

News Release

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CVRD Releases Results of Mesachie Lake Volunteer Fire Department Review

Duncan, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has released the results of a third-party review into the long-term economic and operational sustainability of the Mesachie Lake Volunteer Fire Department (MLVFD). The third-party review was carried out by Behr Integrated Solutions Inc.

Factors that prompted the review included aging infrastructure and apparatus replacement costs, low firefighter recruitment and retention, increasing training costs, unattainable asset management plan objectives, and a very low annual call volume.

“The goal of the review was to provide the CVRD with observations, options and recommendations aimed at developing a long-term, sustainable fire protection strategy that optimizes safe and effective service delivery for the residents of Mesachie Lake,” said Board Chair Jon Lefebure. “Based on the results of the review, we have several options but many of them will incur major costs. For example, Mesachie Lake firefighters respond to an average of 21 service calls each year, yet we estimate the costs of upgrading the existing fire hall and equipment will result in significant property tax increases for Mesachie Lake residents.”

In order to establish a long-term safe and sustainable level of service for Mesachie Lake, the following five options are outlined in the report for consideration by the CVRD and Mesachie Lake residents:

- Replace fire station and major equipment
- Rescind Mesachie Lake and Honeymoon Bay Fire Protection Local Services Areas and establish an Integrated Local Services Area
- Establish a contracted area with Honeymoon Bay to provide fire protection to Mesachie Lake
- Extend CVRD-contracted area with Town of Lake Cowichan
- Remain at status-quo with MLVFD continuing to provide services within existing system/resources

“There are significant concerns that Mesachie Lake’s aging fire hall and equipment are placing the safety of residents and firefighters at risk,” said John Elzinga, General Manager, Community Services. “It is hoped residents will examine the report thoroughly to inform themselves about which of the options makes the most sense to them, both financially and logistically.”

The review also contains seven recommendations, one of which is for the CVRD to discuss the report with the Mesachie Lake community, to determine which option is preferred by the majority of residents. The CVRD Board, at their meeting of June 13, directed that a facilitated public meeting be held in Mesachie Lake, to discuss the review, hear community input, and explore future service delivery options. The Board will provide direction on options following the public meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the Mesachie Lake Volunteer Fire Department Third-Party Review Report in its entirety.

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