

**DATE:** February 28, 2019**FILE:** 7200-01**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Black Creek-Oyster Bay services committee  
Electoral Areas Services Committee**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer**R. Dyson****RE: Fire Chief Compensation Policy - Rescind****Purpose**

To request consideration of rescinding the Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Compensation Policy (Compensation Policy) to allow for the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to include Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Fire Chiefs in the exempt staff compensation model.

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

THAT the Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Compensation Policy, dated July 30, 2013, be rescinded and that Fire Chief compensation align with the Comox Valley Regional District exempt staff compensation model.

**Executive Summary**

To fully align the Fire Chiefs with the exempt staff compensation model requires the board's consideration of rescinding the outdated Compensation Policy.

The Compensation Policy:

- was adopted by the Board in 2013 to create a system of standard compensation rewards for the CVRD Fire Chiefs;
- was amended in 2016 to align Fire Chief's compensation with similar industry positions and to provide rate increases that were related to service depth in each department;
- is not sustainable in its current format as the proposed wages for Fire Chiefs were only addressed to December 2018.

Rescinding the Compensation Policy would:

- include Fire Chief positions in the performance based exempt staff compensation model, created in 2017, that addresses transparency and accountability for exempt staff relating to compensation adjustments. This model includes education, work experience and certification as key components of the performance management model;
- align Fire Chief positions in the exempt staff compensation model to ensure equity and fairness for all staff;
- provides Fire Chief positions with predictable and transparent career paths through linking wage increases to performance management.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

Concurrence:

**J. Bast****T. I. Smith****J. Bradley**

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James Bast  
Manager of Fire Services

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T. Ian Smith  
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Julie Bradley  
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**Background/Current Situation**

In 2013 the CVRD implemented a new administrative model for the delivery of fire protection services which included the engagement of Fire Chiefs as CVRD employees. At that time CVRD staff developed, and the board approved, the Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Compensation Policy (Appendix A).

In 2016, under the authority of the “Comox Valley Regional District Officer Bylaw No. 21, 2008” (Bylaw No. 21) the CAO implemented a revised exempt staff compensation model; an industry standard and allows for transparency and accountability in wage increases and is linked to performance.

To fully align the Fire Chiefs with the exempt staff compensation model requires the board’s consideration of rescinding the outdated Compensation Policy.

Further, including the Fire Chiefs in the current exempt staff compensation model will provide the CAO greater flexibility in meeting the requirements of fire inspection and fire investigation anticipated with the new *Fire Safety Act*.

**Policy Analysis**

In July 2013 the board approved a Compensation Policy. This policy was amended in 2016 and applies to the positions at the four rural area fire departments including:

- Fire Chief, Hornby Island Fire Rescue;
- Fire Chief, Denman Island Fire Rescue;
- Fire Chief, Fanny Bay Fire Department;
- Fire Chief, Oyster River Fire Rescue; and
- Deputy Chief, Oyster River Fire Rescue.

Personnel administration is governed pursuant to Bylaw No. 21, Section 5 assigns personnel administration to the CAO.

**Options**

Staff have identified two options for committee consideration:

1. Move the Fire Chiefs to the current exempt staff compensation model adopted by the CVRD.
2. Maintain the existing policy and update the compensation plan within that policy.

This report provides information in support of option 1

**Financial Factors**

In accordance with Bylaw No. 21, the CAO is responsible to ensure that salaries are within the amounts established annually in the approved budgets for each function. The current budget incorporates the exempt staff compensation model adjustments into the financial plan

**Legal Factors**

Not applicable

**Interdepartmental Involvement**

Community Services staff and Human Resources staff collaborated on the development of this report.

Attachment: Appendix A – Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Compensation Policy

<b>Subject:</b> Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Compensation Policy	
<b>Branch:</b> Executive Management Branch	
<b>Department:</b> Human Resources – public	<b>Policy Reference:</b> 7200-00

### Purpose

This compensation policy covers the fire chief positions at four Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) rural area volunteer fire departments. These are located in Fanny Bay, Denman Island, Hornby Island, and Black Creek/Oyster River. Fire chiefs are exempt management level employees and excluded from any union bargaining unit, also, in observation of CVRD code of conduct policy with regards to conflict of interest, fire chief employees shall not become or shall cease to become a member of a firefighting association. This policy describes the compensation components applicable to the fire chiefs, establishes guidelines, and explains administration procedures.

### Scope

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act* (RSBC, 2015, c. 1) (LGA) and Bylaw No. 21 being the “Comox Valley Regional District Officer Bylaw No. 21, 2008”, the chief administrative officer (CAO) is responsible for all personnel administration matters including salary administration of officers and employees. The CAO is authorized to supervise and direct employees and is responsible for recruitment, appointment, and dismissal of employees. The CAO is authorized to reorganize departments to carry out efficient and effective administration and to recommend to the board an exempt compensation plan and administers it under board’s approval.

### Guiding Principles

The CVRD has authority over four rural area volunteer fire departments in its electoral areas:

- Fanny Bay Fire Department
- Denman Island Fire Rescue
- Hornby Island Fire Rescue
- Oyster River Fire Rescue

Candidates under consideration for the fire chief position are required to submit a current criminal record check as precondition to employment. A “not clear” result may lead to withdrawal or termination of employment. Continued employment is contingent upon a current criminal record check that is in alignment with corporate policy indicating that fire chiefs are considered trusted employees where criminal record checks are required every five years as a condition of employment. A current clean drivers’ abstract submitted at time of hiring or one cleared by the CVRD is also a pre-employment requirement.

A six month probation period applies to all new hires of exempt positions including the fire chief positions, which may be extended, reduced, or waived at the discretion of the CAO.

All exempt positions shall have current job descriptions. Exempt employees are required to prepare their annual performance planning and assessment plan covering the period from April 1 of the current year to March 31 of the following year.

Legislation for regional districts requires a close matching between the costs and benefits of services.

The intent is that residents pay for the services that they receive, meaning each service has a cost recovery formula will be accounted separately in the budget. In accordance with this, the CVRD shall ensure that its approval for fire chief salary adjustment fits within the adopted budget from taxation allocation for the purpose of providing community fire protection service.

This policy shall be administered by the CAO or delegate. Exceptions to this policy may be made only with the approval of the board.

## Policy

### Operational scale of the four fire departments

The operational scales of the four fire departments demonstrates some differentiation based on a set of interrelated and correlated variables (e.g., department size, annual call volume, annual operating grant, service provided, etc.). Table 1 below illustrates these characteristics and the operational scale of each fire department. Each department has been assigned a scale number for reference purposes.

**Table 1: Overview of fire departments based on operational scale**

Operational Scale	Fanny Bay Volunteer Fire Dept – Scale 1	Denman Island Fire Rescue- Scale 2	Hornby Island Fire Rescue – Scale 3	Oyster River Fire Rescue- Scale 4
Department size	Up to 20 members	21 to 30 members		Over 30 members
	17 average	24 average	24 average	33 average
Annual call volume	Up to 50 calls/year	51 to 200 calls/year		Over 200 calls/year
	21 average	60 average	110 average	231 average
Service provided – BC Fire Commission Playbook and board approved	External	Interior / exterior		Full
	Defensive fire suppression, medical assist, response assist	Offensive / defensive fire suppression, medical first response, rescue	Offensive / defensive fire suppression, scheduled fire patrol, medical first response, rescue, ambulance transportation	Offensive / defensive fire suppression, medical first response, rescue
Hectares protected	Up to 2000	2001 to 7000		Over 7001
	723	6549	3303	8371
Folios protected	Up to 500	501 to 1500		Over 1501
	344	935	1143	2179
Assessed values protected	Up to \$200M	\$200 to \$500M		\$500 to \$750M
	\$119.5M	\$324.4M	\$458M	\$730M
Estimated population protected Note 1	Up to 1000	1001 to 3000		Over 3001
	496	1022	958 Tourist influx approx. 5000	3243
Average annual operating grant	Up to \$100K/year	\$100K to \$250K/year		Over \$250K/year
	\$62K	\$111K	\$181K	\$258K
FC average work hours/week	Up to 20	21 to 35		Over 35
	15	25	25	35

Note1: population estimate based on 2011 Canada Census adjusted by the Province and calculated as follows: prorated by known population/ #folios for the area. This may not reflect the actual population due to tourist influx.

Note 2: Average is based on five year average 2011 to 2015

Provided that operational requirements of the CVRD and the fire department can be met effectively, an acceptable degree of flexibility shall be built into fire chiefs' weekly work hours upon agreement between the fire chief and manager of fire services and administered accordingly.

### Salary scales

This policy provides a salary scale for each fire chief position. The salary scales take into account the fire departments' operational scale level and the corresponding interrelated and correlated variables (e.g., department size, annual call volume, annual operating grant, service provided, etc.) and the respective community's ability to pay through taxation. It should be recognized that fire chiefs preferred qualifications, experience are similar for each fire department however the operational scale level is a further indication of level of responsibilities the fire chief is required to lead, manage and respond to. As CVRD management-level employees, fire chiefs do not receive separate or additional honorarium payments for attending call outs and practices; and their annual salaries encompass all monetary compensation for all work required of their positions, inclusive of call outs and practices. For each salary scale, there is a midpoint, a maximum point at 20 per cent above the midpoint, and a minimum point at 20 per cent below the midpoint. Being compensated at midpoint represents that the employee is performing at 100 per cent competency level at the position and it is the CVRD's organizational objective that its employees arrive at the midpoint through continual employee development and performance management.

**Table 2: Fire Chief Salary scales**

<b>Fanny Bay Salary Scale 1 - Based on two key factors:</b>			
1. Department operational scale level one, based on .5 of salary scale for fire department operational scale level 4.			
2. Based on part-time position: average 15 hour/week – 0.40 FTE (780 hours/year)			
	<b>Min 20% below Midpoint</b>	<b>Midpoint</b>	<b>Max 20% above Midpoint</b>
1. Operational Scale 1 (.50)	\$26,042/year	\$31,250/year	\$37,500/year
2. Part-time - 0.40 fte	\$10,417/year	\$12,500/year	\$15,000/year

<b>Denman Island Salary Scale 2 - Based on two key factors:</b>			
1. Fire Department operational scale level two - .75 of salary scale for fire department operation scale level 4			
2. Part-time position: average 25 hours/week – 0.70 FTE (1300 hours/year)			
	<b>Min 20% below Midpoint</b>	<b>Midpoint</b>	<b>Max 20% above Midpoint</b>
1. Operational Scale 2 (.75)	\$39,062/year	\$46,875/year	\$56,250/year
2. Part-time - 0.70 fte	\$27,344/year	\$32,812/year	\$39,375/year

<b>Hornby Island Salary Scale 3 - Based on two key factors:</b>			
1. Fire Department operational scale level three - .80 of salary scale for fire department operational scale level 4.			
2. External agency program/agreement BC Ambulance First medical transport			
3. Part-time position: average 25 hours/week – 0.70 FTE (1300 hours/year)			
	<b>Min 20% below Midpoint</b>	<b>Midpoint</b>	<b>Max 20% above Midpoint</b>
1. Operational Scale 3 (.80)	\$41,667/year	\$50,000/year	\$60,000/year
2. Part-time - 0.70 fte	\$29,167/year	\$35,000/year	\$42,000/year

<b>Oyster River Salary Scale 4 - Based on two key factors:</b>			
1. Fire Department operational scale level (100% operational level)			
2. Full-time position: average 35 hours/week – 1.0 FTE (1820 hours/year)			
	<b>Min 20% below Midpoint</b>	<b>Midpoint</b>	<b>Max 20% above Midpoint</b>
1. Operational Scale 4 (1.0)	\$52,083/ year	\$62,500/ year	\$75,000/ year
2. Full time 1.00 fte			

The salary scale shall be adjusted as follows: 2017 by two per cent; 2018 by two per cent; there after as approved by the board.

Deputy fire chiefs – for deputy fire chief positions established and approved as employees by the CVRD the salary scale shall be based on 80 per cent of Table 2 – Fire chief salary scale for each applicable department.

For example: Oyster River Salary Scale – Deputy Fire Chief, Based on full-time position: average 35 hours/week – 1.0 FTE (1820 hours)

Min 20% below Midpoint	Midpoint	Max 20% above Midpoint
\$43,402/year	\$52,083/year	\$62,500/year

#### **Determining incumbent salary adjustment within a salary scale**

The CVRD shall review various factors when finalizing annual salary adjustment for the incumbent fire chiefs. The governing principle is that total remuneration shall fit within the adopted budget and within the applicable salary scale. Below are some key factors under two possible pay adjustments that the CVRD considers for each incumbent fire chief. The manager of fire services and the general manager of community services shall evaluate these factors and submit recommendation for any salary adjustments, to the CAO for approval.

#### **Eligibility for annual salary adjustment:**

- Quality of job performance as evaluated from annual performance planning and assessment
- Combination of workload and accomplishments (e.g., projects, other objectives, etc.)
- Demonstrated continuous professional training and development related to the position

#### **Moving along the salary scale** (as may be considered by the CAO when situation warrants it):

- Combination of community population and call volume growth
- Combination of growth, size, and scope of fire chief's annual operating grant
- Or combination of factors.

In all cases, salary adjustments are subject to the following:

- Meeting the job requirements and satisfactory annual performance planning and assessment
- Manager and/or general manager's recommendation with supporting evaluation on incumbent's job performance and competency
- There is available funding in the approved budget for the purpose
- In compliance with board approved adjustments for exempt CVRD employees
- Approval from the CAO

Eligible exempt employees may be approved for an adjustment in compensation to be implemented on January 1, April 1, the anniversary hire date, or another date as recommended by the manager or general manager and the approval of the CAO.

#### *Annual vacation entitlements:*

Years of employment	Vacation entitlement
Under 5 years	2 calendar weeks per year (equivalent to 4 per cent of vacation pay and included in the annual salary)
5 years and over	3 calendar weeks per year (equivalent to 6 per cent of vacation pay and included in the annual salary)

At the CAO's discretion, fire chiefs may start at three weeks of annual vacation in recognition of their past experience with local government. Vacation entitlement is given on the first of January each year and employees must take all of their vacation in the year it is accrued.

*Statutory holidays:* in British Columbia are observed by the CVRD.

*Health benefits:* in-lieu payment equivalent to 10 per cent of gross annual salary shall be provided.

*Municipal Pension Plan:* if eligible to participate in the Municipal Pension Plan, the fire chief will be advised by the CVRD of their options, two months prior to becoming eligible to contribute.

*Leave benefits:* In addition to vacation, leave in this section also refers to paid leaves for illness, bereavement, family, and compassionate reasons, as well as unpaid general leave, and pregnancy/parental leave administered under BC provincial legislation. Leaves are non-cumulative from one year to the next. Leave requests must be submitted in writing, using the CVRD leave form, to the manager of fire services or designate for approval subject to meeting operational requirements. Specifics of leave administration can be discussed between the requesting fire chief and the manager of fire services.

*Sick days:* maximum of ten paid sick days per year shall be provided in case of illness.

*Bereavement leave:* maximum of four paid days per incident for death of an immediate family member shall be provided. The full bereavement leave needs not be taken at the time of death if a memorial service is to be held at a later date. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parents (including step/foster parent, legal guardian), siblings, children (including step/foster child), grandparents, grandchildren, father and mother-in-law, son and daughter-in-law, brother and sister-in-law.

*Family leave:* maximum of five paid days per year may be granted for the need to care for parents, spouse, or children who are ill.

*Compassionate leave:* maximum of three paid days per year of compassionate leave shall be provided for reasons approved by the CAO.

*Pregnancy/parental leave:* maximum of one year of unpaid leave shall be granted in accordance with the BC provincial legislation. Statutory holiday pay does not apply during this leave.

*General leave of absence:* unpaid general leaves of absence requests will be considered, subject to meeting organizational and operational requirements. The CAO's approval is required. Statutory holiday pay does not apply during this leave.

#### Approval History

Policy adopted:	July 30, 2013
Policy amended:	November 26, 2013
Policy amended:	October 25, 2016