

DATE: August 5, 2020

FILE: 1700-02/2020 Renewal

TO: Chair and Members
Black Creek-Oyster Bay Services Committee

Supported by Russell Dyson Chief Administrative Officer <i>R. Dyson</i>
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FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: COVID-19 Response and Renewal – Black Creek-Oyster Bay Services

Purpose

To provide the Black Creek-Oyster Bay (BCOB) Services Committee with a COVID-19 Response and Renewal for the BCOB Fire Protection and Water Supply and Distribution Services.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the COVID-19 Response and Renewal plan for the Black Creek-Oyster Bay Services, as included with the staff report dated August 5, 2020, be approved.

Electoral Areas Renewal Plan

As part of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board’s COVID-19 Response and Renewal Framework, an assessment of the CVRD’s Core Services is being conducted and is based on five principles:

- Maintaining core services at an affordable cost
- Sustaining stable services in support of the local economy
- Adapting to changing community priorities
- Realigning resources to support community renewal initiatives
- Communicating clearly about actions.

This report considers the various tasks for the BCOB Fire Protection and Water Supply and Distribution Services and identifies certain changes that could be implemented, supporting the five principles above. Note that this report includes assessment of functions from the Water (water distribution) and Emergency Programs (fire protection) Core Services.

Operational and Capital Work Plan Modifications

The CVRD’s COVID-19 Renewal Framework includes evaluating CVRD services for fiscal efficiencies and assessing tasks and work plans. The following table lists the necessary and critical tasks, which are those that must continue to be provided to the community in order that water supply, sewer treatment, parks and waste management (as examples) are delivered. The functional tasks include actions that may be paused, deferred or cancelled outright. Finally, the renewal actions describe tangible and/or systemic changes to deliver renewed public services.

Necessary Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Critical Tasks are those tasks that ensure the following:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Fire service staff and volunteer health and safety:</i> ▪ <i>Training and skills maintenance</i> ▪ <i>Delivery of fire suppression and medical first responder services</i>

- Water Supply and Treatment
 - *Status quo required to ensure continued compliance with regulatory requirements and continued delivery of safe drinking water to approximately 2,000 residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial customers within the service area.*

Functional Tasks Highlights

In many ways, the CVRD has adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic and identified methods for delivering services during a time where public interactions are limited. In addition to those highlights below, additional changes/improvements are noted at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/renewal.

Water Supply and Treatment:

- The 2020 work plan for the BCOB water local service area remains unchanged after a thorough assessment throughout the COVID-19 response phase. The essential nature of the service means that functional tasks are directly related to ensuring continued delivery of compliant drinking water to the community.

Fire Protection

- The impacts of COVID-19 have resulted in significant challenges to emergency services including establishing the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), cancelling and adapting training for firefighters and closing fire halls to the public. Continuous adaptation of common procedures has been at the forefront of these services.
- The following Fire Service functional task highlights are recommended to continue as planned, in support of the critical tasks above:

Fire Services Capital Improvements:

- Installation of fire hydrant on the training grounds of the Oyster River Fire Rescue fire hall
- Facilitates improved functional hydrant training within the safety of the controlled environment of the training compound.

Fire Services: Operations

- Operational grant funding to Oyster River Volunteer Fire Rescue Association to maintain operational readiness of the fire departments and the volunteers.
- Minor capital purchases for the Oyster River Fire Rescue department that are supported by approved Community Emergency Preparedness Fund grant program funds.
- Personal Protective Equipment for staff and volunteers.

Fire Services: Reserves

- Reducing reserve contributions to the capital works reserves in the current five year plan may be a renewal option for consideration. However, through annual sustainable asset funding analysis, The Black Creek-Oyster Bay fire protection service is currently unable to meet the future replacement cost obligations without incurring debt at the time of replacement.

Renewal Actions

Water Supply and Treatment

1. Defer asset management driven rate increases
In a report to the August 2020 BCOB services committee meeting, staff are recommending that a comprehensive rate review for function 313 be delayed until 2022 to avoid adding additional cost pressure on the community as it recovers from the covid-19 crisis.

2. Participation in an inter-regional Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) with neighboring regional districts and municipalities, and a separate local Comox Valley MAA with smaller water and sewer purveyors to ensure the Comox Valley Regional District water systems and Comox Valley Sewer System are covered in case staffing falls below emergency levels, and that we are doing our part to provide the same comfort to smaller water and wastewater purveyors in the Comox Valley.

Fire Protection

The following includes the recommended project deferral that will support an immediate and short-term cost savings within the BCOB Fire Protection Service.

Fire Services: Capital Improvements

- Defer the planned purchase of a mobile computer aided dispatch communications system

Fire Services: Operations

- Defer the purchase of a 4,000 gallon portable water tank

Longer Term, systemic changes

As the fire services within the Comox Valley adapt to COVID-19, staff will continue to seek administrative efficiencies by way of:

- Combining fire protection services where appropriate.
- Combining fire service training programs where appropriate.
- Increased use of virtual meetings and electronic training media to reduce travel and accommodations costs.
- Increased collaboration with neighbouring fire service jurisdictions where appropriate.

Summary

- Modest adjustments are achieved in the water supply, treatment and distribution service, with a primary focus on ensuring infrastructure is maintained and upgrades are sought where appropriate.
- Fire services can continue to provide a protection of life-safety role in the community while still contributing to the CVRD's renewal phase by offering training to volunteers, outfitting departments with appropriate equipment and seeking partnerships with neighbouring departments.

Citizen/Public Relations

The focus of the Fire Services Renewal Plan continues to be the health, safety and training of the fire service personnel, and the continued delivery of fire suppression and medical first responder services. The citizens of the BCOB Fire Protection Service area will not see a change in the operational delivery of the service as a result of the COVID-19 renewal plan.

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
Deputy Chief Administrative
Officer

Attachments: Appendix A – “Black Creek – Oyster Bay Fire Services Budget Update”

Appendix A – “Black Creek – Oyster Bay Fire Services Budget Update

Table 1 - 2020 Capital Projects Update

Black Creek-Oyster Bay Fire Protection (Function 230) Fire Service Capital Projects 2020				
Project	Status	Budget	Funding Source	Savings 2020
Mobi-cad system (dispatch communication aid)	Deferred	\$12,000	Reserves	\$12,000
Total				\$12,000

Table 2 - Operating Budget – Fire Services – Proposed Savings 2020

Black Creek-Oyster Bay Fire Protection Service (Function 230)			
2020 Operating Budget = \$859,833			
Project	Status	Budget	Savings 2020
Purchase of 4000 gallon portable tank	Deferred	\$5,000	\$5,000
Total			\$5,000