition of access to the existing Dashwood Fire Protection assets. Once the firehall is commissioned the boundaries of the Dashwood service area will be expanded to include the Meadowood area and all of the taxpayers will contribute to the operations of the expanded department. The residents have asked that the service be established by direct petition. The timeframe proposed is to introduce the bylaws in 2006 but to formally approach property owners in January 2007.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Introduce the bylaws as presented.
2. Do not introduce the bylaws at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost to construct a three bay firehall including site preparation, well and septic field as well as to purchase vehicles, uniforms and a variety of essential equipment is \$1,483,000. The tax rate necessary to service the annual debt repayment is estimated at \$2.286 per \$1,000 of assessment – however, the steering committee assisting in the initiative is recommending a parcel tax approach. Staff estimate that the parcel tax rate will be in the range of \$310 per year per property. Additional property taxes will be paid once the operational boundaries are expanded – those taxes will be assessed on property value under the Dashwood Fire department budget.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS:

Staff have been working for some time with a group of property owners representing a neighbourhood developing along the Englishman River in Electoral Area 'F', adjacent to the Dashwood Fire Protection service area. Bylaws are being introduced with this report which would establish a service area covering about 470 properties to borrow a net sum of \$1,483,000 to construct a firehall and acquire all the necessary start up equipment. A capital charge payable to the Dashwood Fire service area will be assessed to acknowledge the past investment of Dashwood taxpayers in their assets. Once the firehall is commissioned the boundaries of the Dashwood Fire service area will be expanded to include the Meadowood properties into their operational budget. The property owners have requested a direct petition. The bylaws are being introduced at this time to provide lead time to prepare communications materials as well as to avoid the Christmas season. The petitions would be sent out early in January 2007.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That "Meadowood Fire Protection Service Establishing Bylaw No. 1509, 2006" be introduced for first three readings.
2. That "Meadowood Fire Protection Service Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 1510, 2006" be introduced for first three readings.
3. That "Dashwood Fire Protection Service Capital Charge Bylaw No. 1511, 2006" be introduced for first three readings.

Report Writer

C.A.O. Concurrence

COMMENTS: