



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**

**RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

**Thursday, May 7, 2020**

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>AGENDA- May 7, 2020</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
3-6	Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes - March 5, 2020	Adopt
	<u>AGRICULTURE REPORT</u>	
7-12	Debbie Evans, Agriculture Coordinator - RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan – Marketing and Promotional Strategy	Receive
	<u>AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
13-14	RDBN Letter to Ministry of Agriculture - COVID-19 Crisis and Class D and E Licenses	Receive
	<u>VERBAL REPORT</u> – Chair Parker re: Agriculture Update	
	<u>PLANNING DEPARTMENT (All Directors)</u>	
	<u>Crown Land Application Referrals</u>	
15-17	Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician Crown Land Application Referral No. 7409648 (Thon) (Area D)	Recommendation
18-21	Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician Crown Land Application Referral No. 6409187 (Lower Dean River Lodge) (Area E & G)	Recommendation
22-23	Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician Crown Land Application Referral No. 0264318 (Tchentlo Lake Lodge) (Area C)	Recommendation
	<u>RURAL REPORTS</u>	
24-105	Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief – Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department Study	Receive

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO****RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING****Thursday, March 5, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Chair Mark Parker

Directors Mark Fisher  
Clint Lambert  
Jerry Petersen

Directors Present Tom Greenaway, Electoral Area "C" (Fort St. James Rural)  
Absent Chris Newell, Electoral Area "G" (Houston Rural)  
Michael Riis-Christianson, Electoral Area "B" (Burns Lake Rural)  
Gerry Thiessen, District of Vanderhoof

Alternate Director Bob Hughes, Electoral Area "C" (Fort St. James Rural)

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services  
Alex Ericksen, Director of Environmental Services  
Debbie Evans, Agriculture Coordinator  
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer  
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning  
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

**AGENDA &  
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**Moved by Director Petersen  
Seconded by Alternate Director Hughes**RDC.2020-3-1**

"That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for March 5, 2020 be approved; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be received and dealt with at this meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY****MINUTES****Rural Directors Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
-February 6, 2020**Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Petersen**RDC.2020-3-2**

"That the minutes of the Rural Directors Committee meeting of February 6, 2020 be received."

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **AGRICULTURE REPORT**

### **Update on the RDBN Food Hub and Food Economy Assessment**

Moved by Director Lambert  
 Seconded by Alternate Director Hughes

RDC.2020-3-3

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee receive the Agriculture Coordinator’s March 5, 2020 memo titled “Update on the RDBN Food Hub and Food Economy Assessment.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Agriculture Correspondence**

Moved by Director Petersen  
 Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2020-3-4

“That the following Agriculture Correspondence be received:  
 -The Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management  
 -A New Approach to Agricultural Environmental Management.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place in regard to:

- Potential for GlenDale Agra Services Ltd., Vanderhoof to provide a workshop in regard to Agricultural Environmental Management
- Lack of Provincial Government communication with the Agriculture community in regard to new regulations
- Challenges understanding new regulations without proper education and communication
- Workshops to increase education.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT (Rural Directors)**

### **Crown Land Application Referrals**

#### **Crown Land Application Referral 6409185 (BC Hydro) – Electoral Area “A”**

Moved by Director Fisher  
 Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2020-3-5

“That the Comment Sheet for Crown Land Application Referral 6409185 be amended to include:

“The Board requests that prior to moving forward with plans to develop a capacitor at either location the Province engage with area residents to identify any concerns.”

And further, that the amended Comment Sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District’s comments on Crown Land Application 6409185.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place in regard to the lack of public consultation built into the Province’s Crown Land Application process.

## **VERBAL REPORT**

### **Changes to the Agricultural Land Commission Act – Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning**

Mr. Llewellyn provided an update regarding:

- Ministry of Agriculture Policy Intensions Paper: Residential Flexibility in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
  - Work regarding the proposed policy direction to increase residential flexibility within the ALR
  - Ministry of Agriculture has reached out to the RDBN for further consultation regarding implementation
  - Proposed to take place in March/April 2020
  - Staff will provide updates to the Rural/Agriculture Committee Chair and RDBN Board

Chair Parker spoke of the positive steps the Ministry of Agriculture has taken in regard to residential flexibility in the ALR.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

### **REPORT**

#### **Rural Directors Travel Budget**

Discussion took place regarding:

- 2020 draft total budget amount for Electoral Area Director Expenses
  - Tracking per Director in 2020 within the total Electoral Area Director Expenses Budget
  - Travel and food allocation to the \$2,000 discretionary budget allocated to each Electoral Area Director
  - Reallocating conference funding if Directors choose not to attend
  - Long travel distance for some Directors to attend local Electoral Area community events
    - Consideration in preparation of budget
    - If requested by local community groups Directors expressed the importance of attending community meetings
  - Staff including an outline of Directors travel in the staff report brought forward at the time of the Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) report
    - Staff provide reporting quarterly to the Electoral Area Directors
  - Five-year history of the Rural Directors Travel budget
    - Have not exceeded the Travel Budget in the past five years
    - Budget to remain the same
    - Pooled budget approach
    - Important to not limit day to day work or learning, networking and advocacy events
  - Municipal Directors attendance on behalf of the Regional District and funding allocation for attendance
  - RDBN Committee Chair attendance and costing at events
  - RDBN Board Members Attendance at Events Policy
    - Potential changes to the Board Policy
    - Staff will bring forward potential amendments to the policy
  - Further discussion when all Rural Directors are in attendance.

**IN-CAMERA MOTION**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2020-3-6

“In accordance with Section 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter, it is the opinion of the Committee that matters pertaining to the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party (Crown Grant Application), must be closed to the public, therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2020-3-7

“That the meeting be adjourned 1:20 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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Mark Parker, Chair

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Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Memo

TO: Committee Chair - Rural/Agriculture Committee  
 FROM: Debbie Evans, P. Ag., Agriculture Coordinator  
 DATE: May 7, 2020  
 SUBJECT: RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan - Marketing and Promotional Strategy

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive.

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A marketing and promotional strategy has been developed for the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan. Below is the strategy and attached are a promotional poster and postcard. Comments and feedback are welcome and will be incorporated as the strategy is launched.

### Marketing and Promotional Objectives:

1. To raise awareness of and celebrate the completion of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan update.
2. To drive traffic to the Food and Agricultural pages on the RDBN website.
3. To announce that implementation is already underway and launch of the *Regional Food Economy Assessment and Food Hub Feasibility Study*.

### Key Messages:

1. The RDBN has completed a process that engages producers and key stakeholders in updating the Food and Agriculture Plan.
2. The Plan is action-focused and provides the RDBN with a guide for how to continue to be a sector partner.
3. The Plan presents a vision for the next 20 years, although the plan will need to be updated every 5-7 years.
4. The RDBN website is a go-to resource that is updated monthly and contains information for producers and consumers in the region.

### Marketing and Promotional Material

1. RDBN Website Content
  - a. Main landing page 'post card'
  - b. Agriculture sub-page content and images
  - c. Include a community interactive part of the ag page (new, would need to be moderated)
2. Printed and electronic 2'X3' poster
3. Printed and electronic brochure/post card
4. Custom emails for target audiences and stakeholders
5. Hard copies of the *Foundations Report and RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan* as well as promotional material to share as requested
6. Slide deck (the presentation given to the Board of Directors on March 19)

**Target Audiences and Strategies to Reach Them:**

<i>Target Audience</i>		<i>Marketing/Promo Strategy</i>
Elected officials	⇒ RDBN Board of Directors, Municipal Mayor and Council	⇒ Deliver slide deck to BOD to allow sharing ⇒ *Send emails and hard copy, and post cards ⇒ Share poster, if desired
Local government staff	⇒ RDBN and Municipal Staff ⇒ RDIFFG ⇒ CRD ⇒ RDKS ⇒ PRRD	⇒ *Send emails with electronic copies of the two documents as well as brochure/post card
Provincial government staff	⇒ Ministry of Ag ⇒ Ministry of Environment ⇒ FLNROW- Rangelands division	⇒ *After formal referrals are complete send email with final documents and brochure/post cards. ⇒ Provide hard copy materials as requested
FAWG	⇒ All members	⇒ *In an email, provide FAWG members with brochure/post card that includes the RDBN link to access the documents ⇒ Provide hard copy materials as requested
Key stakeholders	⇒ Food producers, processors, and distributors ⇒ Non-profit orgs ⇒ Educational orgs	⇒ *In an email with everyone bcc'd, share brochure/post card with those in the stakeholder database. ⇒ Provide hard copy materials as requested ⇒ Fall Agriculture forum
First Nation Government	⇒	⇒ Follow government to government protocols
General public	⇒	⇒ RDBN Website content
*Custom email		

**Attachments:**

1. RDBN Food and Agricultural Plan – Poster
2. RDBN Food and Agricultural Plan – Postcard



# RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan



**Food and Agriculture are significant parts of our region's culture, environment, and economy.** Food and agriculture play a critical and significant role in the history, and the growth and development of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN). Agriculture continues to contribute significantly to the economy and character of our region. Given this significance, the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has updated the 2012 Agricultural Plan to ensure that the RDBN is doing all that it can to protect and enhance the viability and vitality of food and agriculture in the region.

## Purpose of the Plan

The Food and Agriculture Plan was adopted by the RDBN Board of Directors on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to:

- ✓ Guide both leading and supporting activities that address the eight priority areas in the Plan.
- ✓ Ensure that long range planning, and the regulation of land use and development, is managed in a manner consistent with the direction provided in the plan.
- ✓ Ensure that decisions regarding the use of the RDBN's resources are made in consideration of the recommendations made in the plan.

## Eight Key Priorities in the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan

1. **Support producers in navigating government policies and requirements**
2. **Prepare for natural emergencies**
3. **Develop the food and agriculture sector and market(s) for RDBN goods**
4. **Engage a broad audience in regional food and agriculture activities and information**
5. **Prevent and manage invasive and harmful species**
6. **Ensure agricultural policies are in-place and consistent across the region**
7. **Increase climate change resiliency and adaptation capacity**
8. **Continue to build capacity for effective and strategic implementation**

## What is a Food and Agriculture Plan?

A food and agricultural plan is a strategic planning document that will help to develop a shared vision for food and agriculture amongst farmers, the public, and local government within the Regional District as well as goals, objectives and actions for achieving the vision. Upon completion, the agricultural plan will be approved by the Regional District Board of Directors and used to guide future activities affecting agriculture.



## RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan

The Food and Agriculture Plan was adopted by the RDBN Board of Directors on March 19, 2020 to:

- ✓ Guide both leading and supporting activities that address the eight priority areas in the Plan.
- ✓ Ensure that long range planning, and the regulation of land use and development, is managed in a manner consistent with the direction provided in the plan.
- ✓ Ensure that decisions regarding the use of the RDBN's resources are made in consideration of the recommendations made in the plan.

### Eight Key Priorities in the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan:

- 1. Support producers in navigating government policies and requirements**
- 2. Prepare for natural emergencies**
- 3. Develop the food and agriculture sector and market(s) for RDBN goods**
- 4. Engage a broad audience in regional food and agriculture activities and information**
- 5. Prevent and manage invasive and harmful species**
- 6. Ensure agricultural policies are in-place and consistent across the region**
- 7. Increase climate change resiliency and adaptation capacity**
- 8. Continue to build capacity for effective and strategic implementation**

# Do you eat?

If so, check out the 2020 RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and the agricultural section on the RDBN website, your conduit to many useful resources for producers and consumers.

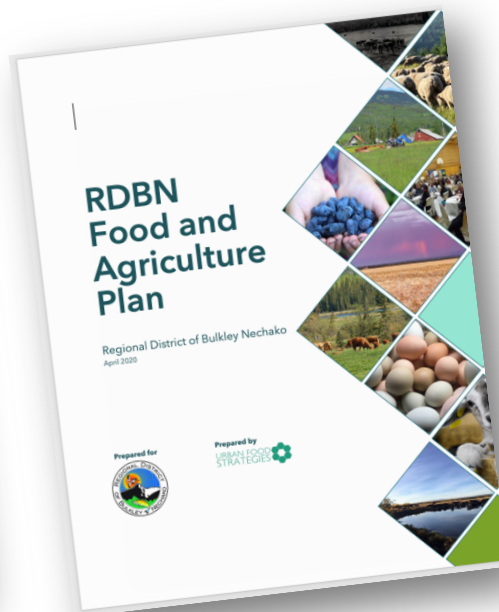
[www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture)



## How the RDBN Plan Was Updated

The agricultural plan, and the process to create it, will help to continue to build a relationship between the farming community and local government. These two groups are working together, with input from the general public, and First Nation Communities, to create a clear plan of action guided by a common vision and goals. Key process points for developing the plan include:

- ✓ Formed the Food and Agriculture Working Group (FAWG) from representatives from across the region involved in food and agriculture
- ✓ Developed an agricultural profile based on Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture and stakeholder input
- ✓ Hosted a series of stakeholder workshops
- ✓ Promoted an online survey for producers and consumers; 204 responses
- ✓ Summarized findings into the *Foundations Report*, a companion document to the Plan
- ✓ Developed, reviewed, and revised draft plan
- ✓ Presented plan to the RDBN Board of Directors



## To find out more

To access these documents and to connect to a wide range of up-to-date resources for producers and consumers, please visit: [www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture)

Or contact:

### **RDBN Agriculture Coordinator**

Debbie Evans P. Ag.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

37 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, PO Box 820, Burns Lake BC, V0J 1E0

Tel: 250-692-3195

Toll Free: 1-800-320-3339

Email: [debbie.evans@rdbn.bc.ca](mailto:debbie.evans@rdbn.bc.ca)





37, 3RD AVE, PO Box 820  
BURNS LAKE, BC  
VOJ 1E0

REGIONAL DISTRICT  
OF BULKLEY NECHAKO  
"A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN OUR REGION"

April 29, 2020

The Honourable Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 9043 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9E2

Deputy Minister Wes Shoemaker  
P.O. Box 9120 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9B4

Dear Minister Popham and Deputy Minister Shoemaker,

**RE: COVID-19 Crisis and Class D and E Licenses**

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors, at its April 23, 2020 Board meeting, discussed the current COVID-19 crisis and the designation of Class D and E licenses and resolved the following:

"That the RDBN Board of Directors write a letter to the Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Minister Wes Shoemaker requesting that Class D and E licenses be established during the COVID-19 crisis to assist local cattle producers."

Currently, the Regional District is not a designated area for Class D or E licenses. As a result of COVID-19, Class A and Class B abattoirs are experiencing high demand. Producers and consumers are seeking local processing ability to alleviate the strain they are currently experiencing.

...2

**MUNICIPALITIES:**

SMITHERS FORT ST. JAMES  
VANDERHOOF FRASER LAKE  
HOUSTON TELKWA  
BURNS LAKE GRANISLE

**ELECTORAL AREAS:**

A - SMITHERS RURAL E - FRANCOIS/OOTSA LAKE RURAL  
B - BURNS LAKE RURAL F - VANDERHOOF RURAL  
C - FORT ST. JAMES RURAL G - HOUSTON RURAL  
D - FRASER LAKE RURAL

INQUIRIES@RDBN.BC.CA

WWW.RDBN.BC.CA

PH: 250-692-3195

FX: 250-692-3305

TF: 800-320-3339

The Board is urging the Ministry of Agriculture to expand the designated area to include the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako during this pandemic to provide producers an opportunity to meet increased consumer demands and generate income for their businesses.

If you require further information, please contact Director Mark Parker, Chair, Rural/Agriculture Committee at (250) 699-1014 or [email mark.parker@rdbn.bc.ca](mailto:mark.parker@rdbn.bc.ca).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours truly,

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

Gerry Thiessen  
Chair



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Chair Parker and Rural/Agriculture Committee  
**FROM:** Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician  
**DATE:** May 7, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Crown Land Application Referral No. 7409648 (Thon)

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the attached comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application 7409648.

**VOTING**

All Directors / Majority

**DISCUSSION**

This application is regarding a Crown Grant to obtain four additional crown land lots for personal purposes.

The application areas are located on Crown land legally described as LOTS 11 & 12, and LOTS 15 & 16 BLOCK 136 SECTION 26 TOWNSHIP 15 RANGE 5 COAST DISTRICT PLAN 960A ' within the unincorporated community of Fort Fraser. The total application area is approximately 0.14 ha. (0.34 Acres) in size. (See maps on page 2)

The applicant's home is located on lots 13 & 14, between the application areas. The intent of this application is to provide additional land for the applicants to build a shop and garden. To comply with RDBN Zoning the parcels need to be consolidated so that no parcel is smaller than 350 square metres (3,767 square feet) and the shop is located on the parcel with the house.

The application area is zoned Single Family Residential (R1) under the RDBN Zoning Bylaw and is not located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Reviewed by:

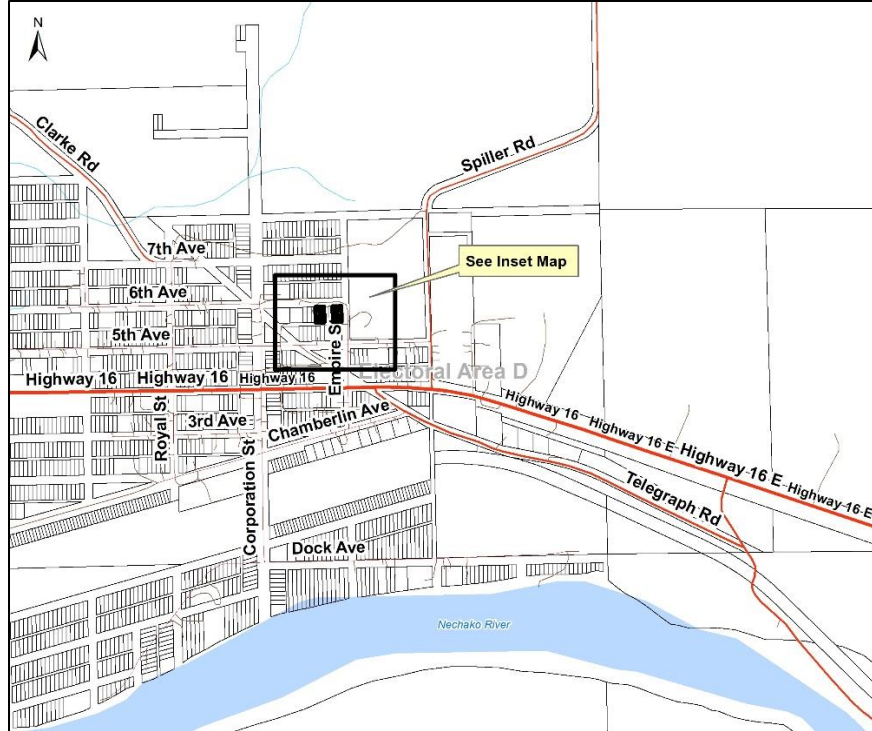
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Jason Llewellyn  
Director of Planning

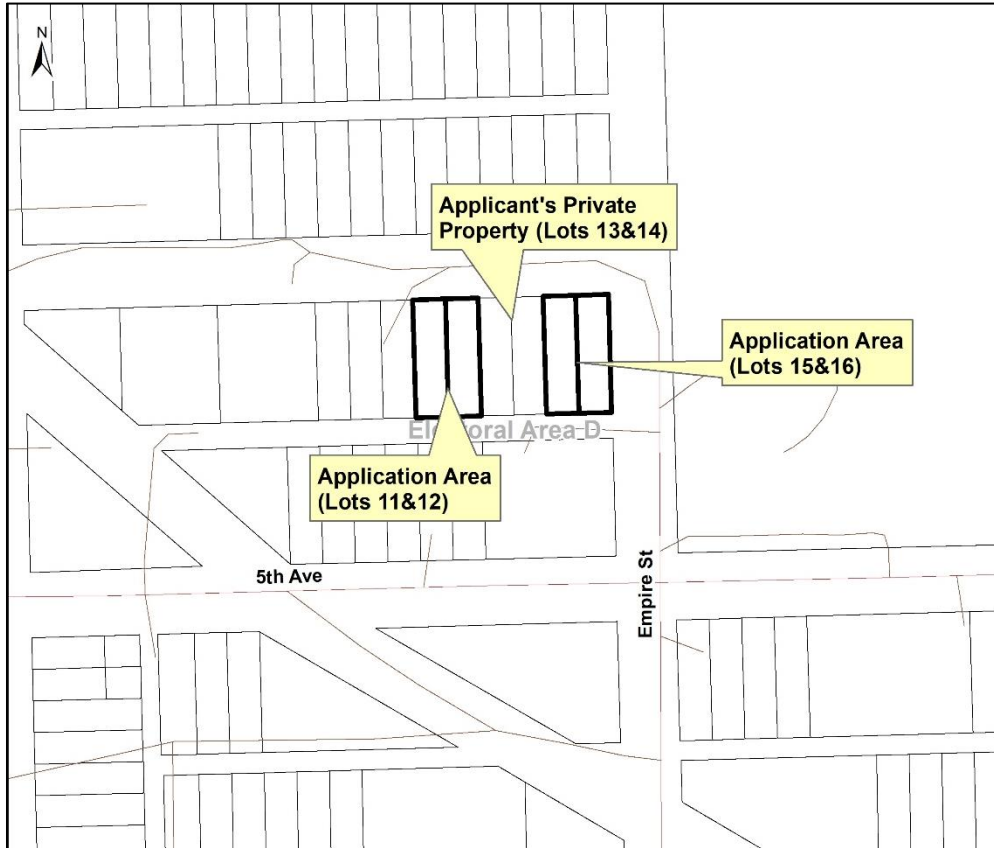
Written by:

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Deneve Vanderwolf  
Planning Technician



Inset Map







**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
COMMENT SHEET ON CROWN LAND REFERRAL 7409648**

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<b>Electoral Area:</b>	D
<b>Applicant:</b>	Donald & Kathy Thon
<b>Existing Land Use:</b>	Vacant
<b>Zoning:</b>	Zoned Single Family Residential (R1) under Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.
<b>Plan Designation</b>	Designated Community Centre under Endako, Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 1865, 2019
<b>Proposed Use Comply with Zoning:</b>	Yes, if consolidated with applicants property
<b>If not, why?</b>	
<b>Agricultural Land Reserve:</b>	No
<b>Access Highway:</b>	Highway 16
<b>Archaeological Site:</b>	None according to provincial mapping
<b>Building Inspection:</b>	Inside the Building Inspection Area
<b>Fire Protection:</b>	Inside the Rural Fire Protection Area
<b>Other comments:</b>	The applicants should be required to consolidate the parcels to ensure compliance with the Zoning Bylaw.



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
STAFF REPORT**

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**TO:** Chair Parker and Rural/Agriculture Committee  
**FROM:** Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician  
**DATE:** May 7, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Crown Land Application Referral No. 6409187 (Lower Dean River Lodge)

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That the attached comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application 6409187.

**VOTING**

All Directors / Majority

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**DISCUSSION**

This application is regarding a Crown Grant to obtain a Licence of Occupation in an area approximately 655,915.54 hectares for helicopter-based recreation opportunities and heli-assisted touring throughout the proposed tenure area.

The applicant is applying for an extensive use area for heli-skiing and backcountry touring (non-mechanized) in the winter and would add heli-hiking and heli-mountain biking in summer to complement its existing fishing experiences. Helicopter recreation operations will be based from the Lower Dean River Lodge, located in the Dean River Conservancy, approximately 50 kilometers north of Bella Coola, BC. The proposed operations will extend from December to May (Winter), and July to October (Summer), and will initially have the capacity to host up to 12 guests at one time. The applicant is also applying for intensive use areas for 11 huts, 10 fuel caches, and 4 radio beacons. There are two intensive use areas located in the RDBN. The location of these areas are as follows:

Electoral Area E

Hut 5 / Fuel Cache 4: Parcel or tract of unsurveyed crown land in the vicinity of Troitsa Creek, shown on map, size approximately 0.06 hectares.

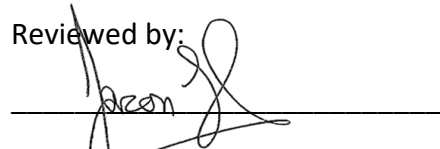
Electoral Area G

Hut 8 / Fuel Cache 5: Parcel or tract of unsurveyed crown land lying north of Sibola range, shown on map, size approximately 0.06 hectares.

More details can be found in the Management Plan at the following [link](#).

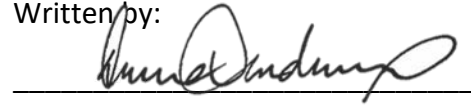
The application area is in Electoral Areas E and G approximately 57 km from Houston and 117 km from Burns Lake. The area is not zoned and is not located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Reviewed by:

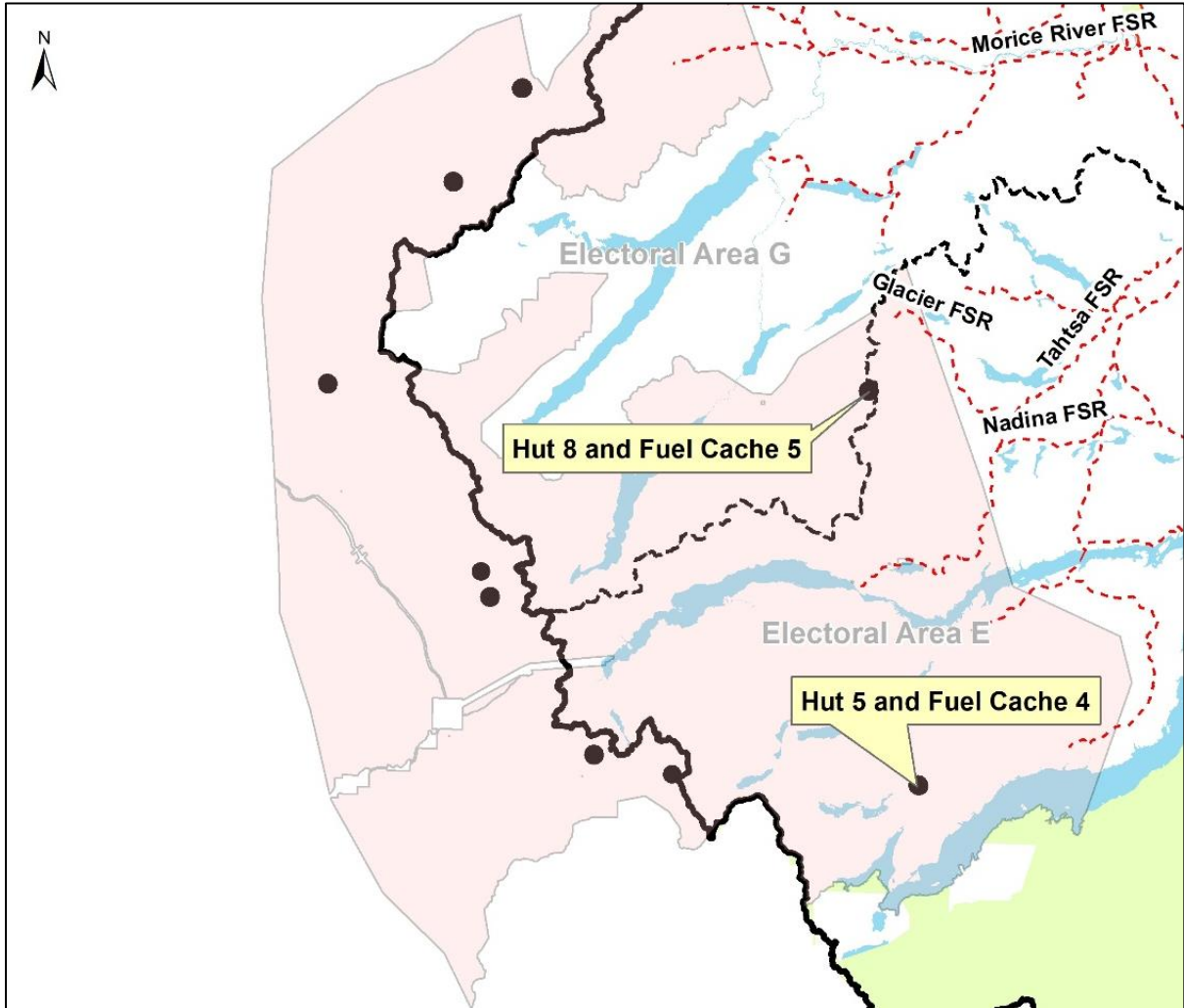
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason", written over a horizontal line.

Jason Lewellyn  
Director of Planning

Written by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deneve Vanderwolf", written over a horizontal line.

Deneve Vanderwolf  
Planning Technician



Application Area



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
COMMENT SHEET ON CROWN LAND REFERRAL 6409187**

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<b>Electoral Area:</b>	E & G
<b>Applicant:</b>	Lower Dean River Lodge
<b>Existing Land Use:</b>	Vacant
<b>Zoning:</b>	Not Zoned under Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.
<b>Plan Designation</b>	Not Designated
<b>Proposed Use Comply with Zoning:</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why?</b>	
<b>Agricultural Land Reserve:</b>	No
<b>Access Highway:</b>	N/A
<b>Archaeological Site:</b>	None according to provincial mapping
<b>Building Inspection:</b>	Not Inside the Building Inspection Area
<b>Fire Protection:</b>	Not Inside the Rural Fire Protection Area
<b>Other comments:</b>	None



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Chair Parker and Rural/Agriculture Committee  
**FROM:** Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician  
**DATE:** May 7, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Crown Land Application Referral No. 0264318 (Tchentlo Lake Lodge)

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the attached comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application 0264318.

**VOTING**

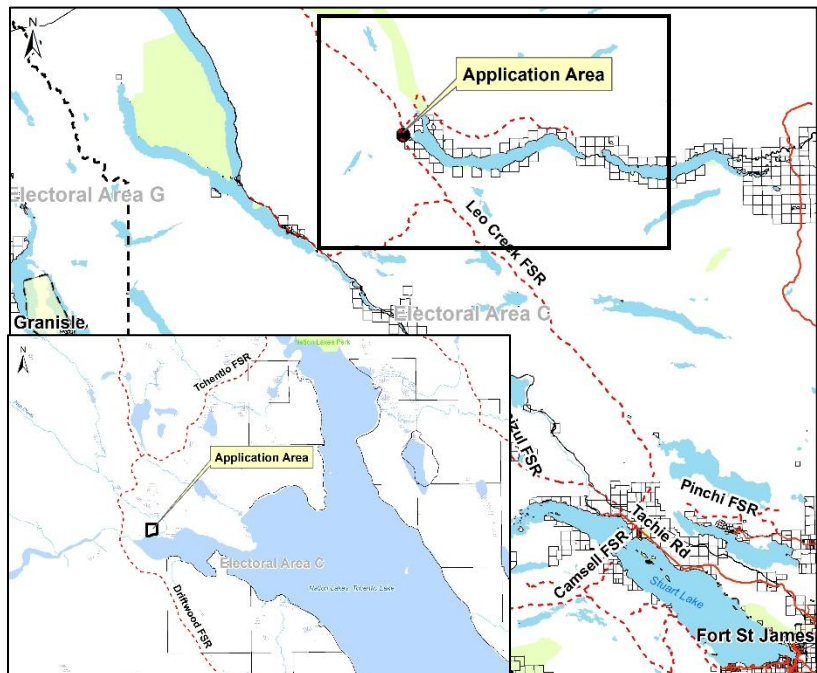
All Directors / Majority

**DISCUSSION**

This application is regarding a Crown Grant to transfer an existing Licence of Occupation to the new owner of Tchentlo Lake Lodge. The existing tenure area is approximately 4.39 hectares.

More details can be found in the Management Plan at the following [link](#).

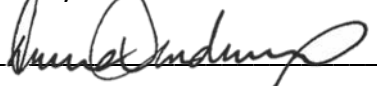
The application area is in Electoral Area C approximately 110 km from Fort St. James. The area is not zoned and is not located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).



Reviewed by:

  
 Jason Llewellyn  
 Director of Planning

Written by:

  
 Deneve Vanderwolf  
 Planning Technician



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
COMMENT SHEET ON CROWN LAND REFERRAL 0267318**

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<b>Electoral Area:</b>	C
<b>Applicant:</b>	Tchentlo Lake Lodge
<b>Existing Land Use:</b>	Tchentlo Lake Lodge Facility
<b>Zoning:</b>	Not Zoned under Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.
<b>Plan Designation</b>	Not Designated
<b>Proposed Use Comply with Zoning:</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why?</b>	
<b>Agricultural Land Reserve:</b>	No
<b>Access Highway:</b>	Driftwood FSR
<b>Archaeological Site:</b>	None according to provincial mapping
<b>Building Inspection:</b>	Not Inside the Building Inspection Area
<b>Fire Protection:</b>	Not Inside the Rural Fire Protection Area
<b>Other comments:</b>	None



## REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY NECHAKO STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Committee Chair – Rural/Agricultural Committee  
**FROM:** Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief  
**DATE:** May 7, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department - Fire Department Study

### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Rural/Agriculture Committee receive the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department Study.

**VOTING:** All/Directors/Majority

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional District of Bulkley Nechako hired Response Specialties Consulting in February 2020 to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department (CLVFD). The CLVFD - Fire Department Study encompassed numerous aspects of the CLVFD from administrative to operations.

The Consultant met with members of the CLVFD and RDBN staff to get a good understanding of some of the current and future challenges the CLVFD are facing. The CLVFD - Fire Department Study highlights 58 recommendations that have been organized into the following three categories:

- “Urgent Priority”
- “Mid-Term Priority”
- “Longer-Term Priority”

The consultant conducted an online survey, due to the pandemic, they received 138 replies of the 950 mailed out. The results are included in the CLVFD - Fire Department Study on Attachment ‘A’.

The consultant Don Jolly will be available during the Board meeting to address the CLVFD - Fire Department Study and answer any questions regarding his process or the recommendations.

Written by,



Jason Blackwell  
Regional Fire Chief



Deborah Jones-Middleton  
Director of Protective Services

Attachment: Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department – “Fire Department Study”



## **DISCUSSION:**

Response Specialties Consulting has provided a substantial review of the CLVFD which is attached for your review.

Recommendation 1 addresses the issues of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). It became evident early in the process that there was confusion around who the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) was. This was highlighted as a priority and was addressed at the April 23, 2020 Board meeting with the Board adopting the "Cluculz Lake Rural Fire Protection Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 1906, 2020.". This change will streamline the working relationship between the two parties and open more opportunities for the CLVFD.

The comprehensive list of recommendations that was included in the CLVFD – Fire Department Study are listed below.

Many of these recommendations will be straightforward remedies, and easy to implement, while others will require further discussion and work by the RDBN and the CLVFD.

Staff believes that all recommendations are realistic, achievable and will assist the CLVFD moving forward and improving the departments overall capacity and efficiency.

## **URGENT PRIORITY:**

The following fifteen (15) Urgent Priority recommendations will be reviewed and implemented by the Regional Fire Chief in collaboration with the CLVFD.

Recommendation 55 has the only recommendation that has budget implications; implementation of this recommendation will be dependent on budget availability.

**Recommendation 1:** That the RDBN and CLVFD engage to establish a new formal governance relationship with the RDBN assuming official AHJ authority over the CLVFD, inclusive of all responsibilities of that authority. This change should occur quickly without referendum as there is no service level change contemplated, no taxation increases recommended, and the Society is fully supportive of the change.

**Recommendation 2:** That with a change in AHJ governance, the CLVFD Fire Chief will report through the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and not the CLVFD Society Board.

**Recommendation 6:** That the CLVFD establish a secure filing system for paper copies of all personnel and operational records.

**Recommendation 8:** That the RDBN and CLVFD institute and implement an appropriate minimum training attendance requirement for the CLVFD, effective immediately.

**Recommendation 9:** That the CLVFD immediately activate and support a functioning OH&S program with support from the RDBN Regional Fire Chief on requirements.

**Recommendation 17:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a training schedule including recruit training and regular member training session times and days, as well as materials/skills to be covered.

**Recommendation 19:** That the RDBN and CLVFD identify at least 2 qualified instructors outside the department to immediately begin delivery of Playbook Exterior Level training to a core group of CLVFD members.

**Recommendation 22:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief provide to the CLVFD, RDBN training record templates for use in recording individual and departmental training, as well as facilitating long-term records management and that the CLVFD regularly submit these training records to the RDBN Regional Fire Chief for permanent record storage.

**Recommendation 29:** Specific service delivery activities should be identified, or excluded, within any new empowering bylaw or other policy document between the RDBN and the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 32:** That a formal equipment inspection, maintenance, and testing program be initiated for all life safety, fire service, and power equipment. A formal checklist is to be created and utilized by all members of the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 38:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all PPE, and in compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created and retained as per RDBN best practice.

**Recommendation 40:** That the CLVFD immediately and permanently remove from service all cotton-jack hose in its inventory.

**Recommendation 41:** That the CLVFD immediately undertake an inventory of all firehose to ensure functionality, compatibility, and number of each are known.

**Recommendation 55:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate with the RDFFG to bring CLVFD on-line with the FOCC dispatch telephone interconnect communication system utilized by the other RDBN fire services.

**Recommendation 57:** That the RDBN strongly consider supporting a FireSmart program initiative in the Cluculz Lake response area due to the topography and vegetation present, and because of the history of serious wildland fires in the area.

### **MID-TERM PRIORITY:**

There are 23 Mid-Term Priority recommendations that will be reviewed and implemented over the next eighteen (18) months depending on budget requirements and availability.

**Recommendation 4:** That the RDBN Economic Development Department and Regional Fire Chief lead the formulation and completion of grant submissions toward all future capital projects for the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 7:** That the CLVFD engage with both the RDBN and the FOCC and begin electronic submission and storage of personnel, incident, and training records.

**Recommendation 10:** That Driver Abstracts be requested from ICBC on an annual basis for all members of the CLVFD, and further that driving restrictions be implemented should any excessive number of demerit points or prohibition exist on an individual's license.

**Recommendation 12:** That new recruits obtain a certificate of fitness (mental and physical) from a registered physician identifying they are clear to assume the duties of a firefighter in the CLVFD. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department (Exhibit 4) on hire.

**Recommendation 15:** That any healthy CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses for a period exceeding 6 months, regardless of reason, be made to undergo a full Exterior Firefighter skills assessment before returning to active duty.

**Recommendation 18:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a documented multi-year training program covering all service areas and training requirements, with specific focus on the Playbook Exterior FF training level.

**Recommendation 23:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify all service areas and associated skills in order to ensure the presence, and utilization, of appropriate training and evaluations.

**Recommendation 24:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify an appropriate policy and training program for personal vehicle response within the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 27:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify safe work practices involved with personal vehicle response to incidents.

**Recommendation 30:** The CLVFD incident response type matrix for departmental dispatch must be reviewed and validated against current practice and authorized service delivery.

**Recommendation 31:** That a complete inventory of all CLVFD equipment and apparatus be undertaken to ensure items are known, functional, safe, and ready for use, and that required items that are not available are identified for purchase.

**Recommendation 34:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all SCBA, including compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created, and retained as per RDBN best practice.

**Recommendation 36:** Until a contrary ruling has been provided by WorkSafe BC the RDBN and CLVFD should proceed with planning for establishment of a 10-year evergreen replacement schedule for all firefighter structural PPE.

**Recommendation 39:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records be created for all Ground Ladders and that regular testing to NFPA 1932 requirements be undertaken.

**Recommendation 42:** That the RDBN provide the CLVFD with hose inspection checklists and arrange for hose testing of all attack and supply line hoses at the earliest opportunity.

**Recommendation 44:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively research replacement of Tender 1 with a more appropriate unit for the community such as a wildland engine/tender.

**Recommendation 47:** That all CLVFD members who may operate any apparatus regularly perform pre- and/or post-trip inspections on the apparatus on a regular basis as per the requirements of both their airbrake endorsement and commercial vehicle regulations.

**Recommendation 48:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish a joint committee to conduct a needs assessment for a firehall facility upgrade. Example suggestions for this are included in Exhibit 14.

**Recommendation 49:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate in researching, preparing, and submitting grant applications to all available funding sources to identify adequate funds to upgrade the firehall to an acceptable level for future operations.

**Recommendation 50:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore funding, including grants, to install a series of dry hydrants (4-6 recommended) around the perimeter of the lake at

appropriately located access points (Exhibit 16).

**Recommendation 51:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore, as part of a firehall upgrade, the installation of a large cistern, reservoir, or above ground tank at the firehall that would be heated to prevent freezing and would guarantee clean water year-round. It would be trickle filled from the firehall water supply.

**Recommendation 53:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore opportunities to integrate the CLVFD radio system into a local repeater network, or alternatively obtain a dedicated repeater.

**Recommendation 56:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate installation of internet access at the CLVFD firehall along with utilization of the FOCC FDM database for incident reporting, at a minimum.

### **LONGER-TERM PRIORITY:**

There are 20 Long-Term Priority recommendations. Many of these recommendations can be implemented over the next six (6) months and others may take significantly longer; this will be determined based on the CLVFD and the Regional Fire Chief's capacity and budget considerations.

**Recommendation 3:** That the RDBN carefully consider the long-term issue of taxation increases in the Cluculz Lake fire response area but for the short-term, during authority transition, deliberately avoid adding financial burden to local taxpayers.

**Recommendation 5:** That the RDBN and the CLVFD review current operational funding envelopes and plan for any necessary amendments in future years.

**Recommendation 11:** That an RCMP Criminal Record Check, including Vulnerable Sector, be implemented for all members upon hire, and every 3 years thereafter at department expense.

**Recommendation 13:** That regular general fitness assessments be made a component of the annual training program for all members, with attendance being compulsory.

**Recommendation 14:** That any CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses due to injury or illness for a period exceeding 3 months, or who has missed their compulsory annual fitness assessment, be made to undergo a full medical evaluation by a registered physician and be cleared of any associated health concerns prior to returning to active duty. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department.

**Recommendation 16:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively explore establishing formal aid agreements with the Beaverley and Vanderhoof VFD's, as well as the BC Wildfire Service.

**Recommendation 20:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief identify, train and mentor 1-2 internal CLVFD members for development as future Playbook Exterior Level instructors.

**Recommendation 21:** That the CLVFD identify a new Training Captain position to plan and instruct most of the department training (Exhibit 5).

**Recommendation 25:** That RDBN Operational Guideline 1.4.3 be re-written to state a minimum number of firefighters on any apparatus responding in emergency mode to be two (2), for safety, and that for routine (non-emergency response) the minimum staffing be one (1) qualified individual (Exhibit 6).

**Recommendation 26:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify the number of qualified firefighters who must be at a scene in order to undertake required fire-ground operations for various incident types (Exhibit 7).

**Recommendation 28:** That a specific incident response worksheet be created to facilitate data collection from incident scenes that will then populate the dispatch FDM incident database.

**Recommendation 33:** That inspection, maintenance, and testing records for all CLVFD equipment be retained as per RDBN records management practices and kept accessible to CLVFD members at the firehall for a period not less than 2 years.

**Recommendation 35:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to SCBA types and training.

**Recommendation 37:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish the number and type of PPE equipment that requires replacement under the 10-year criteria and develop an “evergreen schedule” within either the capital or operating budgets to facilitate compliance on a short and long-term basis (Exhibit 10).

**Recommendation 43:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to fire hose coupling types.

**Recommendation 45:** That Tender 11 be moved to a second-line role with replacement of Tender 1 and stored in an enclosed, secure, and ventilated facility year-round until a permanent firehall renovation can occur. Numerous possibilities exist, from local facilities, to container buildings, to temporary structures.

**Recommendation 46:** That regular pump testing be undertaken on both CLVFD apparatus in conjunction with testing done for other RDBN departments.

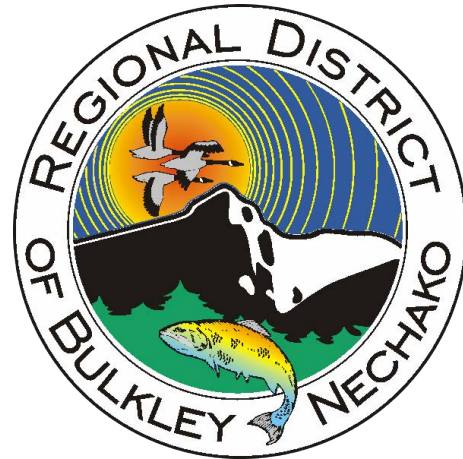
**Recommendation 52:** That a base radio set-up (eg. modified mobile radio) be obtained and installed in the firehall.

**Recommendation 54:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore purchase opportunities for further portable radios such that all individually responding members have direct radio communication with others in the department and/or dispatch.

**Recommendation 58:** That the CLVFD strongly consider initiating a Public Educator position within the volunteer ranks (Exhibit 5). It is further recommended that the position be filled by a non-firefighter as a person who can dedicate their time and effort to prevention and education.

# CLUCULZ LAKE V.F.D.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT STUDY



Report prepared for the

## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

by



**RESPONSE SPECIALTIES**  
CONSULTING

*Evidence-based Innovation and Advancement of Public Safety*  
[ResponseSpecialties@shaw.ca](mailto:ResponseSpecialties@shaw.ca)

April 2020  
Final Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) requested completion of a comprehensive fire department study of the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department (CLVFD). The RDBN has identified concerns related to liability and governance of the CLVFD. Response Specialties is grateful to have been selected to complete the study and provide recommendations to both the RDBN and the CLVFD.

Both the RDBN and the CLVFD have demonstrated excellent cooperation and integrity during the study process. A strong relationship has been exhibited through the willingness demonstrated to complete this project.

Special thanks must go to a few specific individuals:

- RDBN Regional Fire Chief Jason Blackwell who demonstrated superior professionalism and an unwavering commitment to the project. His efforts to answer all questions or provide insight, regardless of day or time, can not be appreciated enough.
- CLVFD Fire Chief Percy Wright and Firefighter/Administrator Eric Chapman were a wealth of information and honesty. They exemplify all that is good about community volunteers and their dedication to, and care of, the fire department and its membership.
- RDBN Director of Protective Services, Deborah Jones-Middleton who had the vision to initiate the project and empower it to make a difference for the RDBN and the Cluculz Lake community.
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) Manager of Public Safety Operations Melanie Perrin, and Prince George FOCC Director of Communication Marty Dupas for their tremendous support in identifying options for the CLVFD related to fire service dispatch and communications.

The delivery of fire services across British Columbia, including Cluculz Lake, are governed by specific legislative requirements. These include the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter*, *BC Fire Services Act*, OFC Structure Firefighter Competency and Training Playbook, WorkSafe BC's *Workers Compensation Act* and OH&S Regulation, and other regulatory materials. The responsibilities of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) are significant as they are responsible to ensure compliance with mandatory requirements and this can prove challenging. In addition, many organizational challenges exist for any volunteer fire department, and especially one that is remote in an area largely populated by seasonal residents.

The primary finding of this study reveals that the CLVFD requires enhanced governance in order to evolve as a department. The CLVFD also has numerous risk and regulatory compliance shortfalls, as well as operational concerns, that can be addressed by implementing the recommendations in this report. Obtaining compliance and operational effectiveness will be challenging and will take time. However, the RDBN and the CLVFD leadership are both motivated to succeed.

The following points highlight significant facts and concerns revealed in the organizational review:



- The CLVFD is not a member of the RDBN rural fire service organization. It is separate and distinct. The CLVFD is a Society under the BC *Societies Act* (#S-33950 – October 13, 2005) and should be operating as an autonomous agency given the legislation present.
- The bylaw with the RDBN recognizes CLVFD autonomy. However, by agreeing to the RDBN bylaw, and an accompanying Contribution Agreement, regulation of monetary contribution, policy, reporting and other oversight mechanisms exists. This demonstrates the RDBN has, in fact, assumed the “authority having jurisdiction” (AHJ) role over the CLVFD.
- RDBN documented requirements for the CLVFD appears to negatively impact the regional districts risk and liability profile.
- With the lack of clarity on governance structure and responsibility, the CLVFD has fallen short in compliance and capability toward meeting the growing regulatory requirements for delivering fire services, especially firefighter training qualifications.
- Significant areas of concern exist related to risk and compliance within training, operations, apparatus and equipment, and human resources.

The benefits of implementing the recommendations put forward include, but are not limited to:

- Formalizing a new reporting structure and relationship, which will be key to success.
- Most of the Study recommendations should be considered essential and non-discretionary. Legislative compliance outcomes will benefit both the CLVFD and the RDBN.
- While firefighters may experience increased demands upon them as a result of many of the recommendations, they are also major beneficiaries in the areas of training and safety.
- Integration of the CLVFD into the RDBN rural fire service should reduce administrative demands on CLVFD leadership.
- The CLVFD apparatus, equipment and facility are old and inadequate. Formal governance by the RDBN assists with numerous funding mechanisms and planning functions.
- The RDBN Regional Fire Chief will be able to manage and lead firefighter training programs for the CLVFD.
- Utilization of comprehensive records management systems specific to training programs, incident reporting, personnel, and maintenance and testing will be possible.
- The RDBN can lead an integration of the CLVFD into the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) regional communication and dispatch systems.
- Establishment of a reporting line between the CLVFD Fire Chief and the RDBN Regional Fire Chief, as used by other RDBN rural fire departments, will facilitate stronger oversight, training and governance.

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## CONTEXT

Historically, a few Cluculz Lake residents created the Cluculz Lake Emergency Response Team (CLERT), now known as the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department (CLVFD), in response to serious wildland fires, community growth and development as both a recreational and permanent resident region. The Department has undergone change and turmoil within the past 15 years, including a failed fire service referendum in 2010 involving the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN). Currently, the CLVFD has 18 active members, two apparatus and one firehall. The CLVFD does its best to maintain and keep operational the equipment it has despite a very low operating budget and little guidance.

This fire department study is timely for several reasons:

- There are growing needs for fire service compliance with WorkSafe BC, the Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC, and other regulatory agencies.
- The CLVFD acknowledge struggling to remain operational and effective and have expressed frustration with the challenges it faces to simply operate properly (Exhibit 1).
- The RDBN has identified concerns regarding their level of liability in the relationship with the CLVFD.
- Fire services and related resources are expensive and require careful and strategic planning to manage costs and maintain compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Local administration of small fire services using volunteers is particularly challenging, both in terms of time and expertise.
- The Cluculz Lake community is increasing in popularity for both seasonal and permanent residents, as well as recreational users. There is a large fire service coverage area involved with extensive response times.
- There is a deep-seated resentment toward increased taxation by the RDBN in response to recent expensive projects that are viewed by many in the Cluculz Lake area as unfair.
- New residents, especially seasonal ones, expect emergency services at, or near, the same level as their home community. This is unwarranted and unreasonable in Cluculz Lake.

This report presents a study of the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department for the RDBN. It is based on a detailed review of all areas of fire department function, community engagement, and the associated current and projected relationship with the RDBN.

## Why the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department Study is “Different”

A traditional fire department master plan process does not fit the CLVFD. A traditional fire service study, or master plan, is a comprehensive document detailing the community’s fire department vision, mission, values, strategies and associated action plans. It generates plans for expansion, enhancement and change including budget requirements and resource acquisition recommendations.

The CLVFD Study must begin at a much more basic level of simple governance because of widespread fire department authority gaps, absence of key records, the legislative non-compliance in both individual firefighter and department training, as well as occupational safety & health concerns. In order to identify, validate and document these challenges a comprehensive operational and administrative review of the fire department was conducted.

To ensure the CLVFD is compliant with required operational and administrative procedures and to close the compliance gaps, this study identifies a comprehensive set of recommendations directed at both the CLVFD and the RDBN.

The key recommendations are listed by subject area, as well as priority order. It is important to identify that because of the nature and extent of many of the required compliance gaps, the priorities are heavily loaded with decisions and actions that directly impact governance and essential compliance concerns.

## Why is a Fire Department so valuable?

Firefighters play a special role in communities. Firehalls themselves are often a community gathering place. Membership as a firefighter is frequently seen as one of the highest levels of community volunteerism and firefighters are generally regarded with much respect and admiration. However, functionally these plaudits do not adequately describe the value of a fire service to the community, especially a small one with a pure volunteer fire department. A few unique aspects of the fire service are noted below:

- Fire and related services demand highly specialized training, equipment and planning.
- If a small fire is not managed promptly and effectively, it can quickly spread.
- Having qualified and well-trained firefighters, as well as the equipment and apparatus they need, can significantly reduce property loss and prevent human suffering.
- A volunteer firefighter typically devotes extensive time, and endures significant hardship on personal life, in their preparing to act and in serving the community. They take personal risk while asking for little, if any, remuneration in return.
- Over time, firefighters, through their service, their example, and fire safety education messaging, make the community and its residents safer.

## **There is a lot to be proud of with the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department**

It is truly remarkable that the CLVFD has been able to provide the services they do given the financial and resource limitations they have. Every member, past and present, is to be commended for their dedication, ingenuity, and perseverance. The fact they are not continually lobbying the community for additional support is a testament to their selflessness. The firefighters obviously take pride in the service they provide and the work they perform. Despite serious limitations, they treat everything they have with respect.

The current leadership of the CLVFD was tremendous to work with as a consultant. They are very engaged and want to represent the department well. They promptly and honestly answered every question, even if it identified challenge or non-compliance. They clearly recognize the needs they have with relation to meeting provincial expectations and they are willing to work hard to achieve those goals. Their #1 priority is the safety of their community, whether that be the department or the taxpayer. They deserve the respect and admiration of the RDBN and every citizen and visitor within their fire response area boundary.

## LEGISLATION DIRECTING BC FIRE SERVICES

Fire Services are a discretionary community function usually enabled and overseen by local or regional government. Legally there is no requirement for a fire service to be provided by a local jurisdiction under either Canadian or Province of BC Legislation. Occasionally, a local community group will establish a local volunteer fire department under a Society. In the case of the CLVFD, the department is run by a Society that receives financial support from the RDBN. The current model lays all responsibility to maintain legislative compliance with the Society. While the CLVFD are aware of the responsibilities, and desire to meet the expectations, they are challenged by both time and expertise to do so. Assistance is required and the CLVFD leadership are open to meeting their responsibilities through organizational change.

Regardless of the organizational or governance model present a series of significant and prescriptive regulatory and legislative requirements must be met (Exhibit 1) in order to provide fire protection. The CLVFD Society, having made the decision to provide local fire protection, is thus obligated to comply with specific requirements as set out in provincial legislation that regulates the operation and administration of fire services (Exhibit 2).

In addition, the CLVFD is required to implement a series of local regulatory requirements guiding the provision and operation of their fire department. All fire departments in British Columbia, except wildland, must comply with the requirements of the BC Structure Firefighter Competency and Training Playbook and WorkSafeBC. Governance of fire department performance and expectations in any jurisdiction takes place in the form of bylaws, policies, and operational guidelines. In the case of the CLVFD they have either voluntarily adopted, or have been required to adopt, the RDBN policies and operational guidelines related to fire service delivery.

### Relevant Provincial Legislation

There are several critical pieces of provincial legislation that dictate how and why fire services perform specific actions. The following legislation is presented in order of precedent

BRITISH COLUMBIA *COMMUNITY CHARTER (2003)* and *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2015)*

The *Local Government Act* applies to the RDBN. Both the *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act* allow for the creation and management of local or regional areas within the province. Both documents describe the powers transferred from the province and the authorities that local or regional government may initiate. One of the authorities conferred is the ability to constitute and manage a fire department.

*SOCIETIES ACT (2015)*

The *Societies Act* allows for the creation of an organization for numerous lawful purposes, one of which being a local fire department. The *Act* describes the requirements and powers of the Society Board and stipulates that the Society may not carry on activities restricted by its

bylaws and policies or contrary to its stated purpose. The Society Board is responsible for the establishment and compliance with said bylaws and policies.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA *FIRE SERVICES ACT (1996)*

The *BC Fire Services Act* identifies the services and actions to be undertaken by a governing body related to specific aspects of local fire safety. The Province does not fund local fire service delivery costs. The Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC (OFC) does provide guidance and advice, particularly related to education and prevention, and will support fire investigations under certain circumstances. Anticipated replacement legislation, identified as the *BC Fire Safety Act*, received 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading in the Legislature in 2016, but has yet to receive Order in Council (OIC) and come into force. The new *Fire Safety Act* is undergoing further review and once amendments are complete, and the necessary associated regulations are approved, the information will be disseminated. The new *Fire Safety Act* is expected to transition more responsibility to local and regional government.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRE SERVICE MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS - STRUCTURE FIREFIGHTER COMPETENCY AND TRAINING PLAYBOOK (2015)

The Playbook, considered a benchmark document completed in 2014 and amended in 2015, sets the standard for firefighter competency and training levels as well as fire service delivery levels for the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). The AHJ may be a local government, regional government, Society, Improvement District or other entity as permitted by legislation. The only fire services legally exempt from this standard are BC Wildfire and First Nations fire services, although many are voluntarily working to comply. The AHJ must establish a minimum service delivery level for the community through bylaw or policy. The fire department must train, equip and perform to that service level, as a minimum. Detailed documentation on training and response is a central component of the Playbook Standard. Additional requirements for Playbook compliance reference the *WorkSafe BC Workers Compensation Act* and OH&S Regulations, and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA *WORKERS COMPENSATION ACT (2019)* and OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OH&S) REGULATION

All fire services must operate within the stringent safety requirements of the *WorkSafe BC, Workers Compensation Act* regardless of the department being career, composite or volunteer. Part 31 of the *WorkSafe BC OH&S Regulation* identifies fire service-specific safety program requirements. Areas include firefighter protective clothing, equipment maintenance and testing, safety committees, and safe work procedures. Full compliance with all components of both the *Act* and the *Regulations* is expected given the high-risk nature of firefighting operations.



## Local Legislation and Regulation

Incredibly, in BC there is no legislated requirement for a community to offer fire protection services. It is a voluntary service provision under either the *Community Charter* or *Local Government Act*. It is a conscious decision for local or regional government whether to offer fire protection, as well as the level and mix of services provided. If the local or regional government does not choose to provide the service in a specific area, fire departments may still arise under the umbrella of a Society or Improvement District. Cluculz Lake, like many other areas of BC has a Society-base fire service. These organizations must still meet the legislative requirements as described above but ensuring compliance can be very challenging and is unfortunately frequently ignored.

The RDBN has recognized the CLVFD under the RDBN Bylaw #1127 - *Bylaw to establish an emergency service as a local service within a portion of Electoral Area "F" of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako*. The original bylaw was adopted December 16, 1999 and describes all monetary and administrative reporting requirements for both parties. Since that time, several amendment documents have been adopted.

The RDBN and the CLVFD have also entered into a Contribution Agreement arrangement that establishes the financial contribution and expectations of the RDBN to the CLVFD.

The CLVFD further utilizes and attempts to follow all requirements contained within RDBN fire service Operational Guidelines (OG's) and Policies.

## REVIEW FINDINGS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An on-line community resident survey was undertaken as a method to gain knowledge of local support and understanding of the CLVFD. Response Specialties crafted an introductory letter to be sent by the RDBN to all registered property owners and residents within the fire service response area of the CLVFD. Response Specialties also designed an on-line survey to be administered through a link residing on the RDBN website.

A letter was distributed via Canada Post to all registered owners and residents (Exhibit 3). The letter was an introduction for community members to the Fire Department Study underway regarding the operation and administration of the CLVFD. Within the letter a direction was provided for the reader to visit the RDBN website to find a hyperlink directly to the on-line survey. The survey and results, in graphic format, are attached as Attachment A.

The survey response rate was as expected for an external community survey via mail (average is 10-15% according to surveygizmo.com). The survey provided 138 responses out of 931 letters sent (14.8%). The survey results demonstrated a diverse community that both values the fire

department and its members, as well as recognizing the need for fire protection services generally. Individual question responses demonstrated that the majority (58%) of answers came from seasonal residents, and that 68% of respondents have owned property in the area for over ten (10) years. These two response statistics provide strong evidence that the established community members are engaged and concerned about their fire protection. Unsurprisingly, very few (7%) reported having to engage the services of the CLVFD in the past three (3) years.

Most respondents recognized the essential role the department plays in fire suppression (88%). Interestingly, a significant number of respondents assumed, or desired, the CLVFD to perform a wider variety of services including medical response, rescue, burning regulation and various educational programs. Internally, the CLVFD desires to maintain a basic fire-response-only profile and does not wish to engage in additional services.

Generally, the respondents reported positive satisfaction with the department's response capability (62%) and its services (70%). However, there was also a significant portion of survey replies that were dissatisfied (poor or fair) with 38% and 30% respectively.

While there are significant percentages expressing dissatisfaction, the data did not demonstrate strong correlation with individuals who had previous department contact within 36 months or were from a firefighting background. This identifies that the performance concerns appear to not be restricted to specific respondent groups. Individuals who self-identified as current or previous volunteer or career firefighters (11 of 138 = 8%) equally rated the department across all levels of satisfaction.

The most positive of all the survey results were nine (9) submissions from individuals who expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer firefighter with the CLVFD.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

### **Governance**

The CLVFD is a Society Fire Department registered under the BC *Societies Act* as S-33950 on October 13, 2005. It is a self-governing entity with an elected Board of Directors who should officially act as the AHJ. It has not entered into any official governance agreement with any other entity whereby their entitlement to self-sustaining operation would be rescinded. The CLVFD Board of Directors has the required professional and liability insurance coverage. There is a Cluculz Lake Community Association, but it is not affiliated with the CLVFD in any manner.

In November 1999 the CLVFD entered into a bylaw agreement with the RDBN (RDBN Bylaw 1127). Subsequently, there have been multiple amendments with the current version being Bylaw 1642 (2012). The current bylaw contains erroneous terminology including reference to the "Cluculz Lake Emergency Response Team (CLERT)", which has not existed in many years. The bylaw establishes "an emergency service as a local service within a portion of Electoral Area

F” of the RDBN. This bylaw allows for the operation of the CLVFD within the RDBN boundary but does not establish a governance arrangement specifically.

A separate Contribution Agreement system was established whereby the RDBN provided specified grant funding to assist in the operation of the CLVFD within the Area “F” service area. The current agreement is dated July 2018.

Neither the bylaw nor the Contribution Agreement provide for the dissolution of the Society, nor for RDBN to exert AHJ authority over the CLVFD. The CLVFD does, through signing both documents, voluntarily agree to abide by the service level and financial reporting expectations of the RDBN. Currently, the CLVFD differs substantially from other RDBN rural fire departments, who all fall under the RDBN governance as the AHJ.

Historically, the RDBN leadership was steadfast in its position that the CLVFD was stand-alone and the RDBN simply provided grant funding but no regional government oversight (no AHJ authority). The new leadership in the RDBN has concerns that in practice, the RDBN has in fact assumed a significant AHJ role. The CLVFD for its part has also had differing viewpoints of the working relationship which includes championing a 2010 referendum on the fire department, which failed. The CLVFD leadership is not clear on the actual AHJ status, but they do acknowledge that they “must” meet the requirements of the RDBN as per the bylaw.

In discussions with both RDBN and CLVFD senior representatives it has become clear that the current reality is that the RDBN is acting as the AHJ and that the CLVFD is voluntarily allowing, if not condoning, that relationship. Presently, the CLVFD looks to the RDBN for virtually all operational and administrative guidance. Specifically, they utilize all RDBN Operational Guidelines, the Playbook Service Level requirement, and financial reporting requirements.

The historic relationship has undergone multiple interpretations and influences given the disconnect, confusion, and inconsistency in documentation. Whereas the CLVFD would appear to officially retain their AHJ status, the existence of contractual requirements that stipulate service provision levels and performance metrics (financial) would suggest that the RDBN is in fact exerting an AHJ authority over the CLVFD. Currently, there is no clear and absolute legal identification of the AHJ for this relationship. This must be rectified quickly.

**Recommendation 1:** That the RDBN and CLVFD engage to establish a new formal governance relationship with the RDBN assuming official AHJ authority over the CLVFD, inclusive of all responsibilities of that authority. This change should occur quickly and without referendum as there is no service level change contemplated, no taxation increases recommended, and the Society is fully supportive of the change.

The CLVFD Fire Chief understands and supports the current reporting structure. He reports to the CLVFD Board of Directors and not the RDBN. The RDBN Regional Fire Chief is a supporting position to the CLVFD Fire Chief and not a supervisor. On this, both parties agree.

**Recommendation 2:** That with a change in AHJ governance, the CLVFD Fire Chief will report through the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and not the CLVFD Society Board.

As a remote community a Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) assessment, which is typically expected in larger communities, is not relevant or required for the CLVFD. Additionally, no formal Strategic Plan has ever been adopted for the CLVFD, though a draft plan was initiated as part of the 2010 CLVFD referendum, which failed.

### Financial Management

Based on information from the RDBN, the Cluculz Lake area has an approximate Mill Rate for fire protection of \$0.1192 per \$1000 assessed value. The mean assessed value for property in the fire protection area is \$188,788 (2020) and there are 1,123 folios registered, with a total assessed value of \$212+ million. Over the past 5 years the RDBN reports a 39.2% increase in assessed value at Cluculz Lake. The CLVFD leadership clearly expressed a belief that any attempt at increasing taxation for fire services at Cluculz Lake would be vigorously opposed by the community taxpayers. However, it is important to note for future consideration that the community survey results indicate both strong organizational support as well as clear community awareness that meeting required training and service standards are critical.

**Recommendation 3:** That the RDBN carefully consider the long-term issue of taxation increases in the Cluculz Lake fire response area but for the short-term, during authority transition, deliberately avoid adding financial burden to local taxpayers.

The CLVFD states that they conduct their financial management in accordance with the requirements of Section 7 of the Contribution Agreement. This agreement expires on June 30, 2020. The RDBN contributes an annual grant to the CLVFD for operational services. It is disbursed monthly by the RDBN Finance Department. The CLVFD has established a financial management structure that meets the requirements of the *Societies Act* including: establishment of four members with signing authority, requirement for two members to sign-off for each expenditure, identification of a secretary/treasurer, annual reporting, and audit by a certified accountant. Further expectations included within the Contribution Agreement, bylaw and *Societies Act* are also met according to CLVFD leadership.

The RDBN grant contribution is sourced solely through local area taxation with a fixed annual amount identified in the agreement. The grant is currently the sole funding source for the CLVFD operating budget. The RDBN makes no contribution toward capital budget for the CLVFD. There is a small CLVFD budget identified for a future firehall update in a “Building Fund” that has been realized through a community fund-raising effort of collecting scrap metal in a bin at a local business. The CLVFD has tentatively explored outside provincial grant funding for capital expenditures but no submissions have been made. The CLVFD does not have any form of capital replacement funding structure or a capital replacement schedule.

**Recommendation 4:** That the RDBN Economic Development Department and Regional Fire Chief lead the formulation and completion of grant submissions toward all future capital projects for the CLVFD.

The CLVFD maintains full authority over all disbursements of operating budget. According to CLVFD leadership, their current operating budget, while austere compared to other nearby departments, is adequate to provide the services required. No cost recovery programs have been implemented. The RDBN has agreed to administer both WorkSafe BC coverage as well as VFIS accident and death insurance for the CLVFD members. Funds for these programs come out of the annual CLVFD operating grant from the RDBN.

**Recommendation 5:** That the RDBN and the CLVFD review current operational funding envelopes and plan for any necessary amendments in future years.

### Records Management

Records management at the CLVFD is poor. Files at the department include documents many years out of date as well as expired contracts and agreements. Personnel files are incomplete and insecure. File cabinets are unlocked and fully accessible. Training records only exist as a diary entry in a paper binder and do not meet the spirit or expectations of either the Playbook or WorkSafe BC. Incident records are rudimentary paper records only. The CLVFD was provided access to the FDM records management software at Prince George Fire Operations Communication Center (FOCC) dispatch as a client but it has not been used. Equipment maintenance and testing records are non-existent except for apparatus pre- & post-trip inspections. WorkSafe BC claims and insurance records management is maintained by the RDBN. The CLVFD does not utilize the records management system available at the RDBN.

**Recommendation 6:** That the CLVFD establish a secure filing system for paper copies of all personnel and operational records.

**Recommendation 7:** That the CLVFD engage with both the RDBN and the FOCC and begin electronic submission and storage of personnel, incident, and training records.

### Human Resources

The current department organization includes a Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Captain/Mechanic, Dispatcher, Secretary/Administrator and Firefighters. This model appears to work well as no concerns were expressed.

The department currently has a roster of 18 members. While turn-over within the department has varied widely over the past decade, the Fire Chief reports that there have only been 2 departures since 2017. This is a good retention percentage for a small rural fire department.

Despite the positive retention, the fact remains that of the total roster only 6-8 members regularly attend incidents or training according to the Fire Chief. This is insufficient to ensure adequate response capability. Additionally, the potential engagement of numerous members who may not be attending regular training is problematic and a potential safety issue. WorkSafe BC requires that all workers must be fully trained and evaluated in the work they perform. Realistically, the CLVFD is far from compliant with this expectation. Additionally, the same conditions demonstrate a clear lack of compliance with the Playbook Standard.

**Recommendation 8:** That the RDBN and CLVFD institute and implement an appropriate minimum training attendance requirement for the CLVFD, effective immediately.

No Occupational Health and Safety program is in place at the CLVFD. This is a serious violation of WorkSafe BC regulations. CLVFD leadership understood it to be a RDBN responsibility. Given the relationship, it is not. There is no OH&S Committee and no regular meetings or inspections. No Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) training occurs as required. The CLVFD leadership does appear to have internal competencies that could facilitate rapid implementation of a functional OH&S program and have suggested they will do so.

**Recommendation 9:** That the CLVFD immediately activate and support a functioning OH&S program with support from the RDBN Regional Fire Chief on requirements.

The CLVFD does not have a formal recruit firefighter training program. This reflects the larger problem of a lack of a regular firefighter training program. The department is in possession of the Playbook Exterior Service Level training and evaluation tools and instruments package, but they are not used. Few, if any, formal recruiting and retention tools are used by the CLVFD.

At present the CLVFD has not been requesting regular Driver Abstract reports from ICBC. These are readily available through on-line submission requests as a designated commercial operator and should be requested annually for every member who may operate a department vehicle.

**Recommendation 10:** That Driver Abstracts be requested from ICBC on an annual basis for all members of the CLVFD, and further that driving restrictions be implemented should any excessive number of demerit points or prohibition exist on an individual's license.

Criminal Record Checks are requested on initial hire. They are not requested again during member tenure unless there is a specific occurrence or request. This is insufficient to ensure ongoing public safety. As firefighters regularly have direct contact with citizens, including vulnerable persons, their conduct must be assumed to be exemplary. Further, with potentially unlimited access to personal property through powers of the *Fire Services Act* during emergency situations, firefighters must not only be, but also appear to be, fully law abiding.

**Recommendation 11:** That an RCMP Criminal Record Check, including Vulnerable Sector, be implemented for all members upon hire, and every 3 years thereafter at department expense.

CLVFD members are not remunerated in any form, including the Fire Chief. The leadership of the CLVFD does not feel that this has any negative impact on recruitment or retention within the department given the demographics and culture of the community. There have been no reported requests to implement such a program. Current funding does not provide for any discretion in implementing such a program.

Members are not subject to any form of initial or on-going medical examinations or fitness proficiency evaluations. If a member has been away for a prolonged period - whether from illness, injury, work or leave - they are not subject to either a health or fitness review (mental or

physical) nor a performance assessment. The lack of these assessments presents a significant liability and safety exposure for the department.

**Recommendation 12:** That new recruits obtain a certificate of fitness (mental and physical) from a registered physician identifying they are clear to assume the duties of a firefighter in the CLVFD. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department (Exhibit 4) on hire.

**Recommendation 13:** That regular general fitness assessments be made a component of the annual training program for all members, with attendance being compulsory.

**Recommendation 14:** That any CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses due to injury or illness for a period exceeding 3 months, or who has missed their compulsory annual fitness assessment, be made to undergo a full medical evaluation by a registered physician and be cleared of any associated health concerns prior to returning to active duty. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department.

**Recommendation 15:** That any healthy CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses for a period exceeding 6 months, regardless of reason, be made to undergo a full Exterior Firefighter skills assessment before returning to active duty.

### Aid Agreements & Service Contracts

There are no aid agreements or service contracts of any kind in place between the CLVFD and any other organization. This leaves the CLVFD significantly exposed should incident attendance be poor, or the level of event exceed their capacity or capability. The CLVFD, to their knowledge, has never responded outside of their established service area boundary.

**Recommendation 16:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively explore establishing formal aid agreements with the Beaverley and Vanderhoof VFD's, as well as the BC Wildfire Service.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

### Training

Currently CLVFD training is in a state of transition and is, at best, lacking. The department recognizes the need to train but has not identified a means and method to implement the need. They are in possession of all training and evaluation tools and instruments available for the Playbook Exterior Service Level, as provided by the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) and the BC Fire Training Officers Association (BCFTOA). However, they are not utilizing the materials in any meaningful way. The CLVFD leadership identifies a lack of an instructor as the major reason this is occurring.

The CLVFD is not in compliance with either the OFC Playbook Standard or WorkSafe BC requirements, and likely has not been so for an extended period. In fact, there is no single current member of the department who has officially attained Exterior Service Level qualification.

The annual training schedule is flexible depending on weather. Generally, regular training occurs during the months of October to April every 2 weeks on training night. For the rest of the year, from May to September, training is scheduled for alternating Wednesdays and Saturdays (every 10 days). Infrequently, additional training sessions are provided as opportunity and interest presents itself.

**Recommendation 17:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a training schedule including recruit training and regular member training session times and days, as well as materials/skills to be covered.

Currently, the training focusses primarily on “making sure we can get water on the fire” according to the Fire Chief. This includes basic apparatus operation and pumping, drafting, and basic hose handling. Most subject areas in the Exterior program are not specifically trained to at this time.

Training in the use of Self-contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is limited. The CLVFD occasionally trains with their SCBA equipment, though not all members can/will wear one at scenes as only 2 packs are carried on their apparatus. This training does not appear to follow any Playbook lesson plan or other recognized instructional method. The department has no SCBA tech, so technical knowledge and training is inadequate for safe use.

**Recommendation 18:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a documented multi-year training program covering all service areas and training requirements, with specific focus on the Playbook Exterior FF training level.

There is no training attendance standard for the members. In fact, according to the Fire Chief more than half do not regularly attend training. He reports attendance between 4-8 as being usual. Records indicate that numerous members receive little or no training annually and yet they may still be permitted, or even encouraged, to respond to emergency incidents and perform active duties. This reality identifies a serious liability risk related to firefighter safety and performance due to minimal training exposure.

The CLVFD currently has no qualified instructors at any service level. They have also been unable to obtain assistance in finding 3<sup>rd</sup> party instructors from other departments or the RDBN.

**Recommendation 19:** That the RDBN and CLVFD identify at least 2 qualified instructors outside the department to immediately begin delivery of Playbook Exterior Level training to a core group of CLVFD members.

**Recommendation 20:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief identify, train and mentor 1-2 internal CLVFD members for development as future Playbook Exterior Level instructors.

**Recommendation 21:** That the CLVFD identify a new Training Captain position to plan and instruct most of the department training (Exhibit 5).



Training records within the department do not meet the requirements of either the Playbook or WorkSafe BC. All training records are currently documented as simple diary entries into a binder. The records do not individually identify firefighters or the skills they each performed during training. There is no documented departmental training plan outlining all training program components and a timeline. The records management of the training documents does not facilitate research and identification of specific skills, knowledge or evaluations of any individual member as required by WorkSafe BC. There are no formal lesson plans or evaluation instruments utilized at this time.

**Recommendation 22:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief provide to the CLVFD, RDBN training record templates for use in recording individual and departmental training, as well as facilitating long-term records management. Additionally, that the CLVFD regularly submit these training records to the RDBN Regional Fire Chief for permanent record storage.

The CLVFD also does not utilize formal training or evaluation materials on subject areas outside those of the Exterior Service Level such as Incident Command, apparatus driver/operator, and wildland fire suppression. Minimal training exists within the membership on wildland firefighting with only a small number of members trained in the S-100 program by BCWildfire.

**Recommendation 23:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify all service areas and associated skills in order to ensure the presence, and utilization, of appropriate training and evaluations.

### Incident Response

The CLVFD has an expansive and remote response area as identified in the bylaw. This area size, combined with geography, road quality, seasonal weather, and responder availability, results in regular response times well in excess of 20-30 minutes. This reality validates the Exterior Service Level. A single firehall is challenged with providing coverage over this expanse but the lack of call volume, minimal resources (firefighters and apparatus) available, and fiscal realities preclude consideration of secondary facilities.

The CLVFD provides an extremely basic response profile to fire and desires to maintain that posture moving forward. It is restricted to fire suppression activities at the Exterior Firefighter Service Level under the Playbook. This is a very appropriate service level for this department. It is currently unable to comprehensively meet this minimum standard, so no additional services should be contemplated. The identification of the Exterior Service Level is required by the Playbook Standard as the minimum in BC. It is stipulated as the Service Delivery Level for the Cluculz Lake response area in the bylaw signed by the RDBN and CLVFD. Troublingly, the CLVFD leadership do not feel that they realistically need to meet all the Exterior Service Level requirements within the limited delivery model they provide.

Core services for the CLVFD are related directly to basic fire suppression from the exterior. The CLVFD does provide a couple of discretionary services that are outside the Exterior Level. These include response to lift assist for BC Ambulance and wildfire response.

Response from the CLVFD occurs primarily in personal vehicles. This is a practice that is discouraged by the fire service generally as it brings on increased liability and risk for both the individual firefighter and the department. In the case of Cluculz Lake the challenging response area supports such a program. However, to ensure maximum safety and reduce risk and liability there should be a specific policy and training program related to personal vehicle response. Such a policy currently does not exist.

**Recommendation 24:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify an appropriate policy and training program for personal vehicle response within the CLVFD.

RDBN Operational Guideline 1.4.3 – Required Number of Responding Personnel, is challenging for the CLVFD. The OG requires the minimum number of firefighters on a fire apparatus responding to a fire response to be four. The CLVFD’s primary response vehicle, Tender 11, only seat 2-3 personnel. Further, due to geography and member location most members respond directly to the scene in personal vehicles. The OG appears to confuse the number of required riders on the apparatus with the number of firefighters required on scene to safely operate. The CLVFD leadership stated that they will simply not respond if they do not have four. This is problematic and potentially incurs risk. Even a single qualified person can provide Incident Command, determine resource needs, request additional assistance, and facilitate public evacuation, as required.

**Recommendation 25:** That RDBN Operational Guideline 1.4.3 be re-written to state a minimum number of firefighters on any apparatus responding in emergency mode to be two (2), for safety, and that for routine (non-emergency response) the minimum staffing be one (1) qualified individual (Exhibit 6).

**Recommendation 26:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify the number of qualified firefighters who must be at a scene in order to undertake required fire-ground operations for various incident types (Exhibit 7).

**Recommendation 27:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify safe work practices involved with personal vehicle response to incidents.

Records management of incident records is barely adequate. The department does not use an available, and free, accessibility to the dispatch FDM database for incident record entry and storage.

**Recommendation 28:** That a specific incident response worksheet be created to facilitate data collection from incident scenes that will then populate the dispatch FDM incident database.

The CLVFD responds to multiple incident types including structural fires, small wildland fires, vehicle fires, lift assists and wires down. These incident/service types are not well described or limited in the bylaw or other empowering documentation. Call volume is extremely low with a 4-year average from 2016-2019 of nine (9) dispatched incidents annually (Exhibit 8).

**Recommendation 29:** Specific service delivery activities should be identified, or excluded, within any new empowering bylaw or other policy document between the RDBN and the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 30:** The CLVFD incident response type matrix for departmental dispatch must be reviewed and validated against current practice and authorized service delivery.

No target hazard assessments have been performed on any identified high-risk or operationally challenging property in the response area. These assessments aid in rapid, coordinated, safe, and effective response to specific challenges and are to be encouraged for locations of concern.

Motor vehicle accident/rescue and dangerous goods/hazmat response are not performed by the CLVFD. These serious and not infrequent incident types are managed by the Vanderhoof VFD (MVI/Rescue/Hazmat), operators or contractors for commercial transports (Hazmat/MVI), and provincial ministries (Hazmat/Environmental), as required.

## Equipment

The CLVFD maintains an adequate, if not modest, cadre of older firefighting equipment. The equipment is stored primarily on apparatus or in a Sea-Can container outside the firehall. Little storage space is available inside the firehall, with only a spare ladder hanging on one wall and a few cupboards with small items inside. No formal current inventory of department equipment was available. The contents of the Sea-Can were not known exactly to the leadership. There are known to be at least 2 spare portable pumps, on Tender 11 and in the Sea-Can container.

**Recommendation 31:** That a complete inventory of all CLVFD equipment and apparatus be undertaken to ensure items are known, functional, safe, and ready for use, and that required items that are not available are identified for purchase.

A replacement schedule for major equipment does not exist. Ad hoc replacement occurs when needed and when funds are available. Generally, this has not been a concern, but the failure or loss of a significant piece of equipment could render the department inoperable in some manner. Given the lack of reserve equipment, this is not acceptable for an emergency service and therefore planning must occur for replacement of significant pieces of equipment on a regular basis to ensure on-going operational readiness (Exhibit 9).

Formal equipment inspection, maintenance and testing programs do not exist. The department identified that they are “pretty easy on their stuff” so there is little required. While this may anecdotally be true, there are basic safety requirements expected of all firefighting and safety equipment that must be evaluated, maintained, repaired, or reported on a regular basis.

**Recommendation 32:** That a formal equipment inspection, maintenance and testing program be initiated for all life safety, fire service, and power equipment. A formal checklist is to be created and utilized by all members of the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 33:** That inspection, maintenance, and testing records for all CLVFD equipment be retained as per RDBN records management practices and kept accessible to CLVFD members at the firehall for a period not less than 2 years.

The CLVFD possesses 10 sets of MSA brand Firehawk SCBA. All units have integrated Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS devices) for firefighter safety. Only two (2) of the SCBA are carried on the first due apparatus (Tender 11). The remaining 8 remain in the firehall for training, or possible loading of a couple onto Tender 1 in the summer season. The SCBA units are stored hanging on the wall at the rear of the firehall in a method that facilitates security and drying. Access to them is not impeded.

SCBA inspection, maintenance and testing is rudimentary at best. The packs are relatively new to the department (<2 years), though they are used equipment from another agency. Hydrostatic testing on their composite air cylinders, required every 5 years, has not occurred, and appears to be due in 2020/21. The department reports that hydrostatic testing will be performed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party when possible. No SCBA mask fit-testing, as per WorkSafe BC requirements, has occurred for any CLVFD member. Air cylinder filling occurs as needed and is facilitated by the Vanderhoof VFD through a gentlemen's agreement whereby a CLVFD member brings them to Vanderhoof while he is at work in the town. It is assumed, though should be confirmed, that the Vanderhoof VFD complies with WorkSafe BC regarding fill station air quality testing requirements.

**Recommendation 34:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all SCBA, including compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created, and retained as per RDBN best practice.

**Recommendation 35:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to SCBA types and training.

CLVFD issues a Personal Protective Ensemble (PPE) to all firefighters. It includes a turn-out coat and pants, a helmet, firefighting rubber boots, fireproof hood/balaclava, and firefighting gloves. In addition, each firefighter is issued a set of red Nomex coveralls, which are apparently used primarily for training. The PPE comes under the regulatory requirements of the WorkSafe BC OH&S Regulation Part 31.10 - 31.18.

WorkSafe BC OH&S Reg Parts 31.14 identifies the adherence to NFPA 1971 (1991 Ed.) -Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting, as well as NFPA 1972 (1992 Ed.) and NFPA 1973 (1988 Ed.) for:

“... firefighters required to approach the seat of a fire or enter a structure or other hazardous area during an incident” (WSBC OH&S Reg. Part 31,14).

WorkSafe BC OH&S Reg Part 31 does not reference NFPA 1851, but the fire service has comprehensively adopted its content regarding lifespan of PPE. NFPA 1851 (2020) – Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting states, in Part 3.3.93-Definitions:

**3.3.93 Structural Fire Fighting.** The activities of rescue, fire suppression, and property conservation in buildings, enclosed structures, vehicles, marine vessels, or like properties that are involved in a fire or emergency situation.

The Playbook Exterior Service Level states:

“Exterior Operations Level fire service firefighters shall not enter any building, vehicle, dumpster or other object if an IDLH atmosphere is present.” (*British Columbia Fire Service Minimum Training Standards*, page 17.)

In interpreting these three documents literally it would appear that there is ambiguity whether the 10-year replacement requirement of NFPA 1851 applies to Exterior Level fire services since they must not enter a burning structure, approach the seat of a fire, or be in an IDLH (toxic) atmosphere. Departments like the CLVFD may have firefighters don their PPE fewer than 30 times per year, including both incidents and practice, with extremely few actual heat/toxic exposures over its lifetime. This minimal use, combined with inspections and cleaning, and the requirement to maintain safe distancing means that 10-year-old PPE is frequently in incredibly good condition, and capable of many more years of use, if permitted.

Response Specialties has asked that the Fire Chiefs Association of BC (FCABC) request a formal ruling on the 10-year replacement of structural PPE for firefighters in Exterior Service Level fire departments. Response Specialties will work cooperatively with the FCABC to develop an objective and reasonable approach that meets both the safety needs and expectations of WorkSafe BC, fire services and firefighters, as well as recognizing the heavy financial burden this requirement imposes on rural fire services. There is certainly opportunity for research and interpretation of the application of the 10-year replacement rule for fire services that strictly comply with the Exterior Service Level of the Playbook.

The department currently has four (4) spare PPE sets at the firehall, as well as three spare Nomex coveralls. All spare PPE sets are over 10 years old and likely many, if not all, “in-service” sets are as well, though this should be confirmed. The CLVFD may not be challenged to afford a 10-year replacement schedule of expensive PPE (\$2500+ per set).

**Recommendation 36:** Until a contrary ruling has been provided by WorkSafe BC the RDBN and CLVFD should proceed with planning for establishment of a 10-year evergreen replacement schedule for all firefighter structural PPE.

**Recommendation 37:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish the number and type of PPE equipment that requires replacement under the 10-year criteria and develop an “evergreen schedule” within either the capital or operating budgets to facilitate compliance on a short and long-term basis (Exhibit 10).

Each firefighter keeps his PPE set with him, generally in their vehicle or at home. They are responsible for checking their own PPE for cleanliness and damage. This poses concern regarding OH&S requirements to maintain a safe protective layer and a carcinogen and toxin-free PPE. It also contributes to possible transfer of carcinogens and toxins from contaminated PPE to other personal items and clothing. The CLVFD members clean their gear at home, which presents significant safety concerns for transference of carcinogens and toxins to other home clothing and textiles. No formal checklist for inspecting personal PPE is in use, despite the RDBN supplying one some time ago. There is no departmental inspection of all PPE annually or after a major incident. Both personal and departmental inspections, using recognized checklists, are required by WorkSafe BC OH&S Reg. Part 31.11 and 31.12.

**Recommendation 38:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all PPE, and in compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created and retained as per RDBN best practice.

Firefighting ladders are regulated by WorkSafe BC OH&S Reg. Part 31.37 – Ground Ladders. This section requires that all ground ladder use, storage, inspection, maintenance, and testing be done in accordance with NFPA 1932, Use, Maintenance, and Service Testing of Fire Department Ground Ladders, 1989 Ed. The CLVFD does not have their ground ladders inspected, tested, or maintained in accordance with this requirement.

**Recommendation 39:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records be created for all Ground Ladders and that regular testing to NFPA 1932 requirements be undertaken.

Fire hose is not regulated by WorkSafe BC regulation. The CLVFD has a stock of various hose types and sizes. Most of the hose is a synthetic rubber jacket type. The enables quick-dry drainage and storage without the required hanging of cotton jacket hose. The limited number of hoses that are cotton jacket within the CLVFD inventory have not been dried and stored properly as there is no heated and ventilated hose tower at the firehall. There is no inventory identifying the number of hose lengths, types or sizes owned by the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 40:** That the CLVFD immediately and permanently remove from service all cotton-jack hose in its inventory.

All 1.5” hose observed at CLVFD has forest service couplings. The large diameter hose, used for drafting and water supply lines, utilize camlock couplings. The department does not thoroughly test its hoses and no test records exist. There are no inspection or testing procedures, nor are their checklists.

**Recommendation 41:** That the CLVFD immediately undertake an inventory of all firehose to ensure functionality, compatibility, and number of each are known.

**Recommendation 42:** That the RDBN provide the CLVFD with hose inspection checklists and arrange for hose testing of all attack and supply line hoses at the earliest opportunity.

**Recommendation 43:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to fire hose coupling types.

The CLVFD has a portable water drafting pond, but does not utilize it, stating “it takes less time to shuttle back and forth to the lake”.

In general, the inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, and replacement programs for all equipment types at the CLVFD are lacking and require upgrade promptly.

### Apparatus

Due to the semi-remote location, extended travel distances and times, and lack of a formal water supply, CLVFD fire apparatus are not expected to meet Fire Underwriters Survey expectations.

The CLVFD operates two department apparatus. The front-line unit is Tender 11. Tender 11 is a 34-year-old, single cab, Type 1 Tender (OFC Inter-agency Operational Procedures and Reimbursement Rates – 2018) with a pumping capacity of 420 imperial gallons per minute (IGPM). This unit is gasoline powered with hydraulic brakes and resides in the firehall year-round. The unit is used from another department (Exhibit 11).

The second CLVFD unit is Tender 1. Tender 1 is a 42-year-old Type 2 Structural Engine with seating for 5 and an 840 IGPM pump. This unit is diesel powered with air brakes. This unit is stored outdoors year-round and is effectively stripped of all equipment and rendered out of service from first to last freeze annually. It is currently stored outside in the elements at the Brookside fueling and resort facility approximately 5 minutes from the firehall on Highway 16. The keys are left in it year-round, but it is not started or used in winter. This unit is not well suited to the Cluculz Lake area with only a 500-gallon water tank and large wheelbase. It was received used from another department (Exhibit 12).

The age and mechanical condition of both trucks expose them to a considerable risk of mechanical failure. Such a failure could possibly result in catastrophe should the failure be significant, and they be unable to respond to, or effectively fight, a fire.

**Recommendation 44:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively research replacement of Tender 1 with a more appropriate unit for the community such as a wildland engine/tender.

**Recommendation 45:** That Tender 11 be moved to a second-line role with replacement of Tender 1 and stored in an enclosed, secure, and ventilated facility year-round until a permanent firehall renovation can occur. Numerous possibilities exist, from local facilities, to container buildings, to temporary structures.

Pump testing though not required due to age and location, is recommended regularly to ensure functionality and performance. This has not occurred with the CLVFD as no records of any pump testing are present. It is unknown whether either unit had pump testing done at their previous departments. Annual Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspections (MVI) are done on both apparatuses according to the Fire Chief.

**Recommendation 46:** That regular pump testing be undertaken on both CLVFD apparatus in conjunction with testing done for other RDBN departments.

Fuel for each apparatus is obtained from the Brookside fueling facility year-round. There is no 24-hour key access for the department generally, but the owner/operator of the facility is the current fire chief and ensures that access can be obtained when required. There have been no occurrences where fuel was not available.

Only a limited number of department members habitually operate the two apparatus. Pre- and post-trip inspections are regularly performed on both apparatus (Tender 1 when in service only) though usually only by 1-2 of the members according to a quick review of the checklist log. Inspections utilize a checklist format that is comprehensive.

**Recommendation 47:** That all CLVFD members who may operate any apparatus regularly perform pre- and/or post-trip inspections on the apparatus on a regular basis as per the requirements of both their airbrake endorsement and commercial vehicle regulations.

## Facilities

The CLVFD has a single firehall facility located centrally within the response area on Lund Rd adjacent to the Community Hall. It is a small and rudimentary facility that does not meet the needs or requirements of a fire station, especially in a harsh climate. Parking and access for responding members is good with a large shared parking area and maintained access roads. The facility is well located to eliminate or minimize risk to the building from flood, fire, or snow accumulation. It is on high ground, is in an area well cleared of defensible space, and the road is one of the most travelled and thus best maintained in the response area.

The firehall itself is small, likely under 1000 square feet. Of major significance is the fact that the facility can only accommodate a single smaller fire apparatus, resulting in the second CLVFD apparatus being parked outside year-round exposed to the elements, which are sometimes extreme. Its location is 53.896214 Latitude and -123.568964 Longitude.

As a single room facility, it has parking for a single small fire apparatus, a small shelf/office area, a limited number of small storage cupboards, and some wall space for hanging equipment and PPE. The apparatus door is manually operated, challenging to operate, and could easily fail. The heating, ventilation and insulation are extremely limited and inadequate for keeping moisture down, heat in, cold out, and facilitating drying of equipment. Electrical circuitry is exposed and undersized. Most important, there are no cleaning or washroom/septic facilities which make decontamination and personal hygiene extremely difficult. An outhouse is nearby. Given normal use this is a serious concern, but especially now during a contagion pandemic (Exhibit 13).

The facility is not designed for the function it performs and lacks many fundamental components of a working fire station including washrooms, showers, secure file storage, office/training/meeting room(s), maintenance bench, hose drying tower or rack, PPE cleaning machines and drying system, and storage rooms. Dedicated areas for storage, drying and maintenance of PPE and SCBA are essential to ensure safety and functionality. Surplus storage for hose lengths is



required in a dry, warm, and ventilated space. Ideally an exhaust extraction system would be present, but given the low call volume and limited exposure, its high cost makes it a “want” versus a “need” at present.

The firehall is not connected via the internet to the Prince George FOCC dispatch and records management database. The CLVFD has full access to this support as a client of the FOCC. There is no base radio or telephone equipment or operability at the firehall.

**Recommendation 48:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish a joint committee to conduct a needs assessment for a firehall facility upgrade. Example suggestions for this are included in Exhibit 14.

The CLVFD has been considering a renovation or addition to the firehall for years. There is a small amount of funds realized through local fund-raising that is still set aside for this purpose in a “Building Fund”. The CLVFD has considered, but not proceeded with, submissions for senior level government funding toward upgrading the firehall. They have not followed through for a variety of reasons but primarily because of a lack of time and expertise.

**Recommendation 49:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate in researching, preparing, and submitting grant applications to all available funding sources to identify adequate funds to upgrade the firehall to an acceptable level for future operations.

### Water Supply & Extinguishing Agents

Cluculz Lake has no fixed water system anywhere in the response area, nor is one likely to be installed. Each property either utilizes a well or lake access. The CLVFD depends entirely upon temporary water supplies from the lake available at numerous identified access points. These access points are illustrated on response area maps that are posted at the firehall, located in each truck, and distributed to each firefighter (Exhibit 15). These access points are not, however secured, identified with signage, or maintained for access in any way by the CLVFD. Many, if not all, of the best access points are through private property or driveways and thus are subject to restriction and impediment without warning. The CLVFD are proficient in water drafting procedures and have identified processes and techniques that work well for the department.

No dry hydrants exist, though their presence would dramatically improve safety, speed, and guaranteed access to a clean water supply even when the lake is frozen over. Dry hydrants could be installed in areas that have public access and could also be positioned away from known traffic areas and obstructions.

In winter, when the lake is frozen, CLVFD members walk out onto the frozen lake, drill an access hole, and introduce the drafting hose. This a time consuming and dangerous operation.

**Recommendation 50:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore funding, including grants, to install a series of dry hydrants (4-6 recommended) around the perimeter of the lake at appropriately located access points (Exhibit 16).

Other than lake access, there are no fixed water supply/storage reservoirs available to the CLVFD. Access to these types of storage containers would facilitate better water supply during freezing weather if they could be kept partially heated. This would be especially beneficial at the firehall itself to facilitate clean water fill-up after drafting operations.

**Recommendation 51:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore, as part of a firehall upgrade, the installation of a large cistern, reservoir, or above ground tank at the firehall that would be heated to prevent freezing and would guarantee clean water year-round. It would be trickle filled from the firehall water supply.

The CLVFD utilizes Class A Foam for fire suppression with much success. The system in use introduces foam into functioning fire streams through a portable educator system creating a suppression blanket of foam and water. This system is useful for many general fire types, except electrical and fuel based. Compressed air-foam is not used or available.

Fire extinguishers are minimally available and filled as required. No fire extinguisher training program exist.

### Communication and Dispatch

The CLVFD has its own internal and rudimentary radio system. The CLVFD is licensed in Canada for use of Radio Frequency 171.5700 MHz and has permission from Vanderhoof VFD for use of their repeater and simplex frequencies on joint incidents.

The CLVFD radio system is a simplex system (line of sight) utilizing eight (8) handheld portable radios and a single mobile radio mounted in Tender 11. There is no repeater dedicated to the frequency. Four portable radios are distributed to four regularly responding members and the remaining portables are mounted in charger units behind the seat of Tender 11. The portables in the charger all appear to have failed batteries based upon the red flashing light indicator on the units. Remaining members of the department, 10 or so, do not have radio capability while responding in their personal vehicles. The three (3) frequencies are installed in the radios, along with a number of Forestry channels used in the region.

**Recommendation 52:** That a base radio set-up (eg. modified mobile radio) be obtained and installed in the firehall.

There is no repeater system in use. Radio coverage of the CLVFD response area is extremely limited due to distance and topography. Line of site communication is “hit and miss” and causes the department to infrequently use radios during operations. Access to a local repeater site, and associated duplex frequency capability, would dramatically improve department operations, radio functionality, and safety for radio users.

**Recommendation 53:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore opportunities to integrate the CLVFD radio system into a local repeater network, or alternatively obtain a dedicated repeater.

**Recommendation 54:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore purchase opportunities for further portable radios such that all individually responding members have direct radio communication with others in the department and/or dispatch.

Direct consultation was undertaken with both the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) Manager of Public Safety Operations, and the Prince George Fire Operations Control Center (FOCC) Dispatch Chief Communications Officer.

There is no radio communication capability between the CLVFD and their fire dispatch at Prince George FOCC. This is a significant safety concern, especially when numerous members are responding alone in personal vehicles. This same concern was also shared by the FOCC Manager in discussion with the consultant. For all other RDBN fire services, as well as many in the RDFFG, the FOCC utilizes a telephone interconnect “radio” system with a satellite system back-up. Both the FOCC and other users report strong system performance and resiliency.

Current procedures for 911 calls received for the CLVFD response area identify that the FOCC will enter the call into their FDM CAD system and then immediately transfer the call to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organization: Active911. Inc. which is located in Oregon, USA. Active911 provides an on-line “app” to emergency response agencies like CLVFD, to assist in simplified dispatch and tracking of incidents within their response area. As a USA-based company that requires an annual subscription and user enrollment, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) concerns for Canadian residents certainly apply. In the case of the CLVFD no alternative exists if a member does not wish to provide their personal information. This is problematic and may violate personal rights.

Once an incident has been transferred to Active911, the FOCC no longer has control or access to the call and has zero communication with the CLVFD unless a direct cellular phone call is made. As mentioned, the FOCC staff are concerned by this lack of status keeping capability as dispatchers currently have no idea whether the department received the call, is responding, or if anything has gone wrong. This has numerous safety implications in the event of a serious incident such as a firefighter emergency or MAYDAY.

FOCC has a back-up system for the CLVFD that involves a direct phone fan-out procedure whereby a designated member will be directly contacted via telephone by the dispatch center. In turn, a departmental internal phone fan-out would then be initiated.

There are no back-up system contingencies for either the CLVFD radio system or the FOCC/Active911 interface. Joining the RDBN dispatch network, along with implementing a repeater to the CLVFD radio system will greatly improve status keeping, operational redundancy and resiliency, as well as providing greater opportunity for alternatives to those concerned with protection of personal privacy. Active911 is effective and should be maintained regardless.

**Recommendation 55:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate with the RDFFG to bring CLVFD on-line with the FOCC dispatch telephone interconnect communication system utilized by the other RDBN fire services.

The CLVFD does not utilize the FDM reporting database provided by the FOCC as part of the client agreement between the RDBN and the RDFFG. CLVFD is a participant and fully authorized to use the system. However, there is no computer access to the internet in the firehall, and in turn the FOCC FDM database. This seriously limits the departments capability of meeting the reporting and records management requirements of the Playbook and the RDBN.

**Recommendation 56:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate installation of internet access at the CLVFD firehall along with utilization of the FOCC FDM database for incident reporting, at a minimum.

The RDBN currently has maps of the response area posted at the firehall. These maps should be updated, enlarged, plasticized and placed such that responders can easily annotate on the plastic sheet any information necessary about the incident, such as best access, and any location details for all responding members to see.

### Education, Prevention and Investigation Programs

The CLVFD does not engage in, nor are they responsible for, any public education programming or fire and life safety inspections. Being within a regional district, and as a Society fire service, these programs are not required. While greatly beneficial, public education programs such as FireSmart, Smoke Alarm Awareness and outdoor burning regulation, require both resources (people and material) as well as budget. In the case of CLVFD, budget is extremely limited, and these programs are not considered core services by either the department or community.

**Recommendation 57:** That the RDBN strongly consider supporting a FireSmart program initiative in the Cluculz Lake response area due to the topography and vegetation present, and because of the history of serious wildland fires in the area.

**Recommendation 58:** That the CLVFD strongly consider initiating a Public Educator position within the volunteer ranks (Exhibit 5). It is further recommended that the position be filled by a non-firefighter as a person who can dedicate their time and effort to prevention and education.

No fire investigations are undertaken by the CLVFD and no Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner (LAFC) is appointed for the department/response area. Fire investigations come under the authority and responsibility of the RCMP in the region. RCMP will attend and determine fire cause, particularly to rule out arson, as required. The OFC is available to assist as required by the RCMP.

## WHY STRIVE TO IMPROVE?

The RDBN, as well as the CLVFD and its members, are at a critical juncture. Do they all step up, accept the need to improve and act to fix shortcomings and gaps? Or does the RDBN walk away from the relationship due to liability concerns and leave the problems to the CLVFD?

There are many recommendations contained within this report and they are identified in two lists following: Recommendations by Topic Area, and Recommendations by Implementation Priorities.

Some of the study findings and recommendations may appear discouraging and require much time or effort. However, with renewed commitment and leadership from both parties there are better days ahead. The key reasons to step up to the challenges are as follows:

- Firefighter safety and health will improve markedly and the CLVFD will become stronger.
- Community members are going to receive better and more engaged service.
- The RDBN will minimize their risk exposure while simultaneously improving community and firefighter safety – a terrific win-win!
- Personal liability risk toward individual firefighters and the Society will be greatly reduced.
- Members' pride and family support will build through improved training and performance.
- Community support will build, and recruitment and retention of firefighters will be enhanced for the longer term.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is easy to be discouraged by the number and complexity of the recommendations. However, they are just a set of individual steps on the journey to a stronger organization and many will be quickly resolved, or at least improved, with a change in the governance model as recommended. Getting to a better place is essential to the RDBN, as well as the members of the CLVFD and community residents. As firefighters, the CLVFD are part of a strong brotherhood and sisterhood that is unique to community volunteerism (Exhibit 18).

There are areas that can quickly be improved to achieve compliance, such as utilizing the RDBN Regional Fire Chief as an initial training instructor. Completion of “low hanging fruit” will facilitate quick wins and will assist in generating a positive attitude toward change. This will lead to a mindset whereby the bigger challenges can be overcome.

Response Specialties greatly appreciates this opportunity to serve the RDBN and the community of Cluculz Lake. Our recommendations are direct because they are needed but we also fully recognize and empathize with the challenge ahead. Serious action is required, but this fire department has a demonstrated history of resilience and all parties now have recommendations and awareness to guide them forward. Please call on us if we can help further, or if any recommendations require further detail or clarification. The honest and forthright information that we provide will facilitate growth and enhancement of fire protection in the community for years to come.

Once again, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the assistance we have received from the RDBN Protective Services Department staff and the CLVFD leadership team.

## STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS - BY TOPIC AREA

Study recommendations are presented below by topic area. The foundational goal of the study is to provide remedies to meet, or exceed, Provincial and regional compliance standards in the safe and effective delivery of fire services.

### 1. General Governance

**Recommendation 1:** That the RDBN and CLVFD engage to establish a new formal governance relationship with the RDBN assuming official AHJ authority over the CLVFD, inclusive of all responsibilities of that authority. This change should occur quickly without referendum as there is no service level change contemplated, no taxation increases recommended, and the Society is fully supportive of the change.

**Recommendation 2:** That with a change in AHJ governance, the CLVFD Fire Chief will report through the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and not the CLVFD Society Board.

### 2. Financial Management

**Recommendation 3:** That the RDBN carefully consider the long-term issue of taxation increases in the Cluculz Lake fire response area but for the short-term, during authority transition, deliberately avoid adding financial burden to local taxpayers.

**Recommendation 4:** That the RDBN Economic Development Department and Regional Fire Chief lead the formulation and completion of grant submissions toward all future capital projects for the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 5:** That the RDBN and the CLVFD review current operational funding envelopes and plan for any necessary amendments in future years.

### 3. Records Management

**Recommendation 6:** That the CLVFD establish a secure filing system for paper copies of all personnel and operational records.

**Recommendation 7:** That the CLVFD engage with both the RDBN and the FOCC and begin electronic submission and storage of personnel, incident, and training records.

### 4. Human Resources

**Recommendation 8:** That the RDBN and CLVFD institute and implement an appropriate minimum training attendance requirement for the CLVFD, effective immediately.

**Recommendation 9:** That the CLVFD immediately activate and support a functioning OH&S program with support from the RDBN Regional Fire Chief on requirements.

**Recommendation 10:** That Driver Abstracts be requested from ICBC on an annual basis for all members of the CLVFD, and further that driving restrictions be implemented should any excessive number of demerit points or prohibition exist on an individual's license.

**Recommendation 11:** That an RCMP Criminal Record Check, including Vulnerable Sector, be implemented for all members upon hire, and every 3 years thereafter at department expense.

**Recommendation 12:** That new recruits obtain a certificate of fitness (mental and physical) from a registered physician identifying they are clear to assume the duties of a firefighter in the CLVFD. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department (Exhibit 4) on hire.

**Recommendation 13:** That regular general fitness assessments be made a component of the annual training program for all members, with attendance being compulsory.

**Recommendation 14:** That any CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses due to injury or illness for a period exceeding 3 months, or who has missed their compulsory annual fitness assessment, be made to undergo a full medical evaluation by a registered physician and be cleared of any associated health concerns prior to returning to active duty. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department.

**Recommendation 15:** That any healthy CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses for a period exceeding 6 months, regardless of reason, be made to undergo a full Exterior Firefighter skills assessment before returning to active duty.

## 5. Aid Agreements and Service Contracts

**Recommendation 16:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively explore establishing formal aid agreements with the Beaverley and Vanderhoof VFD's, as well as the BCWildfire Service.

## 6. Training

**Recommendation 17:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a training schedule including recruit training and regular member training session times and days, as well as materials/skills to be covered.

**Recommendation 18:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a documented multi-year training program covering all service areas and training requirements, with specific focus on the Playbook Exterior FF training level.

**Recommendation 19:** That the RDBN and CLVFD identify at least 2 qualified instructors outside the department to immediately begin delivery of Playbook Exterior Level training to a core group of CLVFD members.

**Recommendation 20:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief identify, train and mentor 1-2 internal CLVFD members for development as future Playbook Exterior Level instructors.

**Recommendation 21:** That the CLVFD identify a new Training Captain position to plan and instruct most of the department training (Exhibit 5).

**Recommendation 22:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief provide to the CLVFD, RDBN training record templates for use in recording individual and departmental training, as well as facilitating long-term records management and that the CLVFD regularly submit these training records to the RDBN Regional Fire Chief for permanent record storage.

**Recommendation 23:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify all service areas and associated skills in order to ensure the presence, and utilization, of appropriate training and evaluations.

## 7. Incident Response

**Recommendation 24:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify an appropriate policy and training program for personal vehicle response within the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 25:** That RDBN Operational Guideline 1.4.3 be re-written to state a minimum number of firefighters on any apparatus responding in emergency mode to be two (2), for safety, and that for routine (non-emergency response) the minimum staffing be one (1) qualified individual (Exhibit 6).

**Recommendation 26:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify the number of qualified firefighters who must be at a scene in order to undertake required fire-ground operations for various incident types (Exhibit 7).

**Recommendation 27:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify safe work practices involved with personal vehicle response to incidents.

**Recommendation 28:** That a specific incident response worksheet be created to facilitate data collection from incident scenes that will then populate the dispatch FDM incident database.

**Recommendation 29:** Specific service delivery activities should be identified, or excluded, within any new empowering bylaw or other policy document between the RDBN and the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 30:** The CLVFD incident response type matrix for departmental dispatch must be reviewed and validated against current practice and authorized service delivery.



## 8. Equipment

**Recommendation 31:** That a complete inventory of all CLVFD equipment and apparatus be undertaken to ensure items are known, functional, safe, and ready for use, and that required items that are not available are identified for purchase.

**Recommendation 32:** That a formal equipment inspection, maintenance, and testing program be initiated for all life safety, fire service, and power equipment. A formal checklist is to be created and utilized by all members of the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 33:** That inspection, maintenance, and testing records for all CLVFD equipment be retained as per RDBN records management practices and kept accessible to CLVFD members at the firehall for a period not less than 2 years.

**Recommendation 34:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all SCBA, including compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created, and retained as per RDBN best practice.

**Recommendation 35:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to SCBA types and training.

**Recommendation 36:** Until a contrary ruling has been provided by WorkSafe BC the RDBN and CLVFD should proceed with planning for establishment of a 10-year evergreen replacement schedule for all firefighter structural PPE.

**Recommendation 37:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish the number and type of PPE equipment that requires replacement under the 10-year criteria and develop an “evergreen schedule” within either the capital or operating budgets to facilitate compliance on a short and long-term basis (Exhibit 10).

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**Recommendation 51:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore, as part of a firehall upgrade, the installation of a large cistern, reservoir, or above ground tank at the firehall that would be heated to prevent freezing and would guarantee clean water year-round. It would be trickle filled from the firehall water supply.

## 12. Communications and Dispatch

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**Recommendation 53:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore opportunities to integrate the CLVFD radio system into a local repeater network, or alternatively obtain a dedicated repeater.

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**Recommendation 56:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate installation of internet access at the CLVFD firehall along with utilization of the FOCC FDM database for incident reporting, at a minimum.

## 13. Education, Inspection and Investigations

**Recommendation 57:** That the RDBN strongly consider supporting a FireSmart program initiative in the Cluculz Lake response area due to the topography and vegetation present, and because of the history of serious wildland fires in the area.

**Recommendation 58:** That the CLVFD strongly consider initiating a Public Educator position within the volunteer ranks (Exhibit 5). It is further recommended that the position be filled by a non-firefighter as a person who can dedicate their time and effort to prevention and education.

## STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS – IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

These priorities are subjective. The final acceptance, implementation, and prioritization of recommendations will always be the responsibility of the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).

### Urgent Priority

- Recommendation 1:** That the RDBN and CLVFD engage to establish a new formal governance relationship with the RDBN assuming official AHJ authority over the CLVFD, inclusive of all responsibilities of that authority. This change should occur quickly without referendum as there is no service level change contemplated, no taxation increases recommended, and the Society is fully supportive of the change.
- Recommendation 2:** That with a change in AHJ governance, the CLVFD Fire Chief will report through the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and not the CLVFD Society Board.
- Recommendation 6:** That the CLVFD establish a secure filing system for paper copies of all personnel and operational records.
- Recommendation 8:** That the RDBN and CLVFD institute and implement an appropriate minimum training attendance requirement for the CLVFD, effective immediately.
- Recommendation 9:** That the CLVFD immediately activate and support a functioning OH&S program with support from the RDBN Regional Fire Chief on requirements.
- Recommendation 17:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a training schedule including recruit training and regular member training session times and days, as well as materials/skills to be covered.
- Recommendation 19:** That the RDBN and CLVFD identify at least 2 qualified instructors outside the department to immediately begin delivery of Playbook Exterior Level training to a core group of CLVFD members.
- Recommendation 22:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief provide to the CLVFD, RDBN training record templates for use in recording individual and departmental training, as well as facilitating long-term records management and that the CLVFD regularly submit these training records to the RDBN Regional Fire Chief for permanent record storage.
- Recommendation 29:** Specific service delivery activities should be identified, or excluded, within any new empowering bylaw or other policy document between the RDBN and the CLVFD.
- Recommendation 32:** That a formal equipment inspection, maintenance, and testing program be initiated for all life safety, fire service, and power equipment. A formal checklist is to be created and utilized by all members of the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 38:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all PPE, and in compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created and retained as per RDBN best practice.

**Recommendation 40:** That the CLVFD immediately and permanently remove from service all cotton-jack hose in its inventory.

**Recommendation 41:** That the CLVFD immediately undertake an inventory of all firehose to ensure functionality, compatibility, and number of each are known.

**Recommendation 55:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate with the RDBN to bring CLVFD on-line with the FOCC dispatch telephone interconnect communication system utilized by the other RDBN fire services.

**Recommendation 57:** That the RDBN strongly consider supporting a FireSmart program initiative in the Cluculz Lake response area due to the topography and vegetation present, and because of the history of serious wildland fires in the area.

### Mid-term Priority

**Recommendation 4:** That the RDBN Economic Development Department and Regional Fire Chief lead the formulation and completion of grant submissions toward all future capital projects for the CLVFD.

**Recommendation 7:** That the CLVFD engage with both the RDBN and the FOCC and begin electronic submission and storage of personnel, incident, and training records.

**Recommendation 10:** That Driver Abstracts be requested from ICBC on an annual basis for all members of the CLVFD, and further that driving restrictions be implemented should any excessive number of demerit points or prohibition exist on an individual's license.

**Recommendation 12:** That new recruits obtain a certificate of fitness (mental and physical) from a registered physician identifying they are clear to assume the duties of a firefighter in the CLVFD. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department (Exhibit 4) on hire.

**Recommendation 15:** That any healthy CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses for a period exceeding 6 months, regardless of reason, be made to undergo a full Exterior Firefighter skills assessment before returning to active duty.

**Recommendation 18:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief and the CLVFD cooperatively develop and implement a documented multi-year training program covering all service areas and training requirements, with specific focus on the Playbook Exterior FF training level.

- Recommendation 23:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify all service areas and associated skills in order to ensure the presence, and utilization, of appropriate training and evaluations.
- Recommendation 24:** That the RDBN and CLVFD jointly identify an appropriate policy and training program for personal vehicle response within the CLVFD.
- Recommendation 27:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify safe work practices involved with personal vehicle response to incidents.
- Recommendation 30:** The CLVFD incident response type matrix for departmental dispatch must be reviewed and validated against current practice and authorized service delivery.
- Recommendation 31:** That a complete inventory of all CLVFD equipment and apparatus be undertaken to ensure items are known, functional, safe, and ready for use, and that required items that are not available are identified for purchase.
- Recommendation 34:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records for all SCBA, including compliance with all applicable legislation and regulation, be created, and retained as per RDBN best practice.
- Recommendation 36:** Until a contrary ruling has been provided by WorkSafe BC the RDBN and CLVFD should proceed with planning for establishment of a 10-year evergreen replacement schedule for all firefighter structural PPE.
- Recommendation 39:** That inspection, maintenance and testing checklists and records be created for all Ground Ladders and that regular testing to NFPA 1932 requirements be undertaken.
- Recommendation 42:** That the RDBN provide the CLVFD with hose inspection checklists and arrange for hose testing of all attack and supply line hoses at the earliest opportunity.
- Recommendation 44:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively research replacement of Tender 1 with a more appropriate unit for the community such as a wildland engine/tender.
- Recommendation 47:** That all CLVFD members who may operate any apparatus regularly perform pre- and/or post-trip inspections on the apparatus on a regular basis as per the requirements of both their airbrake endorsement and commercial vehicle regulations.
- Recommendation 48:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish a joint committee to conduct a needs assessment for a firehall facility upgrade. Example suggestions for this are included in Exhibit 14.
- Recommendation 49:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate in researching, preparing, and submitting grant applications to all available funding sources to identify adequate funds to upgrade the firehall to an acceptable level for future operations.

**Recommendation 50:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore funding, including grants, to install a series of dry hydrants (4-6 recommended) around the perimeter of the lake at appropriately located access points (Exhibit 16).

**Recommendation 51:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore, as part of a firehall upgrade, the installation of a large cistern, reservoir, or above ground tank at the firehall that would be heated to prevent freezing and would guarantee clean water year-round. It would be trickle filled from the firehall water supply.

**Recommendation 53:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore opportunities to integrate the CLVFD radio system into a local repeater network, or alternatively obtain a dedicated repeater.

**Recommendation 56:** That the RDBN and CLVFD coordinate installation of internet access at the CLVFD firehall along with utilization of the FOCC FDM database for incident reporting, at a minimum.

### Longer-term Priority

**Recommendation 3:** That the RDBN carefully consider the long-term issue of taxation increases in the Cluculz Lake fire response area but for the short-term, during authority transition, deliberately avoid adding financial burden to local taxpayers.

**Recommendation 5:** That the RDBN and the CLVFD review current operational funding envelopes and plan for any necessary amendments in future years.

**Recommendation 11:** That an RCMP Criminal Record Check, including Vulnerable Sector, be implemented for all members upon hire, and every 3 years thereafter at department expense.

**Recommendation 13:** That regular general fitness assessments be made a component of the annual training program for all members, with attendance being compulsory.

**Recommendation 14:** That any CLVFD member who has been absent from training or responses due to injury or illness for a period exceeding 3 months, or who has missed their compulsory annual fitness assessment, be made to undergo a full medical evaluation by a registered physician and be cleared of any associated health concerns prior to returning to active duty. Costs for this request must be reimbursed by the fire department.

**Recommendation 16:** That the RDBN and CLVFD cooperatively explore establishing formal aid agreements with the Beaverley and Vanderhoof VFD's, as well as the BCWildfire Service.

**Recommendation 20:** That the RDBN Regional Fire Chief identify, train and mentor 1-2 internal CLVFD members for development as future Playbook Exterior Level instructors.

**Recommendation 21:** That the CLVFD identify a new Training Captain position to plan and instruct most of the department training (Exhibit 5).

**Recommendation 25:** That RDBN Operational Guideline 1.4.3 be re-written to state a minimum number of firefighters on any apparatus responding in emergency mode to be two (2), for safety, and that for routine (non-emergency response) the minimum staffing be one (1) qualified individual (Exhibit 6).

**Recommendation 26:** That a new RDBN Operational Guideline be written to identify the number of qualified firefighters who must be at a scene in order to undertake required fire-ground operations for various incident types (Exhibit 7).

**Recommendation 28:** That a specific incident response worksheet be created to facilitate data collection from incident scenes that will then populate the dispatch FDM incident database.

**Recommendation 33:** That inspection, maintenance, and testing records for all CLVFD equipment be retained as per RDBN records management practices and kept accessible to CLVFD members at the firehall for a period not less than 2 years.

**Recommendation 35:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to SCBA types and training.

**Recommendation 37:** That the RDBN and CLVFD establish the number and type of PPE equipment that requires replacement under the 10-year criteria and develop an “evergreen schedule” within either the capital or operating budgets to facilitate compliance on a short and long-term basis (Exhibit 10).

**Recommendation 43:** That the RDBN and CLVFD confirm compatibility challenges and opportunities with neighbouring fire services related to fire hose coupling types.

**Recommendation 45:** That Tender 11 be moved to a second-line role with replacement of Tender 1 and stored in an enclosed, secure, and ventilated facility year-round until a permanent firehall renovation can occur. Numerous possibilities exist, from local facilities, to container buildings, to temporary structures.

**Recommendation 46:** That regular pump testing be undertaken on both CLVFD apparatus in conjunction with testing done for other RDBN departments.

**Recommendation 52:** That a base radio set-up (eg. modified mobile radio) be obtained and installed in the firehall.

**Recommendation 54:** That the RDBN and CLVFD explore purchase opportunities for further portable radios such that all individually responding members have direct radio communication with others in the department and/or dispatch.

**Recommendation 58:** That the CLVFD strongly consider initiating a Public Educator position within the volunteer ranks (Exhibit 5). It is further recommended that the position be filled by a non-firefighter as a person who can dedicate their time and effort to prevention and education.



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## EXHIBIT – 1 Organizational Challenges placed upon BC Fire Services

This exhibit shows the various organizational challenges that fire services face to simply operate within British Columbia.

This diagram is not all-inclusive but provides a general overview of the complexity involved in fire service performance.



Image property of Response Specialties (March 2020)

## EXHIBIT – 2 Legislative Challenges placed upon BC Fire Services

This exhibit shows the various legislative, regulatory and performance assessment frameworks within which the fire department must operate. These comprehensive and diverse compliance requirements on fire service operations and performance are in place for the following reasons:

- Protect and improve firefighter safety
- Ensure that fire services can meet community needs
- Increase the safety of fire service “customers”
- Improve fire service performance

This diagram is not all-inclusive but provides a general overview of the complexity in governance.



Image property of Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT – 3** Introductory letter to the Cluculz Lake community**Response Specialties**[ResponseSpecialties@shaw.ca](mailto:ResponseSpecialties@shaw.ca)

778.554.1783

*“Evidence-based Innovation and Advancement of Public Safety”***March 12, 2020****Re: 2020 Cluculz Lake Fire Department Study**

Dear Resident of Cluculz Lake,

Response Specialties Consulting (RSC) has been retained by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to undertake a comprehensive and transparent assessment of the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department (CLVFD). As part of the project we are facilitating a short survey and are seeking your assistance and engagement.

RSC is based in Pitt Meadows, British Columbia. Don Jolley created the consultancy to specialize in evaluations and recommendations for smaller fire services. Our breadth of experience extends into operations and administration with multiple agencies and organizations and includes organizational review and change, legislation and bylaws, policy and procedure, training, emergency response, and community risk reduction & education. Our full range of services, our background and a more fulsome description of the company can be found at [www.responsespecialties.com](http://www.responsespecialties.com).

RSC is committed to creating a process and final report that provides a comprehensive and transparent review of the administration and operation of the CLVFD. Our principle focus will be to assess the feasibility and provide recommendations for continued operation of the CLVFD to meet the required standards as set forth by the Province of British Columbia through the BC Structure Firefighter Training Playbook, WorkSafe BC, the BC *Fire Services Act*, and other legislation and regulations where applicable.

If you could kindly visit the link below no later than March 26, 2020 and complete the short survey. We will be hosting a community open house on March 28, 2020 at the Cluculz Lake Community Hall at 3 p.m., located at 3385 Lund Road, to discuss the study and the survey results. We would greatly appreciate your participation.

[www.rdbn.bc.ca/clvfd](http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/clvfd)

Respectfully,

**EXHIBIT – 4** Example of a Medical Fit for Duty Assessment Form

## FIRE DEPARTMENT Medical Examination Form

SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GIVEN NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Care Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / B.C.  
(Street) (City)**OCCUPATION “FIREFIGHTER” – VOLUNTEER**

The medical examination to be performed by a Physician is to determine if the person above has maintained an acceptable level of health and has not contracted any disabling disease or disability to prevent their effective functioning in the position of a firefighter.

*The regular duties of a firefighter may include prolonged anaerobic exertion, heavy lifting, working in confined or awkward positions, ability to immediately function upon waking from deep sleep, and exposure to high mental stress.*

The Physician shall determine, using any testing procedure he/she feels necessary, if the above person is fit for active firefighting duties so that the firefighter will NOT jeopardize himself/herself and other personnel or public that he/she may come in contact with while performing his/her duties.

***The following is to be completed by a Licensed Physician***

\_\_\_\_\_ **is / is not** (please circle appropriate)  
(NAME)

**physically and mentally fit for firefighting duties as per the above requirements.**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

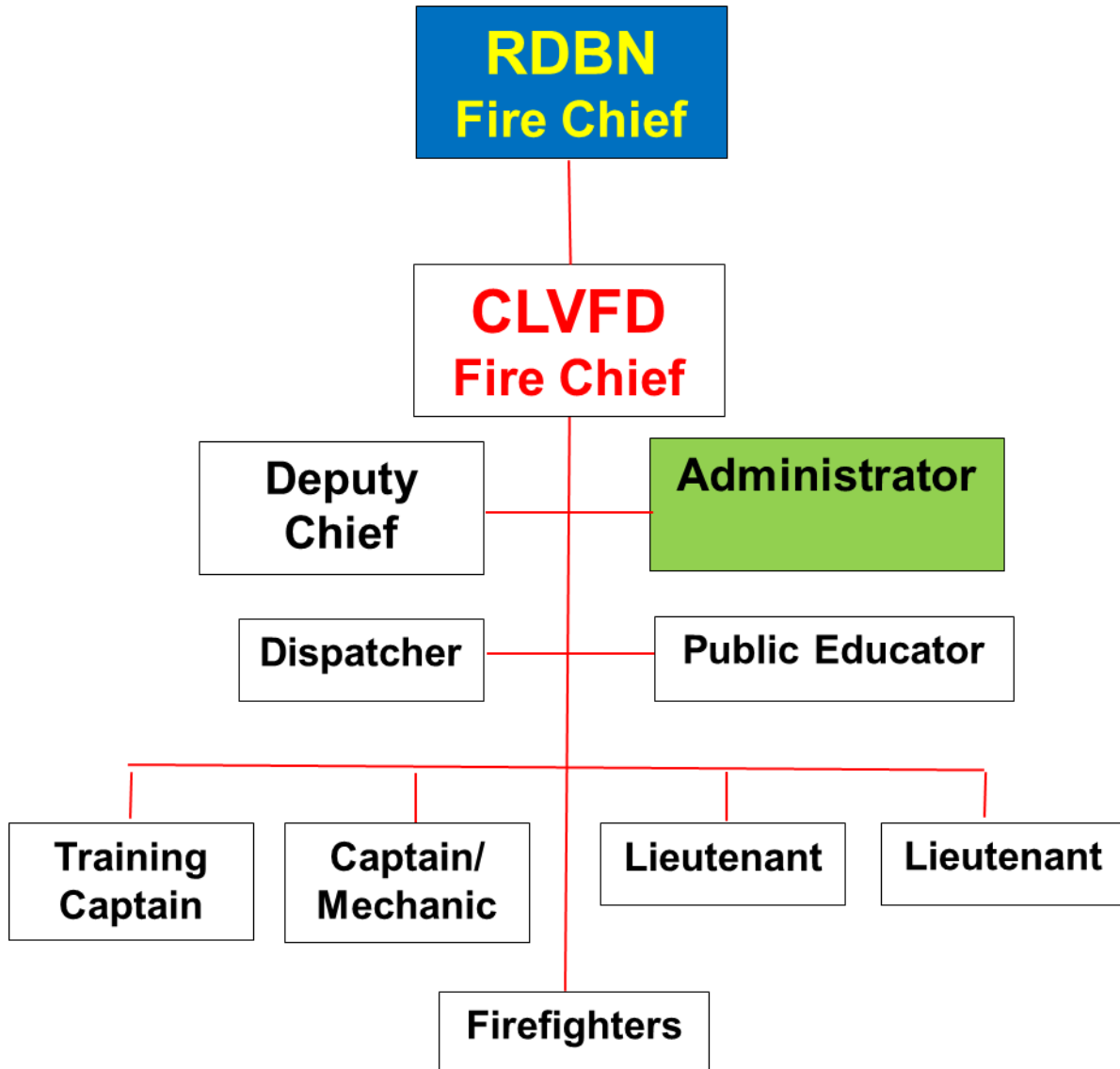
Physician Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician Address: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Example property of Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT – 5** Recommended Reporting Structure and Organizational Chart design



## EXHIBIT – 6 Recommendation 25

### **Recommended wording for changes to RDBN OG #1.4.3 – Required Number of Responding Personnel**

**Purpose:** To ensure that there is an adequate number of trained personnel responding on each apparatus to each specific type of incident.

**Scope:** All Fire Department Members

**Guideline:** There must be an adequate number of trained personnel available to respond on the apparatus PRIOR to departure from the firehall.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Drivers of any apparatus must be trained and qualified on that apparatus, or equivalent.
2. Apparatus will not respond to an incident in emergency mode (“lights and siren”) unless at least two (2) trained personnel are on board.
3. Apparatus may respond to an incident in routine mode (no-emergency) with only a single trained driver on board.
4. All personnel responding on an apparatus must have appropriate firefighting PPE on board.
5. Attempts should be made to have at least one senior firefighter or officer on board before responding, if possible.

#### **References:**

## EXHIBIT – 7 Recommendation 26

### Recommended wording for **NEW** RDBN OG – Required Number of Personnel at Incident Scenes

**Purpose:** To ensure that there is an adequate number of trained personnel on scene at each specific type of incident.

**Scope:** All Fire Department Members

**Guideline:** The Incident Commander must be an adequate number of trained personnel available on scene to initiate safe and effective incident management activities.

**Procedure:**

1. An Incident Commander must be identified at every incident scene.
2. The following minimum number of personnel, including the Incident Commander, must be present:
  - a. Structural Fire Exterior Defensive-only Response – TWO (2)
  - b. Structural Fire Exterior Attack Response – FOUR (4)
  - c. Wildland Fire Response – THREE (3)
  - d. Road Rescue Response – FOUR (4)
  - e. Medical First Response – TWO (2)
3. All personnel on scene must be wearing all appropriate firefighting PPE, including SCBA if indicated.
4. NO EXTERIOR QUALIFIED FIREFIGHTER MAY ENTER AN IDLH ENVIRONMENT AT ANY TIME.

**References:**



**EXHIBIT – 8** CLVFD Incident Responses (2016 – 2019)

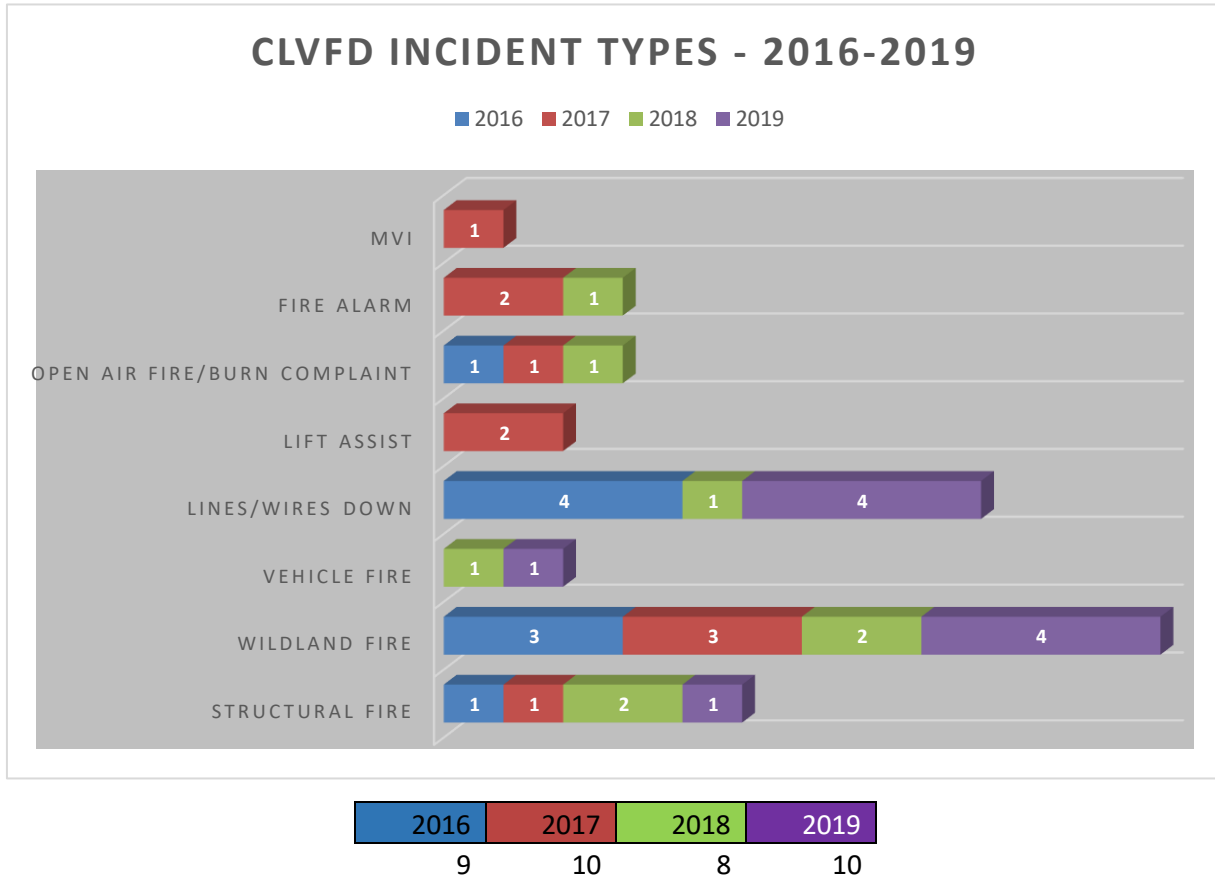


Image reproduced for Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT – 9** Example long-term Capital Improvement Schedule (Excel format)

**10 year Capital Improvement Worksheet**

Item	Project #	Purchase Year	Life expectancy (years)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Firehall Addition / Renovation															
Engine															
Engine															
Tender															
SCBA packs															
SCBA Cylinders															
Portable Radios															
Base Station Radio															
Fire hose 1.75 in															
Fire hose 2.5 in															
Ladders															
PPE Sets (per Evergreen Schedule)															
<b>Projected Annual Total</b>				<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>															
	<b>ERRF</b>	ERRF - Equipment Replacement Reserve Fund				<b>LCRF</b>	LCRF - Life Cycle Reserve Fund								
	<b>Grant</b>					<b>FCRF</b>	FCRF - Facility Capital Replacement Fund								

Image and spreadsheet property of Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT – 10 Recommendation 37**

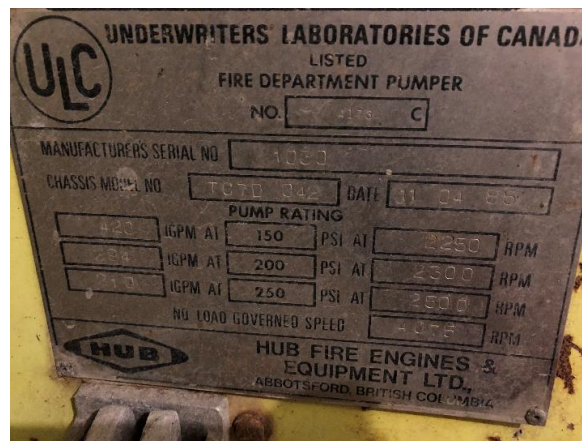
**Example of a PPE Evergreen Replacement Schedule (Excel format)**

**Personal Protective Equipment - PPE  
Evergreen Replacement Schedule**

<b>2015 - 2025 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) set replacement schedule</b>											
Current inventory of 32 active + 13 spare sets of PP (Need inventory of at least 38 active + 18 spare into future as POC numbers increase)											
2008	3		Securitex								
2009	9		Morning Pride								
2010	7		Morning Pride								
2011	7		Morning Pride								
2012	5		4- Morning Pride; 1 - Fire Dex								
2013	6		Morning Pride								
2014	4		Fire Dex								
2015	8		Morning Pride								
+											
<i>All units purchased from 2005 - 2007 have already failed inspection/repair and have all been removed from service and replaced.</i>											
<b>The following evergreen schedule meets the required and/or anticipated inventory requirements, as well as industry lifespan standards</b>											
6 sets per year to be replaced starting in 2016											
	current	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2008	3	2									
2009	9	9	8	7							
2010	7	7	7	6	5						
2011	7	7	7	7	6	5					
2012	5	5	5	5	5	4	3				
2013	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	4			
2014	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2		
2015	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	6	
2016		6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	4
2017			6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5
2018				6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
2019					6	6	6	6	6	6	6
2020						6	6	6	6	6	6
2021							6	6	6	6	6
2022								6	6	6	6
2023									6	6	6
2024										6	6
2025											6
<b>TOTAL</b>		54	57	61	58	57	56	57	57	59	57
<i>On this cycle a consistent replacement schedule will be achieved for the PPE to meet their required operational life time of 10 yrs. As well, allowances are made for early replacement of damaged sets within this cycle. The cycle is flexible and dynamic to meet current needs.</i>											

Image and spreadsheet property of Response Specialties (March 2020)

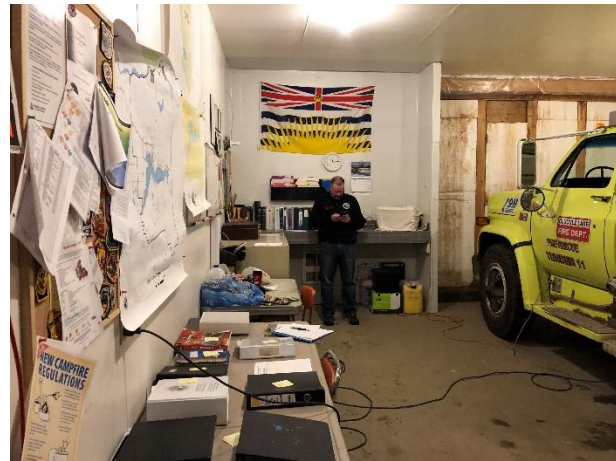
**EXHIBIT - 11** Tender 11 - CLVFD's front-line apparatus (1985)



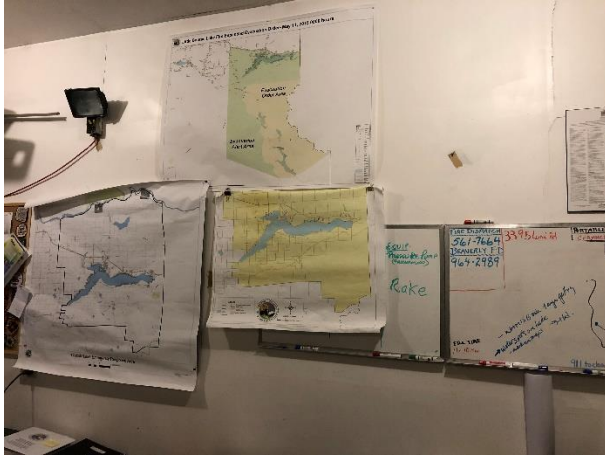
All photos by Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT - 12** Tender 1 – CLVFD’s second-line apparatus (1978)

All photos by Response Specialties (March 2020)

**EXHIBIT - 13** CLVFD Firehall

All photos by Response Specialties (March 2020)



All photo by Response Specialties (March 2020)

## EXHIBIT – 14 Firehall Needs Assessment

### Existing Building

Enclose the entire existing building to make it:

- a) A large training room
- b) An office space with counter, telephone and internet access, computer, printer/scanner
- c) Wall and shelves for operational documentation and maps
- d) File cabinets for secure records management

### Building Addition

Construct a structure to house the following:

- a) Two large apparatus bays – for modern fire apparatus – that face toward the parking lot and have remote controlled bay doors
- b) Floors of addition to be reinforced concrete to withstand apparatus weight, including water
- c) Man doors to be installed between the new and old buildings, to the rear and on the west side
- d) Entire structure to be well lit, have complete HVAC, heavy-duty electrical, and air exchange/movement capability
- e) A locking unisex washroom with separate locking shower facility
- f) Septic drainage into a septic field/container, possibly located beneath the new addition
- g) A large storage room for hose, SCBA and other large equipment
- h) A storage room for perishable and smaller equipment
- i) A maintenance workbench of at least 2 meters in length

The Sea-Can container should be moved to the west end of the new addition, or at its rear.

A connected or stand-alone heated water reservoir would be valued at the firehall to provide clean water year-round.



**EXHIBIT – 15** Cluculz Lake Water Supply Access Points

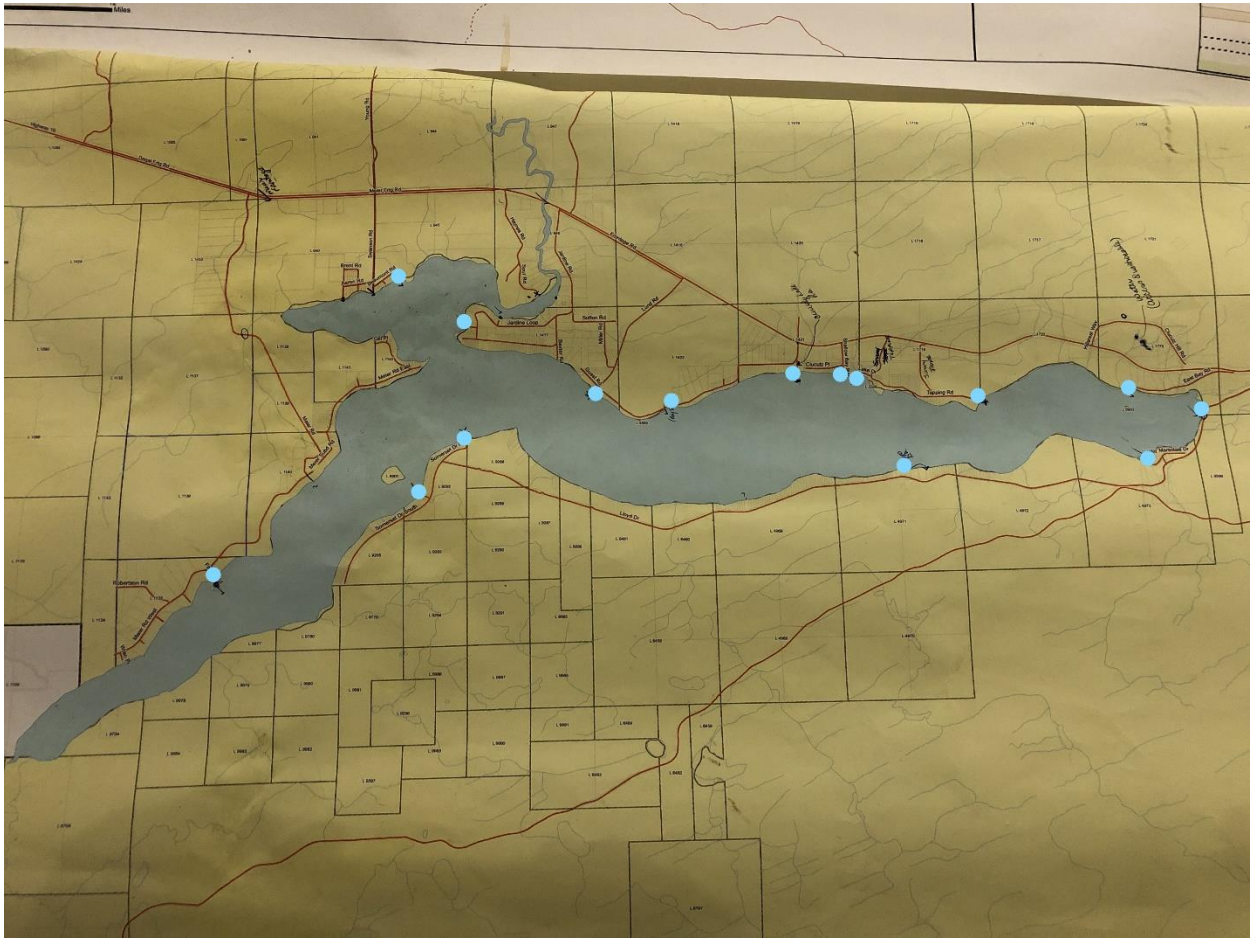


Photo by Response Specialties (March 2020)

## EXHIBIT – 16 Dry Fire Hydrant

In rural areas where municipal water systems are not available, dry hydrants are used to supply water for fighting fires. A dry hydrant is analogous to a standpipe. A dry hydrant is usually an unpressurized, permanently installed pipe that has one end well below the water level of a lake or pond. For northern areas it needs to be below the typical freeze depth where it enters the water body. The underwater end has a strainer to prevent debris from entering the pipe. The above ground end drops vertically into the ground to below the frost/freeze layer. It has a hard sleeve connector to attach to the drafting hose from the fire apparatus.

When water is needed, a tender or engine will connect to the dry hydrant and pump from the lake or pond by drafting water. This is done by vacuuming the air out of the dry hydrant, hard sleeve, and the fire pump with a primer. Because lower pressure now exists at the pump intake, atmospheric pressure on the water and the weight of the water forces water into part of the dry hydrant above water, into the hard sleeve, and finally into the pump. This water can then be pumped out to fire hoses by the fire apparatus.

Since no water exists within the vertical part of the system when not being used, the pipe will not freeze and break and will remain functional year-round even in freezing weather.



Source: "What is a dry hydrant?" – Insurance Basics You Tube video, March 29, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aiSp2gAdas>

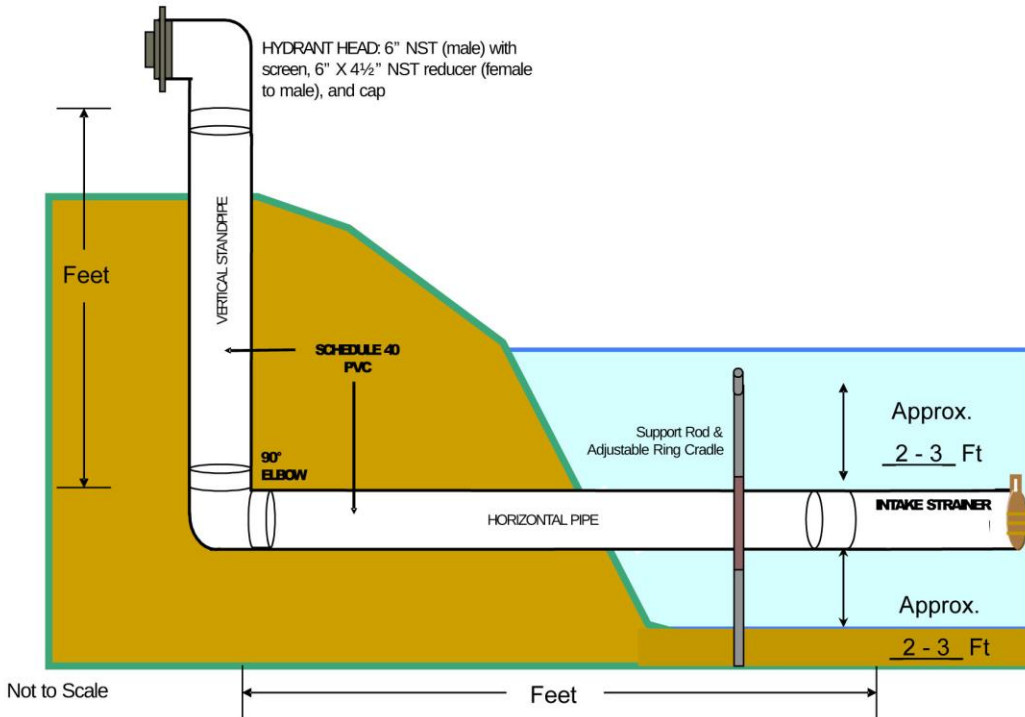


Source: Kocheck Company Inc. Safety Equipment.  
<https://www.kocheck.com/shop/dry-hydrant-reflective-sign/>



Source: South Sumter Fire Department (2016).  
<http://www.southsumterfire.org/?m=201602>

Example installation (exact measurements TBD based upon frost/freeze depths in area):



Source: Bob Lusk Outdoors, Valuable Pond Amenities: Siphons and Dry Hydrants.  
<https://www.bobluskoutdoors.com/articles/valuable-pond-amenities-siphons-dry-hydrants-2017-08-3603>

## EXHIBIT – 17 Comparison of community volunteers and volunteer firefighters

This exhibit shows the key differences between regular community volunteers and volunteer firefighters

Factor	Community Volunteer	Volunteer Firefighter	Notes
Annual time requirements/ expectations	Modest	Training 150 hours; callouts 150 hours	
Randomness of time requirements	Predictable hours	Predictable training hours; random hours call out	
Volunteer safety	Not an issue	Unpredictable dangers and safety risks	
Regulatory environment	None to modest	Heavy regulation by WorkSafe BC and other agencies	
Certification environment	None	Volunteers required to maintain their certifications (e.g. driving; firefighting; medical skills, safety practices; records)	
Life safety/health impacts	None	Can be major long-term health risks	
Risk of Post-Traumatic Stress Injury/Disorder (PTSI/PTSD)	None	Mental injury very possible based on viewing of serious accident scenes; often over many years	
Training requirements	Modest, usually informal and common sense	Major start up and continuing training requirements throughout their service	
Attendance standards	Usually optional	Attendance standards generally required for training and callouts	
Length of commitment	Usually for up to a year at one time	Commitment is expected to be for many years	
Impacts on personal life	None	Need to be sober and fit for duty essentially all the time. Must be prepared to leave home or work immediately for incidents	

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## ATTACHMENT – A Community Engagement Survey

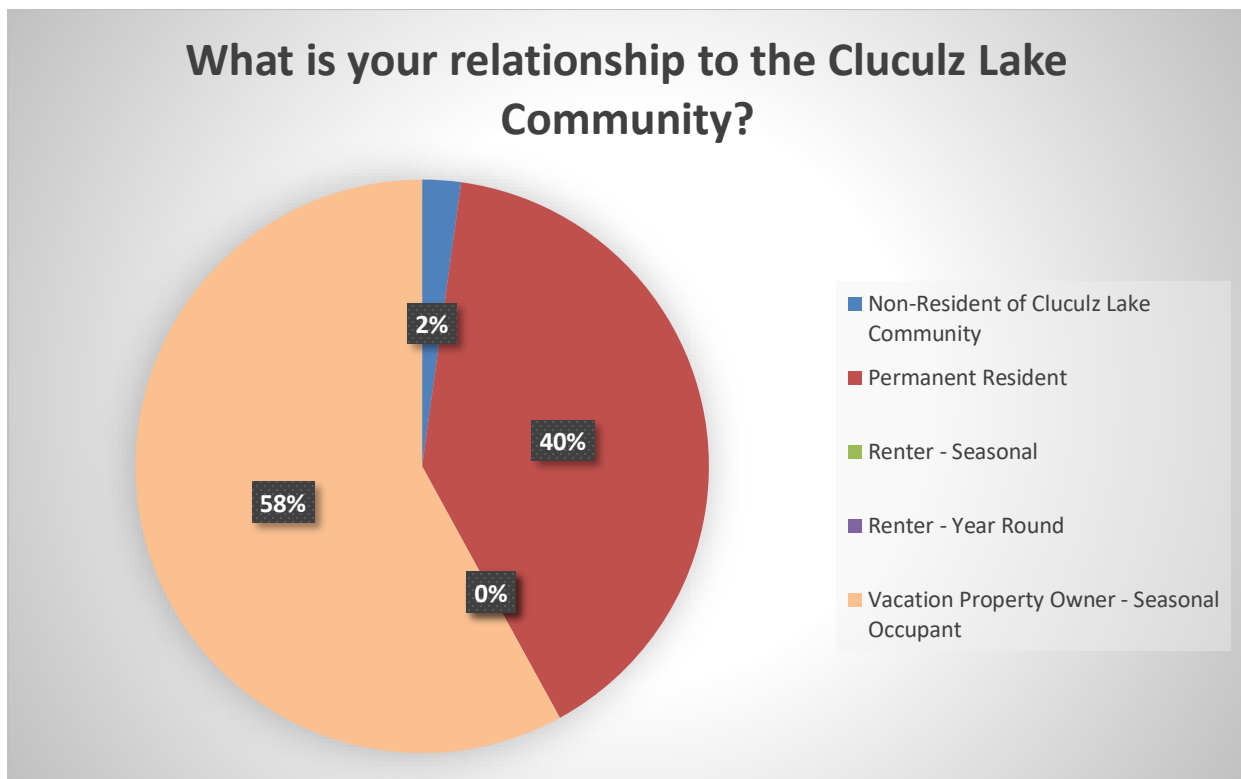
This attachment is comprised of the entire Community on-line survey and graphic depiction of responses. Responses were requested from all 931 title holders within the CLVFD fire response area. The survey was created by Response Specialties and distributed through the RDBN website to make it readily accessible to all respondents. There were 138 responses in total which is a 14.8% return: average for similar survey types according to [www.surveygizmo.com](http://www.surveygizmo.com).

### Cluculz Lake VFD – Survey and Results

931 letters distributed - 138 Survey Responses (14.8% Return Rate)

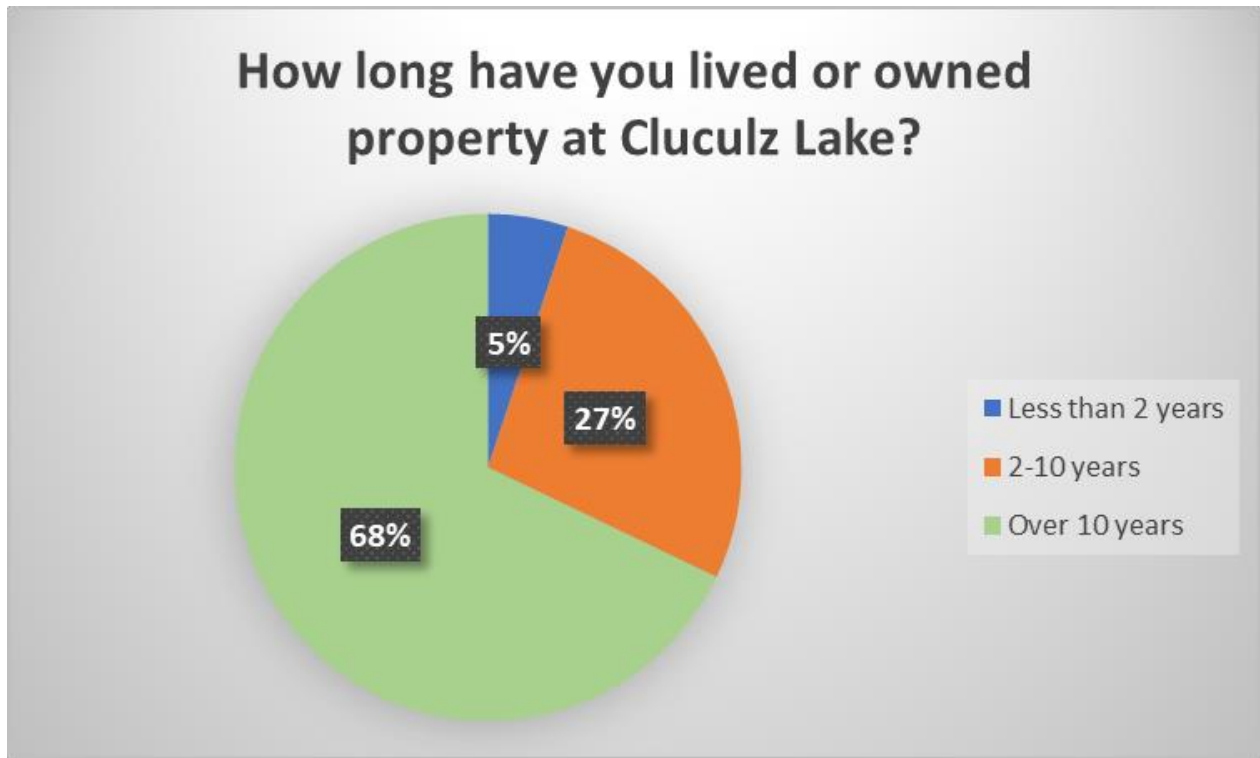
(not all respondents answered every question)

#### Question #1



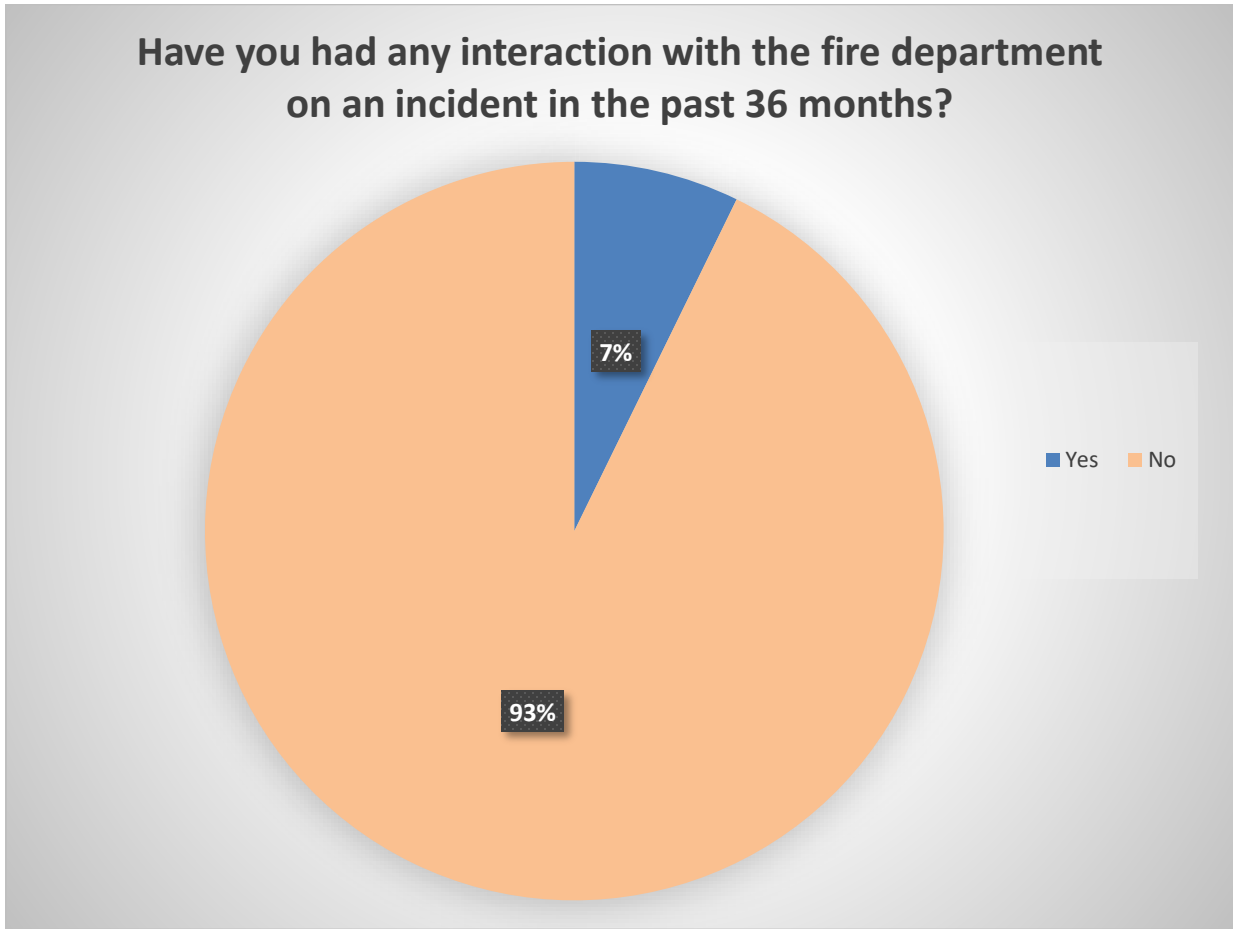
(138 responses)

Question #2



(137 Responses)

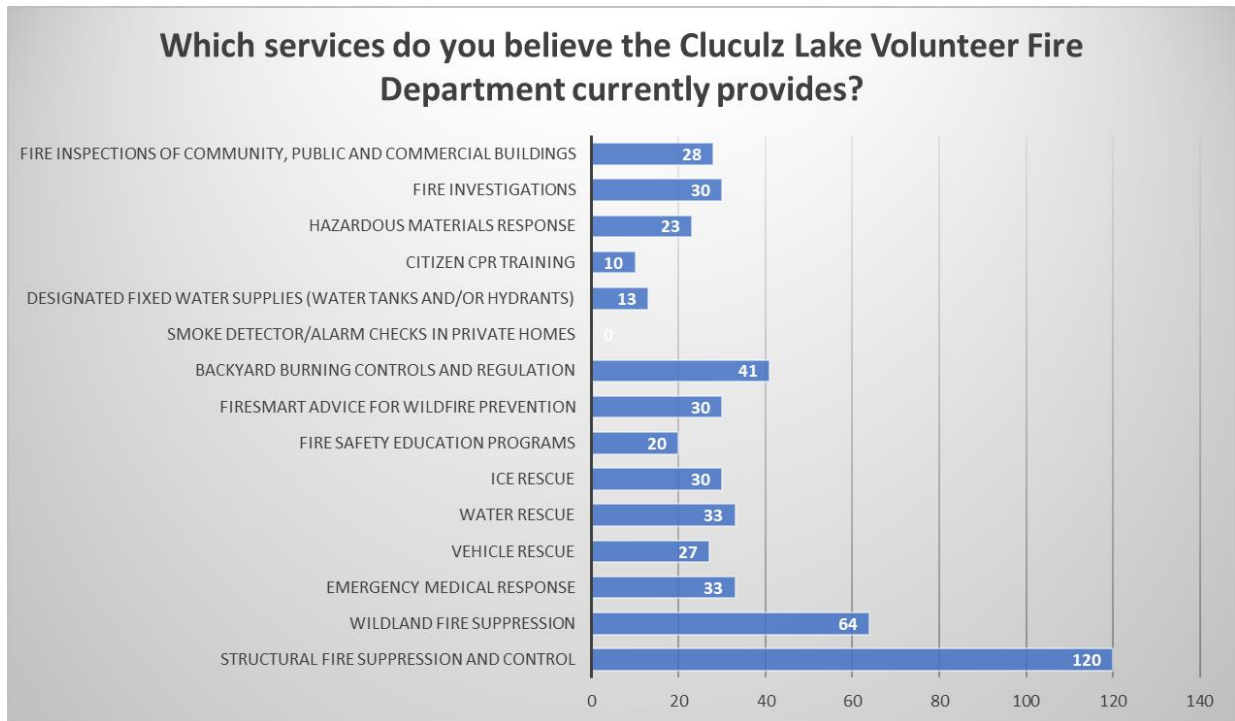
**Question #3**



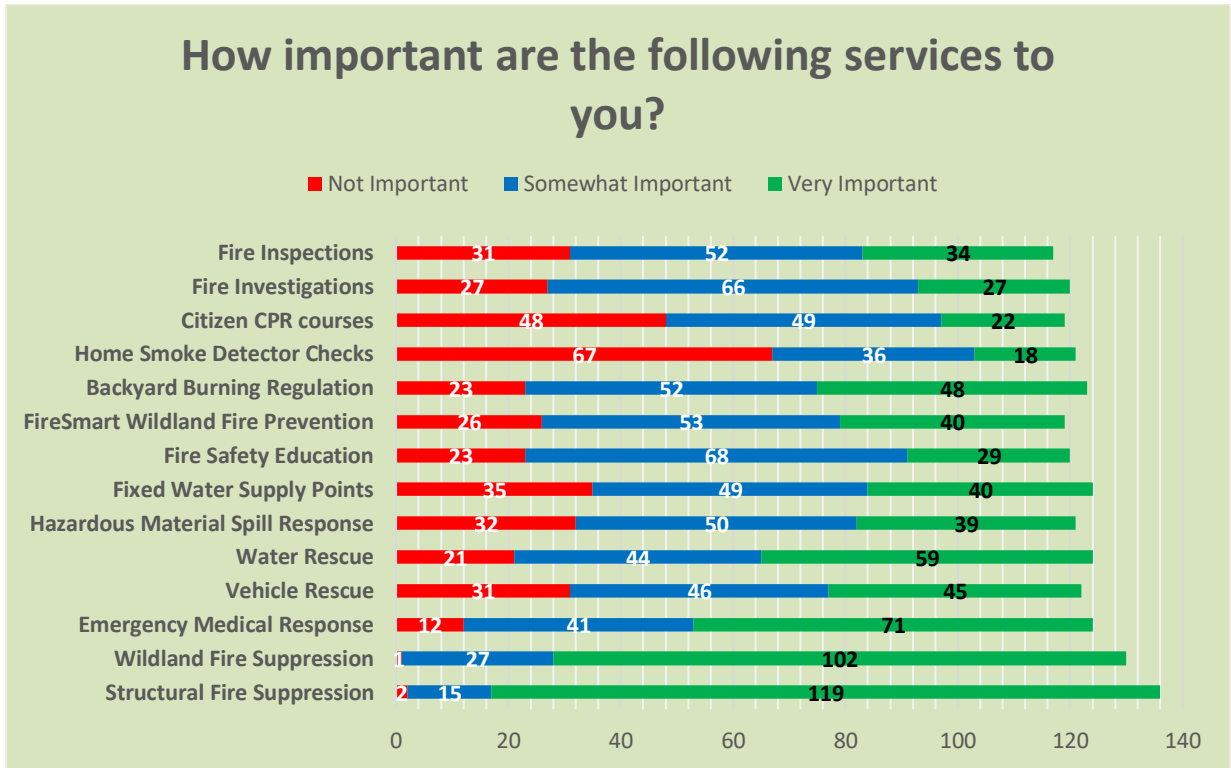
**(138 responses)**



### Question #4

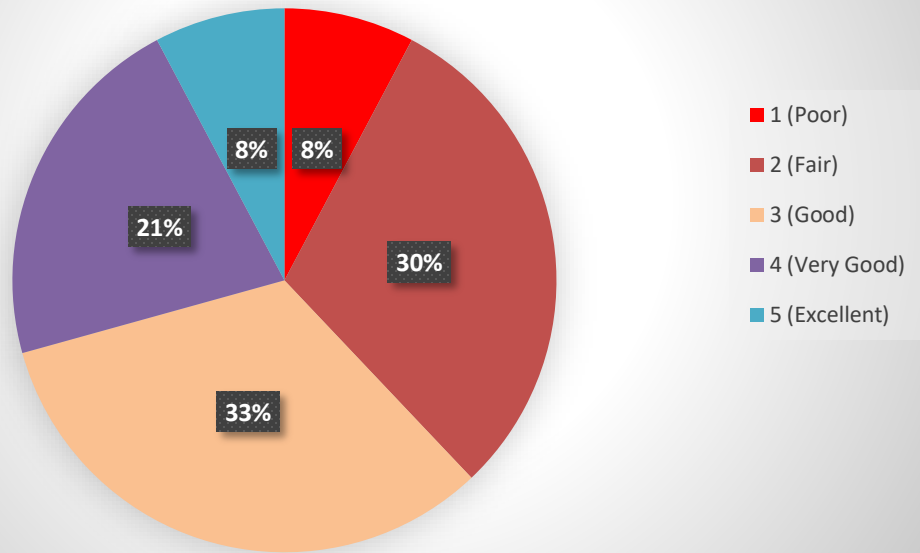


Question #5



**Question #6**

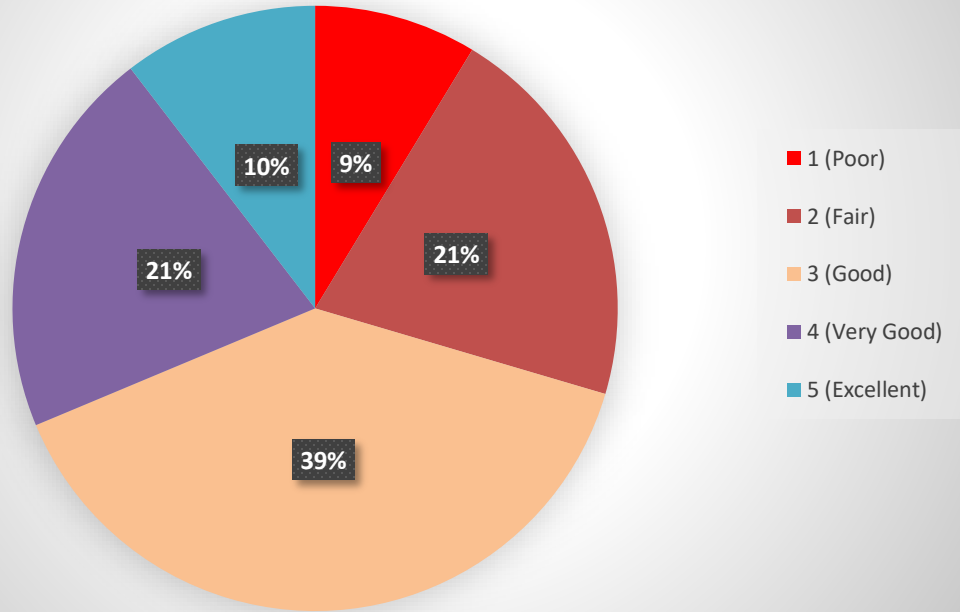
**How would you rate the ability to the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department to respond in a prompt manner to emergencies?**



**(116 Responses)**

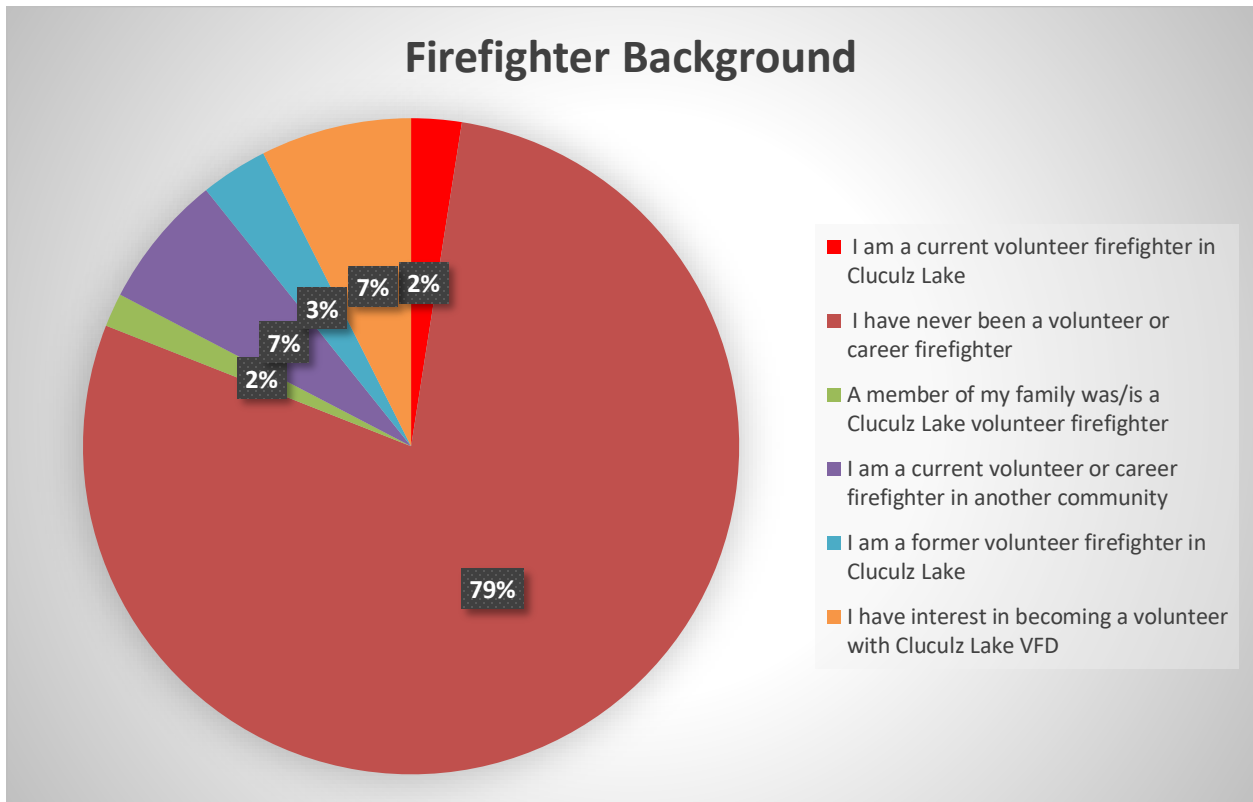
**Question #7**

**How would you rate the service provided by the Cluculz Lake Volunteer Fire Department?**



**(115 responses)**

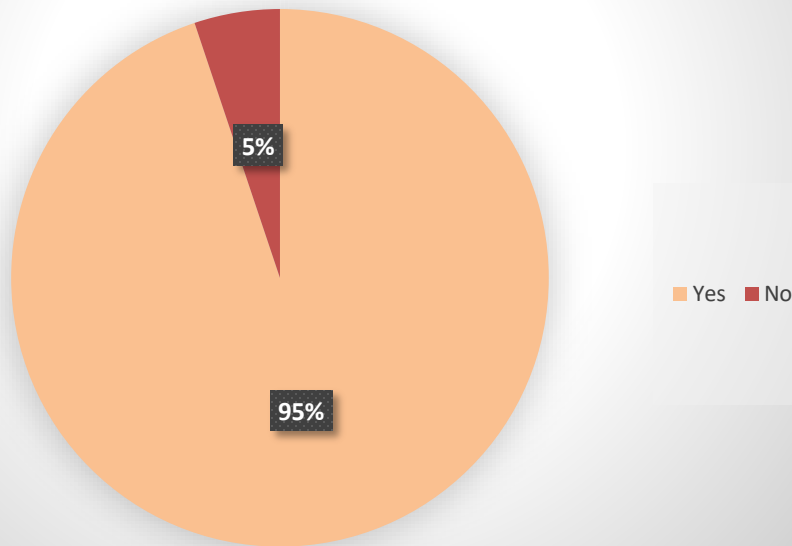
Question #8



(121 Responses)

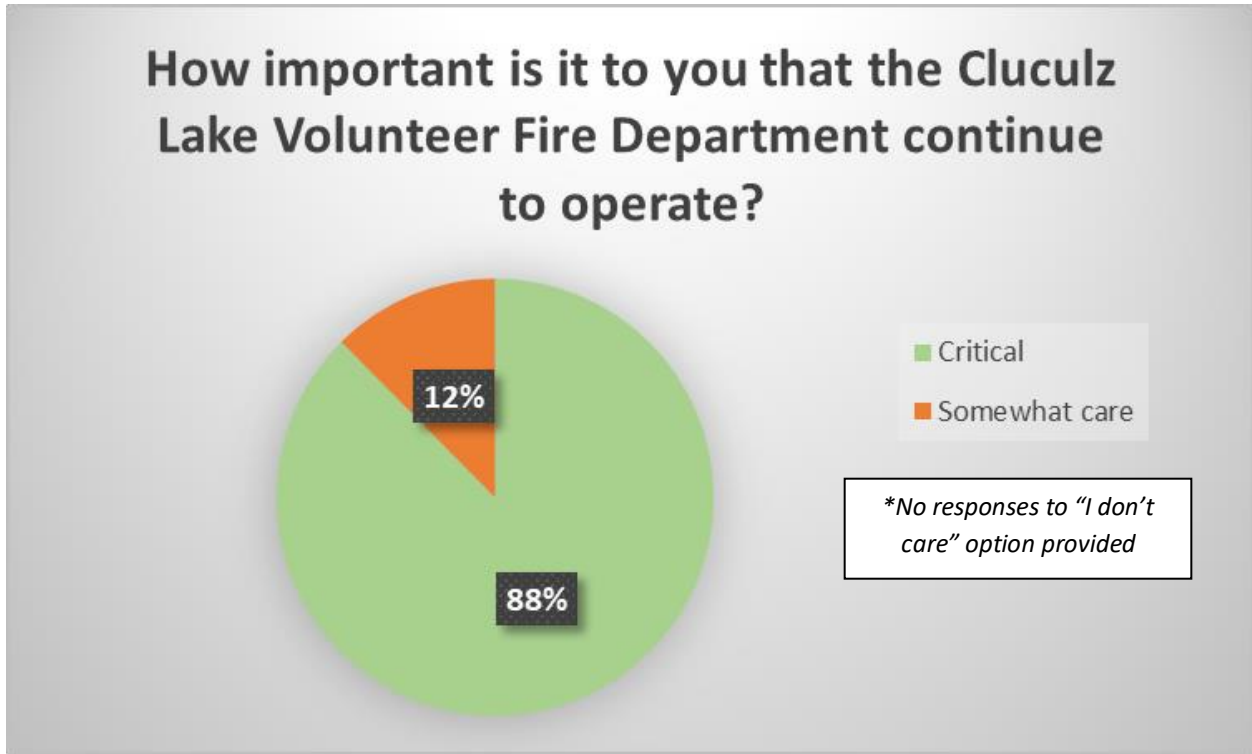
## Question #9

**Do you believe that is important that the Cluculz Lake VFD meet provincial and WorkSafe BC legislated requirements to ensure firefighter training and safety?**



**(136 Responses)**

Question #10



**(137 Responses)**

## REFERENCES

British Columbia Fire Service Minimum Training Standards: Structure Firefighters Competency and Training PLAYBOOK (2015 Ed.), Province of B.C.

*Community Charter* (2003), Province of BC

*Fire Services Act* (1996), Province of BC

*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (1996), Province of BC

*Local Government Act* (2015), Province of BC

*Motor Vehicle Act – Parts 3 & 4* (1996), Province of BC

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1851 (2020 Edition) – Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1971 (1991 Edition) – Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Firefighting.

National Fire Protection Association Standard 1972 (1992 Edition) – Helmets for Structural Firefighting: Structural Fire Fighters Helmets.

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (2019), part of the WorkSafe BC *Workers Compensation Act*, Part 31.

OFC Inter-agency Operational Procedures and Reimbursement Rates – 2018

*Societies Act* (2015), Province of BC



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