



Ships Point Volunteer Fire Department

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Ships Point Improvement District Annual General Meeting

Fire Chiefs Report

- 04 November 2020 -

In the past 18 months the department has responded to 30 official emergency calls: 20 first responder calls, four fire calls and six Duty Officer calls. We've also responded to Good Samaritan calls from local residents to members of the department. We did respond to one major structure fire on the Point. While all members of the household safely evacuated, the fire did serve as a reminder to everyone on the importance of both placing smoke alarms in all sleeping areas and on having a known and practised evacuation plan.

Normal departmental training tempo remains high. The department continues to hold regular practices every Tuesday, as well as briefings and subject exams on most Wednesday evenings. This training allows department members to learn and practice firefighting techniques and procedures that meet both Work Safe BC and Office of the Fire Commissioner guidelines. We continue periodic joint training with Fanny Bay and Deep Bay Fire Departments, since we maintain a mutual aid agreement in the event of an emergency situation that one department cannot handle. We have an automatic mutual aid agreement with Fanny Bay Fire Department in the event of a structure fire in either fire protection area. Members attended live fire training at the Comox and Courtenay Fire Department Fire Training Centres, and completed training on specialized firefighting techniques for interface fires, incident scene management and motor vehicle extrication. Specialized medical First Responder certification was completed by one member, and recertification training was completed by two currently licensed First Responder. It should be noted that First Responders are required to recertify every three years in order to maintain their license.

The department had three members retire last year and two new members who joined the Department. The current composition of our volunteer force is such that we generally have a turnout of 10 to 12 members in response to an emergency page-out, even though on paper the department currently has 17 active members (13 Firefighters and four Firefighter Auxiliary). Consequently, we remain in serious need of new volunteers to fill the ranks. If you have a desire to contribute to your community safety, you could be a volunteer firefighter. We need men and women who respond to fires and emergencies, and those who can assist with community education, fundraising and administration. As mentioned in the previous year's report, to assist with manpower issues we established a Firefighter Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is meant to appeal to those members of the community who have expressed a desire to provide support and/or assistance to the Fire Department without becoming fully trained firefighters. The use of trained non-firefighting personnel to provide various levels of support increases the manpower pool and allows firefighters to carry out their primary responsibility, thereby improving the overall level of support to the community. Positions available for Firefighter Auxiliary include First Responder, Traffic Control and Pumper Operator. Application forms for both regular and auxiliary volunteers are available at the SPID Office.

I would like to thank the Ships Point Fire Fighters Association (SPVFFA), who have raised and donated a substantial amount of money towards firefighters equipment and first responder training. The Association

recently assisted with the purchase of upgraded and lighter Self Contained Breathing Apparatus to assist with safe operations on the fire ground. They also assisted with the outfitting of our new Primary Response / Rescue vehicle to assist with Fire Dept Operations. A recent \$1000 donation to the department from the Lions Club was used towards the purchase of a new Thermal Imaging Camera, and a \$1500 donation to the Association from the Fanny Bay Inn was used for the purchase of a Cut Off saw. The Association continues to operate a Community Chipping program in order to reduce the level of back yard burning on the Point. Without the financial aid of the SPVFFA and other organizations within the community we would be unable to offer the level of support that we currently provide.

All residents are reminded to review local regulations as they pertain to back yard burning and fire permits. Even if a burn permit is not required to burn back yard waste, all other burn restrictions still apply. Remember to always check the Vent Index before burning back yard waste. A link to the Environment Canada Vent Index is located on the SPID/Fire Department web page. Noxious smoke settling over the community is unpleasant, and every effort must be made to minimize the smoke from a yard burn. You must make sure the Ventilation Index for Central Vancouver Island region is "good" before burning. Also, a polite reminder that at no time are beach fires allowed on the Point.

And finally, I'd like to express my thanks to the volunteer fire fighters who have willingly given their time to provide Fire Protection and First Responder services to our community. A lot of time and effort has been expended in order to provide for your protection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Hoffart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Terry Hoffart
Fire Chief
Ships Point Fire Department