

East Sooke Fire Commission

6071 East Sooke Road, East Sooke BC, V9Z1B2
commissioners@eastsookefirecommission.ca



Commissioners Present: Falk Wagenbach, Bruce Manning, Wendy Herring, Mike Yeager, Al Wickheim

Absent: Doug Thompson

FD Present: Chief Pocock

Public Present: 4

December 18, 2023 at 7:00 pm

1. Adoption of Agenda

MOVED: Al SECONDED: Mike CARRIED

2. Public Participation on Agenda Items

Community member Bryan Mooney asked to discuss recruitment and retention issues.
Added to New Business.

3. Reports

a. Chair's report

MOVED: Bruce SECONDED: Mike CARRIED

b. Fire Chief's report

MOVED: Al SECONDED: Bruce CARRIED

c. Finance report (provided by Chair Wagenbach)

MOVED: Mike SECONDED: Bruce CARRIED

d. Community Hall report

MOVED: Mike SECONDED: Al CARRIED

4. Old Business

5. New Business

- a. Chief's Staff report (see Attachment 1 and 2)

Discussion around the development of a strategic planning committee to implement a plan with Chief Pocock's report (presented at the November 2023 AGM) in mind.

Motion: *"To establish a committee consisting of members of the fire department and the commission to come up with a plan to address the findings of our fire chief's staff report from November 2023. The committee should start their work in January 2024."*

MOVED: Falk SECONDED: Bruce CARRIED

- b. Approval of Fire Brigade Stipend

Motion: "To transfer \$9,790 to the Fire Brigade in January 2024."
GL515300

MOVED: Mike SECONDED: Bruce CARRIED

- c. Approval of 2022 AGM minutes

MOVED: Bruce SECONDED: Mike CARRIED

- d. Approval of 2023 AGM minutes

MOVED: Mike SECONDED: Bruce CARRIED

- e. Recruitment of new volunteers. Bryan Mooney presented questions of options for relieving the firefighters of some of their administrative burdens through community involvement and support. The topic was discussed and considered further.

6. Adjournment

Meeting to move to in-camera session.

Next meeting: Monday, January 15, 2024.

Chair's Report
East Sooke Fire Commission
December 18, 2023

Chiefs Staff Report

Nathan provided the commission with a comprehensive analysis of where our fire department needs to catch up in terms of compliance with OFC (Office of the Fire Commissioner) and OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) regulations. As Fire Chief, it is his responsibility to identify and address the shortcomings or (if additional resources are required) to make suggestions that show a path to full compliance.

Nathan is doing his best in his paid but also unpaid time to reduce some training deficits, but needs the support of the CRD (commission, CRD staff) to tackle the changes that require long-term planning and/or additional funding.

We should (and will vote today) to form a committee to identify the issues, prioritize them, identify necessary funding and chart a path to ensure future compliance with all regulations in a reasonable timeframe.

FYI: The 2020 Fire Service Review of all 9 CRD Fire Departments (prepared by Keavan Brehart) found that **none** of the 9 Fire Departments currently meet all OHS and OFC regulations. So, we are all in the same boat and need to find a way to meet the requirements in the future.

Fire Service Governance Review

Now that the CRD has presented the results of its governance review, the CRD staff is seeking input from fire chiefs, associations and commissioners in a next phase.

Chris Vrabel

In January, Chris Vrabel starts his new assignment as CRD Manager, Fire Services. This will change his CRD contract from independent contractor to employee.

Falk Wagenbach,
Chair East Sooke Fire Commission

East Sooke Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief's Report

December 2023



Membership

Roll Call

Interior FFs on pagers:	11
Exterior FFs on pager:	2
FR/Support on pagers:	5
FR/Support not on pager:	1
Recruits not on pager:	3
Total =	22

Hours

Membership hours for calls from November 1st 2023 till :

Calls: 79.5 hours

Training from January 1st 2023 till December 18th 2023: approximately 1607.5 hours

Anita hours as of December 15th 2023 =

Approximately 1117.50 hours

My hours to as of December 17th 2023;

Total: 973.5 hours

Training

EVO training is moving along really well. Most are through their driving section of the training and we are moving into the pump operations now for these members.

We hosted wildfire training over the past months that was a huge success for the members and the department as we brought in multiple outside departments to share experience and knowledge with our members as well as show them what we have here in East Sooke to provide.

Looking to engage our members in the next levels of wildfire training in the spring.

We are seeking some live fire 2 dates on the mainland for some members. We have live fire 1 and 2 dates for some members currently locked in for Otter point, but

these are in April and June. We have several members with this live fire 2 as their last hurdle to completing their full service.

The recruits that were present in July when I first arrived FF. Huth, FF. Scheafer and FF Siebert have all completed their Exterior now and are well on their way to completing interior with forecasted completion date of February for this training.

We have two recruits in the Regional Program currently who have just finished their First Responder Certification and are now waiting on first responder licensing exams.

Creating a department standard is still a need and we are chipping away at it where and when we can.

Callouts

Till November 1 st 2023 till December 18th	
Alarm Bells	2
Duty Calls	1
Hydro	0
Medical	7
MVI	0
Rescue	1
Structure Fire	2
Wildfire	1
Car/garbage/other fire	2
Smoke investigation	0
Total	16

- November 10th FR Seizures, East Sooke was unable to provide any response and Metchosin had to send a truck into East Sooke to handle this call.
- November 17th we were unable to respond to mutual aid structure fire with requested staffing levels

Miscellaneous Items

Annual maintenance and tests:

Hose testing in completed for 2023.

SCBA Hydro static testing:

Some bottles still need to be done, we have run into a quality issue with the current service provider and are looking for an alternate.

We have received our January SCBA order already though we still won't be billed until January as planned. This has put 9 new bottles into service to help with the hydro static rotations.

Community Resiliency Plan

No time to read it yet.

FireSmart

Is currently on hold from a CRD request to do so.

There is a new FireSmart program coming out in January. It is a 4 day course, we will be sending 2 of our members to bring the training back to the rest of our group.

SPU

FF Neilson saying he would take on the inventory of the SPU. I have no further updates from FF Neilson but I know he is still very much in recovery from his time in the Hospital recently.

Apparatus:

Still waiting on CRD to update on E2 muffler fix and Tender 2 tank leaks and tank condition.

I have asked CRD fleet to recommend if they believe Tender 2 is road worthy at this time or whether it is too much of an exposure to risk to have a known problem with the water tank, until we can have a proper test and/or repair.

Currently the Squad committee is working with a vendor for the replacement of this vehicle and are at a stage of waiting for some detailed drawings to come back to us. These drawings will allow us to better see equipment placement on the truck and price of the vehicle. Currently the chassis for this vehicle which is looking like an F550 is approximately \$90,000.00. This is the cheaper chassis option for this vehicle and one of the quickest chassis to get to start the build.

Records Management

Unfortunately, we have not had the time to make start to learn or implement this system. FF Neilson and the department officers have been provided the recordings to the training material.

Mobile Terminals

FF Neilson has said he will look into the required monitors and get back with recommendations.

Projects

Grant funds 2024:

Status: coming up

The 2024 grant has come out and I have submitted it to CRD. They will now submit this forward to UBCM. We were given 23,000 cap to submit for This will allow us and I requested 56 lengths of 1.75" hose to help bring us up to industry standard and to be compatible with our mutual aid partners.

Benefits for members:

Discussed with CRD staff they have recommended;

- Wait and see if the CRD can find something to form like the other regional districts in BC to create benefits for Volunteer firefighters
- Pay members a set amount so that they can use the money to enroll in their own benefits plan.

SOG Review:

Status: I currently have not yet had time to start SOG reviews.

Deacon sink:

Status: Requesting

FF Hurst and myself have been exploring the option to install a stainless-steel deacon sink in the apparatus bays. After several fires and incidents in the rain and mud in recent months this need was highlighted.

Currently to deacon SCBA packs, SCBA Masks, gloves, firefighting hoods (balaclavas) and tools they have to be cleaned in the bathroom sinks or outside with a garden hose. Being able to have a large stainless-steel sink would not only allow members to clean equipment in the designated "dirty" area of the fire hall keeping contaminants out of the other areas but also provide warm water a warm place to do it in the winter months.

We have gotten 3 quotes;

Wolseley = \$5,038.53

EMCO = \$4902.75

Andrew Sheret = \$5,294.18

All products are of similar or equal quality to one another. Install would be done by FF Hurst if board approves the purchase.

Training Building:

Status: Progress continues.

Looking to install a fire department standpipe on our hose tower to allow us to train on stand pipe evaluations both as part our required 1001(firefighter 1&2) and our required 1002 (driver operator)

Main items to complete the training facility:

- #1 Stairs from upper C-can to lower : **Completed**
- #2 Wooden frame roof section with attic access provisions
- #3 Steel partitions layers with wood to simulate walls which can be folded flat against inside walls to change layout of rooms.
- #4 Wired with lights inside
- #5 Finish platform for below level practice.
- #6 Setup Wood stove to give practice for chimney fires
- #7 Being able to make better smoke using wood stove in facility.

#8 Create a hole with hatch on second floor to allow for through the floor training

Pre-incident Planning:

Status: Paused

I hope to get out and do allot of pre incident planning but have found it difficult to get out of the office with the amount of work taking place in the station.

Strategic Planning Committee:

Status: suggested

Commission and I have had some emails discussing the idea of the recommendation for this committee. One thought from the report and the question of compliance for fire underwriters is if we wish to be able to meet the insurance requirements of "15 fully trained members" we could change our service designation to exterior only if the public would agree to this.

This new designation would mean as a Fire Department we will not enter structures but only do what mitigations we can from the outside of the structure. Essentially just ensuring the fire does not spread to the neighbor's property. This would for the time being would allow us to be in compliance with fire under writers by taking advantage of a loop whole in their understanding of BC service levels by decreasing the service we provided.

EXPENSES	Budget			Year-to-date		
	2022	2023	%change	budget	actual	%diff.
Principal for loan	\$97,959	\$97,959	0.00	\$89,796	\$89,796	0.00
Interest on loan	\$57,150	\$57,150	0.00	\$52,388	\$52,388	0.00
Transfer to Reserve	\$95,000	\$103,362	8.80	\$94,749	\$94,749	0.00
Operations	\$250,882	\$267,518	6.63	\$245,225	\$202,625	-17.37
TOTAL	\$500,991	\$525,989	5.0	\$482,157	\$439,557	-8.8
debt service budget fixed until 2029				ytd.- proportional calculated budget		

Selection of significant OPERATIONS cost centers						
	Budget			Year-to-date		
	2022	2023	%change	budget	spent	%diff
Wages and Stipends	\$74,930	\$74,930	0.00%	\$68,686	\$24,840	-63.8
Vehicles	\$33,160	\$35,150	6.0%	\$32,221	\$35,137	9.1
Contract for Services	\$9,270	\$9,550	3.0%	\$8,754	\$10,959	25.2
Purchase Mtn. Buildings	\$6,990	\$7,200	3.0%	\$6,600	\$12,503	89.4
Training	\$19,240	\$25,000	29.9%	\$22,917	\$19,060	-16.8
Electricity	\$9,410	\$9,600	2.0%	\$8,800	\$6,771	-23.1
Med. Supplies	\$5,210	\$5,630	8.1%	\$5,161	\$3,396	-34.2
Supplies Operating	\$15,373	\$14,719	-4.3%	\$13,492	\$18,916	40.2
Protective Clothing	\$6,260	\$6,763	8.0%	\$6,199	\$13,524	118.1
Contingency Fund	\$15,300	\$15,000	-2.0%	\$13,750	\$0	-100.0
	\$195,143	\$203,542		\$186,580	\$145,106	-22.2

Significant cost centers over which the Fire Department has no influence ... and one-time-payment items:
Brigade: \$9,790 Appreciation Dinner: \$6,450 Insurances/Legal: \$7,325 CRD Services: \$9,550

Accumulated assets (our piggy bank)

Equipment Replacement Fund (ERF) \$798,335	Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) \$31,000	General Capital Fund (GCF) \$2,000
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to purchase trucks and other depreciating equipment (allocation: \$8613 per month) earmarked for **new** projects - **Approved** projects are complete. Projects to be closed at year end.

Comments:

- All cost centers have been reviewed and the following irregularities have been found:
 - Only \$319 of Wages was expensed in November
 - Contract for Services - expenditures greatly exceed budget; this has been addressed
 - Protective Clothing - expenditures exceed budget; this has been addressed.
 - GCF projects for Landscape and SPU are complete.
 - Operating Supplies - expenses increased significantly in Sept due to replacement of several fire extinguishers.
 - Building Maintenance - expenditures in September include unforeseen electrical repairs to Hall.
- To the best of my knowledge, all invoices have been coded and submitted for payment.
- Despite expenditures above budget in some operational areas, total expenditures fall short of budgeted amounts.

Overall assessment: East Sooke Fire is on sound financial footing. The reserves we have accumulated are sufficient to finance foreseeable future investments. The spending behaviour of our Chief and his officers presents itself as both responsible and sustainable.



Community Hall report

East Sooke Community Hall Group Minutes

December 15, 2023

Call to order at 6.55pm.

Present: Leslie Leus, Wendy Lane, Bruce Manning, Armin Sielopp.

Regrets: Wendy Herring.

Minutes of November 10. Moved by Bruce to adopt.

Seconded by Wendy. Carried.

Treasurer report. Leslie presented an up to date balanced financial report. Moved by Armin to adopt. Seconded by Bruce. Carried.

Hall bookings (sent by email from Wendy Herring). A two day workshop in January is in the planning stages. Lunch and Learn canceled for December.

Regular users on going.

Old business. Bruce had blinds repaired and reinstalled.

Washroom stalls primed. Painter returning December 17.

Bruce purchased a new floor mat for East exit doors. A thank you to the Community lunch group for covering the expense.

New business. A leak upstairs in SAR was detected by JdF SAR personnel. Water was coming in from the main electrical power mast. JdF SAR did an emergency repair. We will have a new flashing installed. A thank you to JdF SAR.

Bathroom emergency lights. RTQ sent to three electricians; two quotes received. Moved by Bruce, seconded by Leslie to accept the lower bid.

Washroom sinks. The sink in SAR is rusted with failing taps. The chipped

sinks in the washroom will not meet health standards. It was discussed and agreed to replace these units. Costs per sink/taps installed approximately \$400.00 each. Armin to contact the plumber.

Hall Group members term. As this was not addressed at the fire commission AGM Bruce will take this forward to the next fire commission meeting. All current members are willing to stand for another two year term.

Armin passed on a compliment received from a weekly renter on how clean the hall is.

(Thank you to Bruce & Wendy H. for their work)

Respectfully submitted. Armin Sielopp

Attachment 1

East Sooke Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief's Staff Report

November 2023

New Fire Chief for east Sooke

July 2023 East Sooke chose to hire its first part time chief. Since July I have been working to analyse the department's current needs with a focus on working to bring us up to the minimum standards required of a fire department in BC.

The contract for the fire chief is a contracted 21 hours a week paid, \$44,662.80 of a full year's annual budget if no vacations are taken. This is \$22,331.40 of 2023s annual budget with the July start. There is no medical, pension or vacation benefits for this position so these are the total maximum annual costs.

My hours as of November 19th 2023 at 20:00;
Total: 823 hours = 41.15 average of hrs/weekly
Paid: 420 hours = average 21 hrs/weekly
Unpaid working hours: 403 hours = average of 20.15 hrs/weekly

In my time here so far, I have taken a deep dive into the fire department to see where we stand and to start working with the crews, community and mutual aid partners to find their needs and wants for the department.

These hours are not sustainable and will result in burn out. It is not possible for the average person in today's fiscal climate to afford to work for these hours for this pay. These current condition do not allow for a healthy life style for someone living alone, let along someone with a family.

The following report has been generated outlining some of the key responsibilities of fire departments, explaining their importance and highlighting where East Sooke currently is in each area.

Response: Status/Importance: Constant/Mandatory

Calls from November 24th 2022 till November 19th 2023

Alarm Bells 12

Duty Calls	12
Hydro	10
Medical	74
MVI	8
Rescue	6
Structure Fire	25
Wildfire	5
Car/garbage & other fires	3
Smoke investigation	12
Total	167

To give a highlight of what our firefighters do. Since I started as Chief in July, some of what I have been a part of is; 2 CPR calls one of which included a 2-year-old, 2 park rescues, an auto extrication, a rope rescue down a bank, and 2 structure fires including one in East Sooke where we contained the fire to origin, thus saving the bottom half of the home.

Members hours spent on calls since Nov. 24th 2022 – Nov. 19th 2023 = 757.5
Calls of note since July 2nd 2023:

East Sooke Fire currently struggles to provide day time response Monday through to Friday for all calls.

East Sooke Fire currently struggles to provide response to structure fires at all times.

July 22nd 2023 we could not meet requirements of our auto mutual aid (AMA) agreement to send an apparatus

August 19th 2023 we could not meet requirements of our AMA agreement to send an apparatus

September 19th we were unable to respond to AMA structure fire as we did not have the required staffing levels in response.

September 29th we had a Psychiatric call and only one member could respond. This raises worries for member protection and response.

October 17th we had a structure fire in our own district which saw 10 of our 22 members respond. Of the 10 members who responded, 6 were interior or full service members. If it had not been for the fire being on Metchosin's side of the district and that we had a joint recruitment event happening in Metchosin at the time of the fire, I would not have had an engine with 4 fully trained members at the fire to quickly deploy a line interior to get a handle on the fire. East Sooke's first engine had one fully trained member and two members not allowed to wear SCBAs for medical reasons which would have resulted in much different tactics and a far greater if not complete loss of the structure.

October 24th we could not fill AMA requirements for response to a structure fire

October 30th Alarm bells in Silver Spray contract area required a second page out and resulted in over a 20min response time till apparatus on scene. (Sooke fire made note of this delay and contacted dispatch) Silver Spray currently is responsible for approximately 2% of East Sooke Fire's call volume and over 20% of its operational budget.

November 10th FR Seizures, East Sooke was unable to provide any response and Metchosin had to send a truck into East Sooke to handle this call.

November 17th we were unable to respond to mutual aid structure fire with requested staffing levels

Training and Membership: Status/Importance:

Started/Mandatory Roll Call

Interior FFs on pagers: 10

Interior FFs not on pager: 1
Exterior FFs on pager: 2
FR/Support on pagers: 5
FR/Support not on pager: 1
Recruits not on pager: 3
Total = 22

Without members a fire department cannot exist, without trained members a fire department cannot function fully or safely. East Sooke Fire Rescue Declares as an Interior Service Level department under the Provincial Training Standards of the British Columbia Office of the Fire Commissioner, and currently reports to Fire Underwriters for a 3a/3b rating (semi protected). With the current 3a/3b ratings citizens of East Sooke save \$3.82 in insurance cost for every dollar spent on East Sooke Fire Rescue.

To maintain the current rating levels of 3a and 3b in East Sooke we must maintain a staffing level of "15 fully qualified members". The difference between a 3a rating and a 3b is dependent on water supply and proximity to a fire hydrant.

If we fail to have 15 members fully trained and can only maintain 10 then we drop to a rating of 4 (this is an approximate 40% increase to insurance rates). Below 10 we become unprotected (an approximate 400% increase to insurance rates).

If we were to maintain 15 fully trained members and provide 1 member on duty in the station 24/7/365 we would go to an insurance rating of 2 for the entire district.

Where we currently stand is;
Fully trained members: 11
Fully trained members no longer working at fully trained capacity due to medical conditions: 4 Fully trained members not on pager: 1
Total fully trained on pager: 16

It is important to point out that 3 of the 11 medically fit and certified fully trained members are currently seeking full time jobs in the fire service, while the fire service in BC is hiring more firefighters than ever seen before.

The Office of the Fire Commission (OFC) standards mandate certified training for driver operators for the province of British Columbia:

Of our 22 members currently, we have 2 with certification for being a driver operator for all apparatus, and 6 members grandfathered in as driver operators with no official certification.

The emergency medical licensing board mandates all prehospital care workers that have patient contact must be trained and hold a valid First

Responder 3 license.

Of our 22 members we currently have 13 with valid FR licenses

The OFC standards require officer training for members operating as command at incidents and/or as team leaders in a group operating on the fire ground.

Of our 22 members currently, we have one member certified in Fire officer 1 and one member certified in Fire officer 4

The OFC requires all members operating at Interior or Full Service to hold NFPA 1407 certification for Rapid intervention team training.

Of our 22 members currently, we have 3 certified in NFPA 1407

This means currently East Sooke Fire Rescue does not meet the required standards for a 3a/3b rating and if audited should be reassigned a 4 and should we lose 2 more fully trained members we will be then classified as unprotected. In reality if looked too closely the fact we only have 3 members to NFPA 1407 means we truly only have 3 members "fully" trained at this time.

East Sooke Fire Rescue currently struggles with keeping, creating and upkeep training documentation such as lesson plans, certificates, other official and required documentation. This results in increasing timelines to get members trained to their required service level and increases department liability.

East Sooke Fire rescues budget for Training and Staff development was \$25,000 in 2023. The average cost to get a member to full service is approximately \$12,000 and can take 18 to 24 months (approximately \$8000 of this is in the first 8 months to get them through the regional recruit program)

The average cost to get a member to Fire Officer level 1 is approximately \$3,044 this training is 170 hours of course time

The average cost to have Fire Officer level 2 is approximately \$2,780 this training is 164 hours of course time.

The average time to meet OFC driver certification if done in house is approximately 40 hours per student. Done in house to minimize costs to only about \$200 per student for equipment used (outsourced this is approximately \$1200 per student). Results in higher instructor involvement times and documentation for each student.

NFPA 1407 RIT training required by the OFC is an approximate 40 hour program per student. Done in house to minimize costs to about \$150 per student, again increases administrative workload and time on current members (outsourced this course would be \$1200 per student)

Other services provided are low angle slope rescue at an approximate cost of \$1200 per student and 40 hours of training per member to be certified.

Year to date East Sooke members have dedicated approximately 1421 hours to

training from January 1st 2023 till November 19th 2023

Succession planning and Budgeting for the future: Status/Importance: Started/Mandatory New science and standards are constantly changing and coming out in the fire service. Having a team that can continue to get educated, learn and then implement these new changing ways is a mandatory part of any fire service. Fire halls must constantly prepare for the future and in a rank-and-file structure always need to be bringing the next person up with education, experience and training. A fire department cannot rely on a select few individuals, if they were to leave everything stops. Currently East Sooke Fire has missed many opportunities to join in conversations, have its voice heard and to learn from the experience of those around us. East Sooke Fire has very little capacity to participate in regional discussions and meetings.

Apparatus: Status/Importance: Active/Mandatory

Car 1 2013 GMC Sierra 1500: Currently meets needs due for

replacement 2033 Engine 1 2015 Spartan Metro Star: Currently

Meets needs due for replacement 2055 Engine 2 1999 Freightliner:

Currently meets needs due for replacement 2035

Squad 1 2000 GMC 1 ton: Currently does not fully meet the requirements for its current use mainly due to lack of storage space due for replacement 2024

Tender 1 2007 Freightliner: Currently meets needs Due for replacement 2047

Tender 2 1996 Freightliner: Currently meets some needs but regionally departments have moved to a tender with pump model which decreases this tenders usability due for replacement 2026. This tenders water tank continues to show signs of failing. (tank is from 1986)

Support trailer 2009 Mirage: Does not currently meet needs. The trailer is not a great way for us to transport equipment as we only have two vehicles capable of towing it and they will usually already be on scene where we need the trailer. Possible option would be with replacement of Tender two (2026) we can budget to repurpose the old tender two chassis to become a support truck that would carry the items in the trailer along with additional needed rehab items.

SPU Trailer 2020 : Does not meet needs. The SPU trailer is currently undeployable for BC wildfire standards and we currently do not have any fire apparatus capable of towing it in the East Sooke Fire Rescue.

Moving our truck replacement plans from the original 15 year terms to

the full extended 20 year terms presents some challenges for East Sooke Fire rescue as maintenance and aging out can occur. An example is our current back up engine has a pump on it only capable of 800 gallons per minute and only 500 gallons of water on board. Industry standard for an engine in rural settings is 800 to 1000 gallons on board and a pump capable of 1500 gallons per minute or more. With our long hard access driveways we frequently require two engines or more to pump water to the scene. While E1 is a 1500 gallon per minute pump that capacity can not be used to any greater amount than the 800 gallon per minute that engine 2 can supply.

Our equipment replacement fund (ERF) sees a large hurdle for 2035 to appropriately fund for a new engine. Currently we are seeing engines sell for 1.6 million in 2023 like the 13 purchased by Vancouver fire this year. We have seen record breaking inflation and prices prove to only go up. Currently we have 1 million budgeted for a new engine in 2035.

I recommend considerable re-thinking of the ERF budgeting with more current numbers and inflation.

Annual maintenance and testing: Status/Importance: Active/Mandatory

Being an emergency service not only do all our members need to be trained and ready but our equipment must be well kept and well organized not only to provide good response but also to ensure we meet the requirements of legislation.

Currently East Sooke Fire Rescue relies on this to be done on purely volunteer hours which is averaging in about 13 to 15 hours a week. We currently are doing well, staying on top of most legislated checks, but have struggled to meet the mandated requirements of Pre-trips of our apparatus set out by CVSE and CRD. Non legislated checks have fallen behind along with replacement of older gear/equipment largely due to great inflation of equipment costs and time required to stay on top of these items.

Records Management: Status/Importance: Paused/Mandatory

It is a requirement to keep paperwork and records of incidents, personal, response and training. The Fire department must be able to show proof of meeting the standards of training as well as be able to provide information on members and call response and equipment maintenance when and where required to be shielded from liability.

Currently the system we use is almost exclusively paper based and relies on over 40 hours a week of volunteering shared between 2 department members to maintain. Capital regional district has introduced a new records management system to help lessen some on this workload.

Unfortunately, no staff have had the time to make any of the training sessions or watch any of the recordings from missed sessions. This program will also take a lot of additional hours to get up and running.

Currently East Sooke fire does not have the resources to do this project.

Standard Operating Guidelines Review: Status/Importance: Not Started/High Standard Operating Guidelines create the rules and standards in

which a fire department is to operate safely and efficiently. The fire service and the community are constantly changing, and the guidelines need to shift and adapt with those changes, to maximize efficiency and safety of the community and members.

Currently East Sooke fire does not have the resources to do this project.

Pre-Incident Planning: Status/Importance: Not Started/High

Pre-incident planning is an extremely high value project to take place. It allows us not only to get face to face with the community and provide a chance for life safety education, but also provides a chance to create documents and plans that will aid our firefighters when responding to these addresses.

A big area of pre-incident planning in East Sooke is the many alternative water sources in our non-hydranted areas. In order to be effectively used these water sources need to have standing agreements in place with the landowners, be maintained and documented. Currently many of these water systems have fallen into disrepair and or lapsed on any agreements making them unreliable and/or unusable.

Currently East Sooke fire does not have the resources to do this project.

FireSmart: Status/Importance: Active/High

Fire smart assessments are a fantastic way for our members to get out and engage in public education and communication. This program is currently supported through grant funding and provides the following benefits:

- Compensation to our members for their time
- Potential reimbursement back to citizens for doing wildfire mitigation work on their own properties.
- Lower wildfire potential
- Insight into properties and locations to better know response area
- Face to face education with community members

FireSmart Assessments completed

January 1st till November 15th 2023 = 64

Successful Chipper days with four fully booked days of piles being chipped.

Training Building: Status/Importance: Active/High

Having our own training facility allows East Sooke Firefighters the ability to be trained and certified to the Office of the Fire Commissions set standards that need to be achieved and relate to the Fire Underwriters insurance ratings and standards.

East Sooke has been working on this building since approximately 2017 and is slowly progressing on this with some major items still required for completion.

Main items to complete the training facility:

#1 Stairs from upper C-can to lower

#2 Wooden frame roof section with attic access provisions

#3 Steel partitions layers with wood to simulate walls which can be folded

- flat against inside walls to change layout of rooms.
- #4 Wired with lights inside
- #5 Finish platform for below level practice.
- #6 Setup Wood stove to give practice for chimney fires
- #7 Being able to make better smoke using wood stove in facility.

Currently all skills required needing these facilities involves sending members out of district at cost for training elsewhere. This project continues to struggle with funding to complete it fully.

Wildfire grant fund 2023: Status/Importance: complete/moderate

For 2023 East Sooke fire applied for a grant to equip our firefighters with new 2-piece wildland personal protective gear. This included; Helmets, boots, Nomex shirts and pants. Having the proper PPE can reduce fatigue and increase safety of members on the fire ground.

Grant Funds 2024: Status/Importance: Submitted/Extremely

Industry and NFPA standards dictate that the minimum flow of a fire hose at a residential structure fire shall be not less than 150 gallons per minute.

Currently East Sooke Fire Rescue flows 95 gallons per minute.

Our current hose is 1.5” diameter and has a flow limit under that required 150 gallon per minute minimum laid out by industry and national fire protection association standards. The 2024 grant has been submitted to CRD. We were given a \$23,000 cap to submit for this and 56 lengths of 1.75” hose was requested, to help bring us up to industry standard and to be compatible with our mutual aid partners. We will still need to purchase new nozzles and some additional hose outside of this grant to get to the full standard.

To get our department fully switched over to compliant hose and nozzles we are looking at a cost of approximately \$45,000.00 the \$23,000 dollar grant is a start to go this way, but East Sooke will need to find another means to fulfill this compliance issue. Other avenues have been explored but were not approved by the CRD.

East Sooke Fire Rescue’s Largest Hurdles to overcome:

Currently our largest hurdle in the department is resources needed to complete routine high priority and mandatory tasks. East Sooke Fire Rescue is currently the only regional partner servicing their community at a level lower than Full Service which means we routinely can not fulfill our requested mutual aid agreement. Currently our Automatic mutual aid agreement partners request 4 full-service firefighters to respond. East Sooke Fire Rescue currently has 3 full-service members. Interior Service level declares that Interior Operations firefighters will only operate inside simple structures “as described by BC building Code Part 9- Buildings of 3 stories or less with a maximum of 600 square meters of living space” This means that for Commercial and large residential structure of which East Sooke has few but our mutual aid partners have increasing amounts of our members are not trained nor qualified for interior operations.

Neighboring departments have made it clear routinely that they are aware of East Sooke Fire’s decreased skill sets and abilities and are cautious

of our crews on fire scenes. Our auto mutual aid agreement is up for renewal, there is concern from some of our auto aid partners about this exact point.

Much of East Sooke Fire Rescue's struggles come from the lack of resources both in ability to have members commit to the massive time requirements of the huge administrative and organizational load that comes with running a fire hall and much of our programs and training. We see examples of this in our current organization of equipment and gear on our apparatus, the lack of equipment and readiness of our support trailer. Extensive important hall projects continually being underfunded and understaffed such as the SPU trailer, which we have never been able to use.

With the great inflation of fire equipment over the last few years we are continually seeing our capital budget fall short for purchases, Tender replacement having to be postponed last year, this is the same tender that is now leaking from rusted holes in the tank getting the breathing apparatus in the cabinets below wet.

The 2023 CRD financial review showed East Sooke Fire 34% below average on funding for its fire department per call. Our 2023 budget was reported as \$525,989.00 if we were to just be funded the same as the average of the 29 departments in the CRD financial survey this would put our budget to \$704,825.26 an increase of \$178,836.26. It is important to note that this 34% below average included the \$155,000 currently in the budget to pay for the fire hall built in 2015 which means our operational budget is actually even further behind than this 34% presented in the CRD financial report. Current volunteer work loads are seeing many members volunteering from 5 to 10 hours a week throughout the year and some members routinely needing to volunteer for 20 hours a week to work to achieve department needs.

Currently even with this decreased finances East Sooke Fire continues to rely on trying to generate surpluses in yearly budgets in order to be able to afford future purchases. This is a robbing Peter to pay Paul scenario and simple creates holes in other areas of the fire department.

East Sooke Fire Rescue's Greatest Advantage:

East Sooke community continues to show support for our membership and the department and understands the need for a well-equipped and trained response. East Sooke Fire Rescue currently has a positive membership that is wanting to help their community and eager for knowledge and opportunity. With the right support and resources East Sooke Fire Rescue has a fantastic foundation and membership to build on and attract new membership to create an effective fire service for the community.

Internal Survey:

The following are the results of an internal survey of 21 members of the fire department sent out on November 7th 2023 (excluding the fire chief) we had 18 of the 21 = 86% respond to the survey. The survey shows the department members are quite unified in their thoughts on the department where it stands and the current direction it is going. It highlights the primary focus and want for the majority of department members is training.

Q1

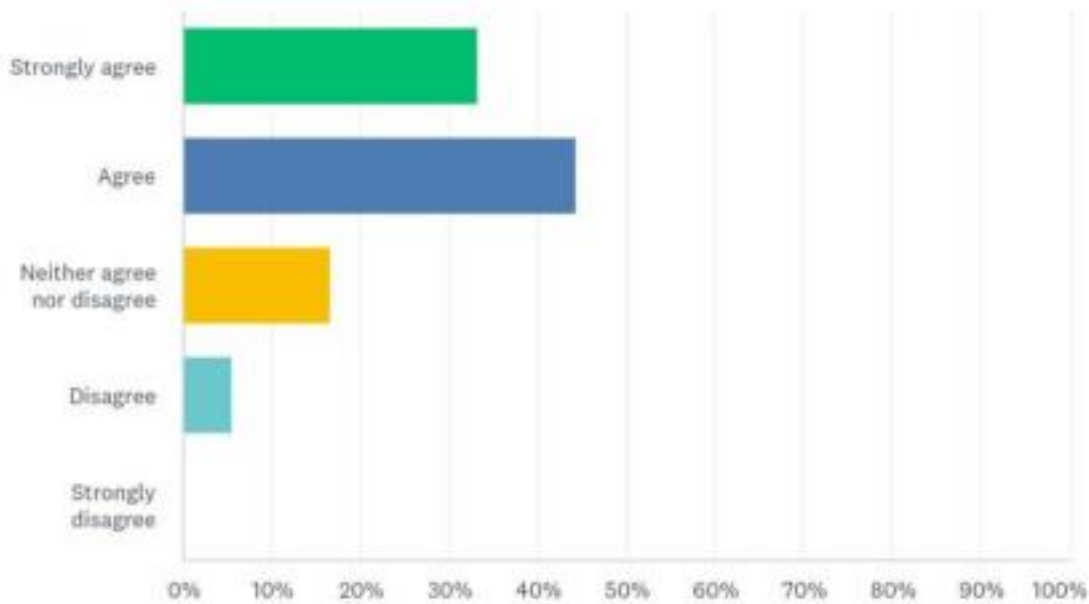


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As an East Sooke Fire Department member do you feel your time and commitment is appreciated by your fellow firefighters? select the percentage below closest to the number you feel.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	33.33% 6
Agree	44.44% 8
Neither agree nor disagree	16.67% 3
Disagree	5.56% 1
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Q2

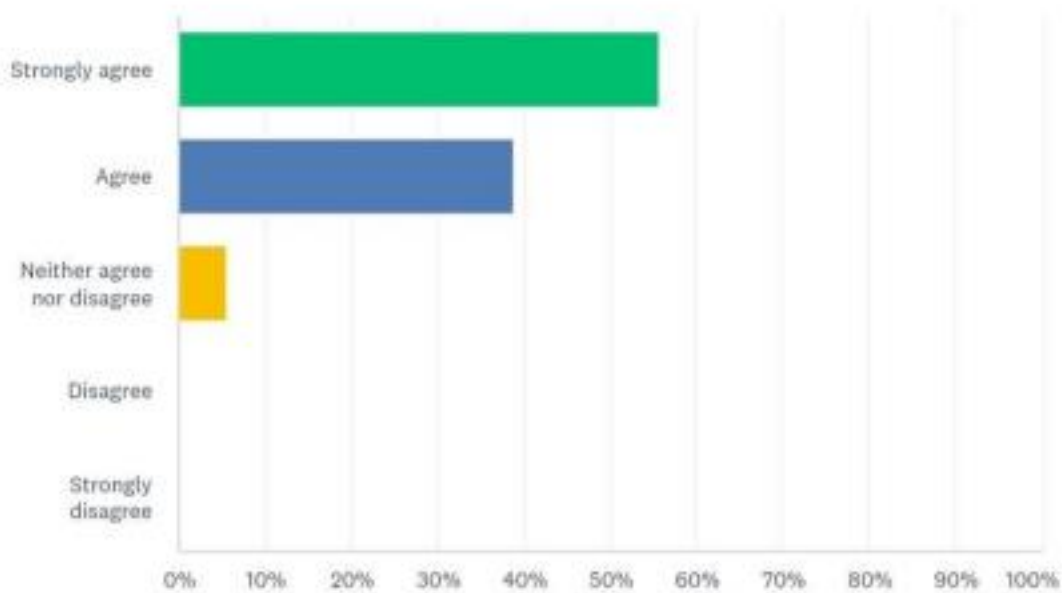


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As an East Sooke Fire Department member do you feel your time and commitment is appreciated by your Chief? select the percentage below closest to the number you feel.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	55.56% 10
Agree	38.89% 7
Neither agree nor disagree	5.56% 1
Disagree	0.00% 0
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Q3

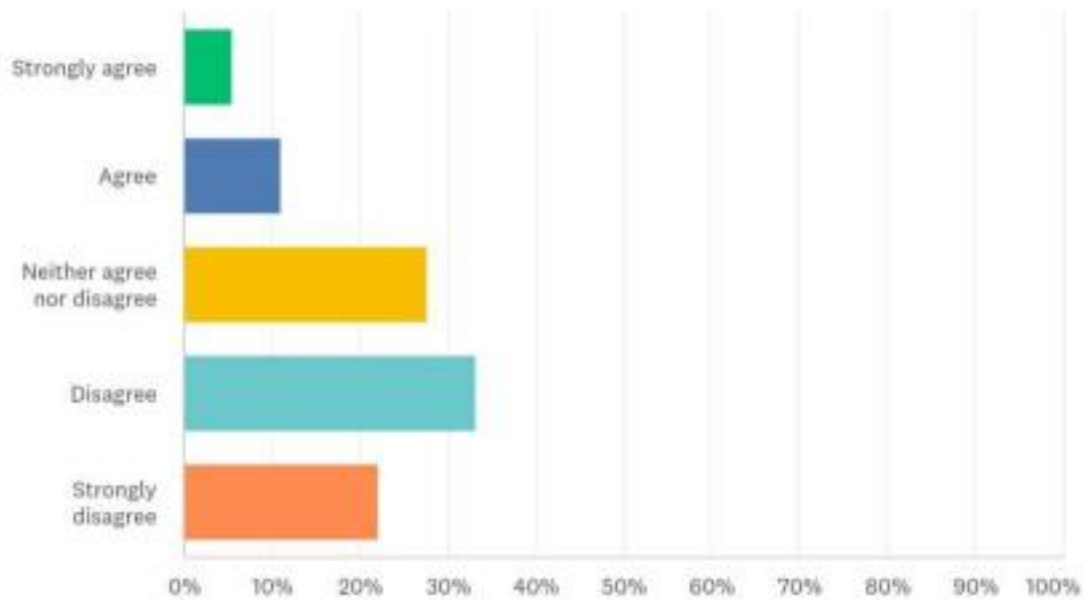


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As an East Sooke Fire Department member do you feel your time and commitment is appreciated by your Commission? select the percentage below closest to the number you feel.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	5.56% 1
Agree	11.11% 2
Neither agree nor disagree	27.78% 5
Disagree	33.33% 6
Strongly disagree	22.22% 4
TOTAL	18

Q4

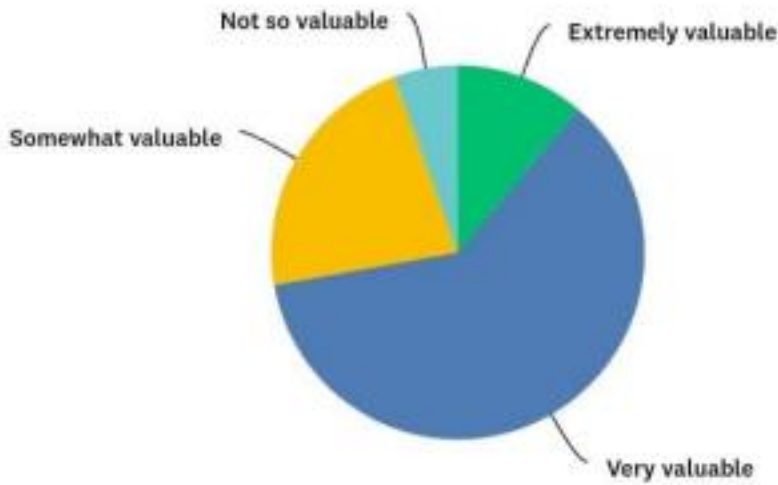


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How do you feel about the departments equipment they provide you with (example, tools, trucks, PPE) overall?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Extremely valuable	11.11% 2
Very valuable	61.11% 11
Somewhat valuable	22.22% 4
Not so valuable	5.56% 1
Not at all valuable	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Q5

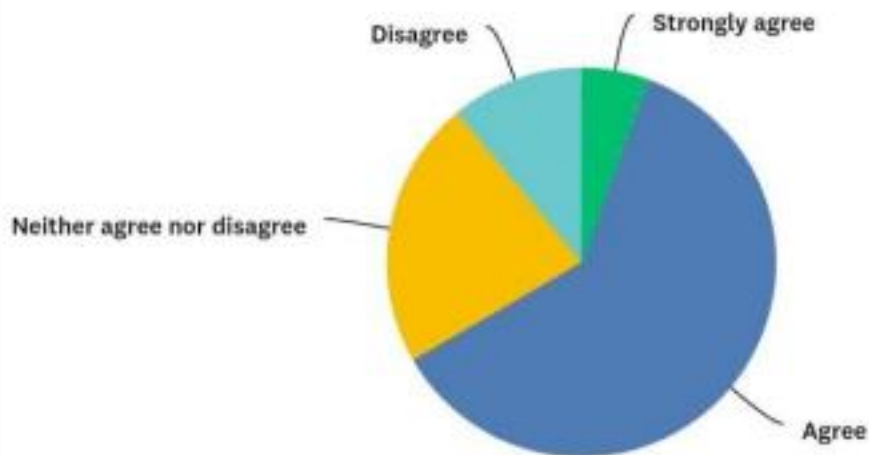


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I feel confident and well trained to preform my tasks as an East Sooke Fire Rescue Member

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	5.56% 1
Agree	61.11% 11
Neither agree nor disagree	22.22% 4
Disagree	11.11% 2
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Q6

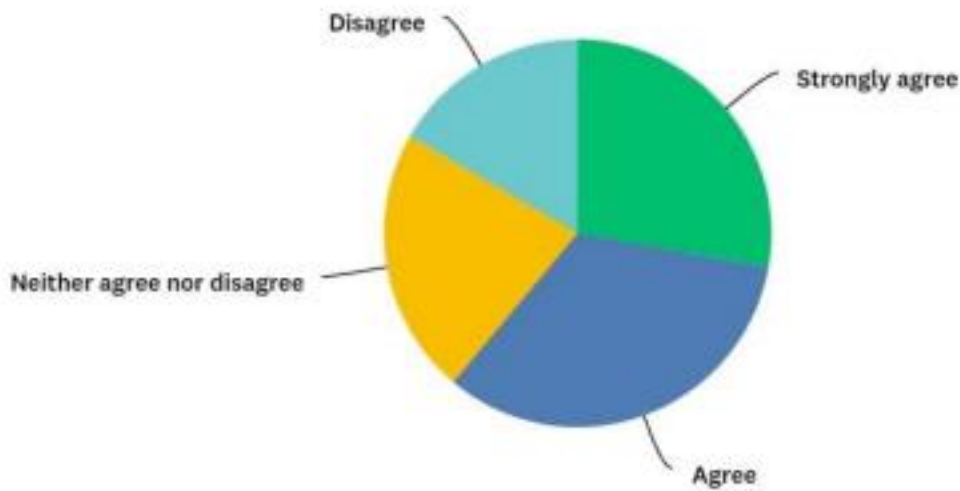


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Do you have an understanding of where the leadership of the department hopes to take the department and what they are aiming for?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	27.78% 5
Agree	33.33% 6
Neither agree nor disagree	22.22% 4
Disagree	16.67% 3
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Q7

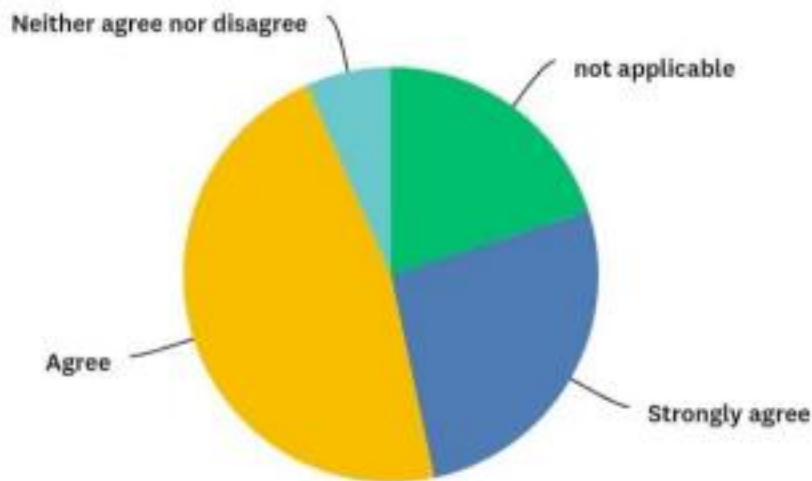


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If you agreed or Strongly agreed to Question 6. I believe the department is headed in the right direction.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 3

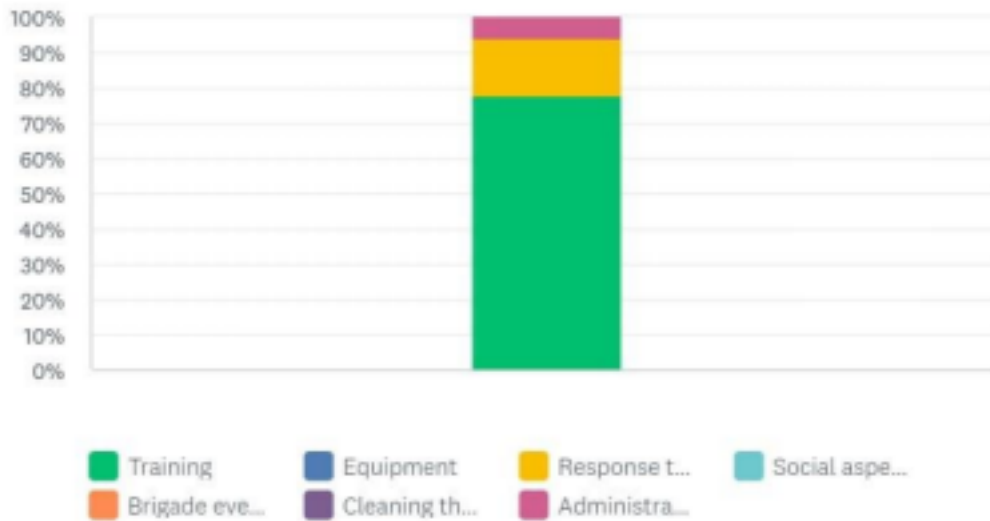


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
not applicable	20.00%	3
Strongly agree	26.67%	4
Agree	46.67%	7
Neither agree nor disagree	6.67%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		15



What aspect of the fire department is most important to you?

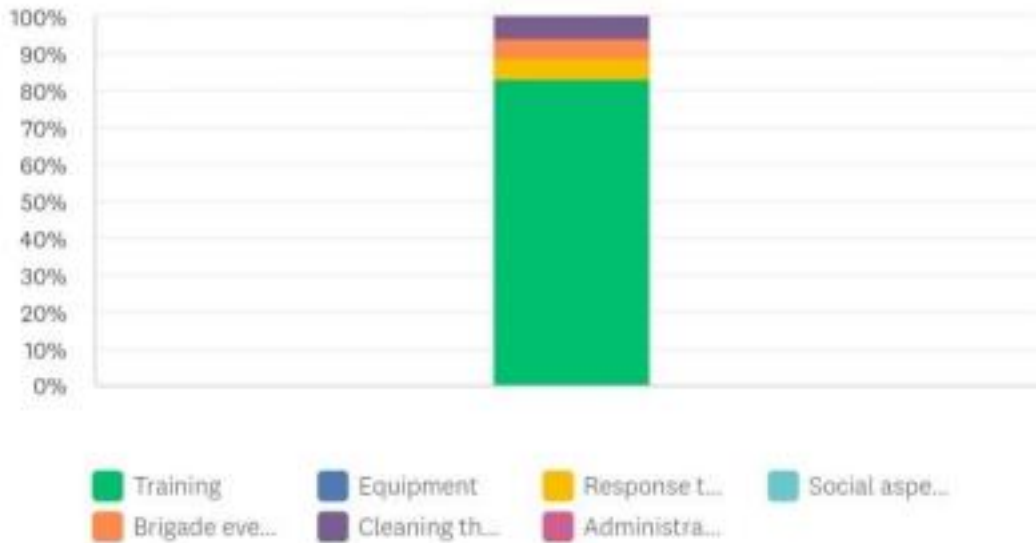
Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Training	77.78% 14
Equipment	0.00% 0
Response to calls	16.67% 3
Social aspect for members	0.00% 0
Brigade events for the community	0.00% 0
Cleaning the hall and maintenance	0.00% 0
Administration	5.56% 1
TOTAL	18

What area would you like to see the chief prioritizing his time?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Training	83.33%	15
Equipment	0.00%	0
Response to calls	5.56%	1
Social aspect for the members	0.00%	0
Brigade events for the community	5.56%	1
Cleaning the hall and maintenance	5.56%	1
Administration	0.00%	0
TOTAL		18

Q10

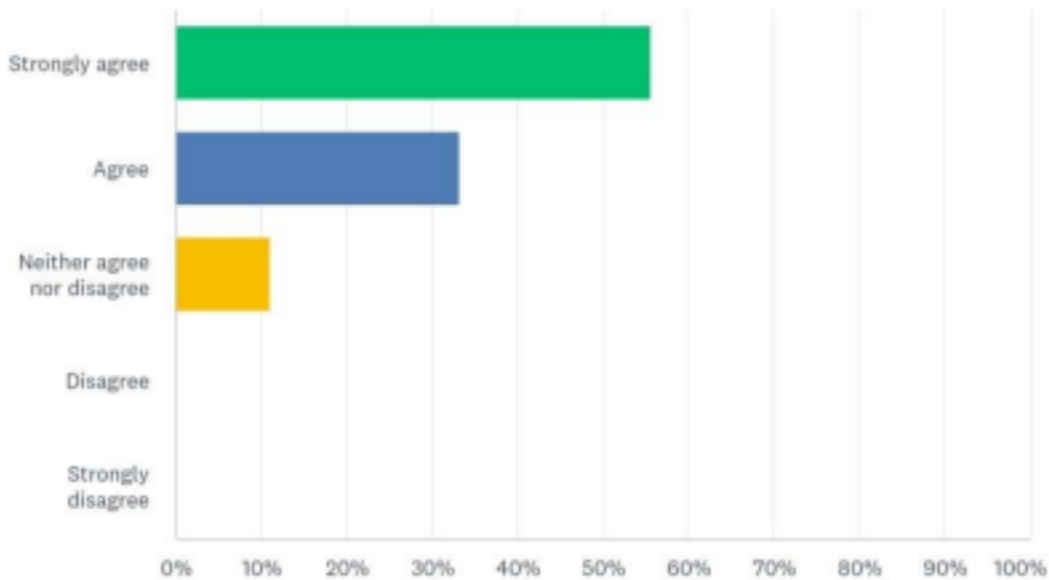


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I feel proud to be a firefighter for East Sooke Fire Rescue

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	55.56% 10
Agree	33.33% 6
Neither agree nor disagree	11.11% 2
Disagree	0.00% 0
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	18

Recommendation:

That a planning committee is formed to create a short- and long-term plan for East Sooke Fire Rescue. This committee should look to take swift action to minimize the current large legal liabilities East Sooke Fire Rescue currently finds itself in. This planning process should include The Fire Chief and member appointed by the Fire Chief from the department, two members appointed from the commission and CRD Fire Services

Coordinator.

A good starting place would be for this committee to decided what they want the service in their community to look like and the level of protection they wish to see the community have. We can then easily work back from there.

Key areas recommend for focus are;

- Initial training and maintenance of training for firefighters, drivers and officers to at least minimum required OFC standards.
- Retention of current and future members
- Long range budgeting for equipment replacement and maintenance

Report submitted by:

Nathan Pocock
Fire Chief
East Sooke Fire Rescue

Attachment 2

Fire Chiefs Staff Report Chair`s comments

The fire chief provided the Commission with a comprehensive report about the status of East Sooke Fire (Equipment, staffing, training etc.)

Knowing our fire department “from the ground up”, I can agree to most of the findings and we as commissioners, together with our fire fighters, have to and will discuss measures to address the shown shortcomings in a meaningful and viable way.

Before anyone gets the impression that our fire department has been at a standstill for years and that neither our officers nor the commissioners have worked in the past for a better and safer working environment for our fire fighters, here are a few facts:

Nathan and I were trained as fire fighters together in 2009/2010, we volunteered many hours of training together to keep our community safe.

The working environment was as follows:

- our fire station was an old, self-built fire hall with moldy, ancient carpeting and appliances that had been donated to us shortly before the end of their lifespan
- Our gym consisted of an ancient (donated, of course) squeaky stationary bike
- there was one chaotic small office for all the paperwork
- one old computer, breaking down once a month
- there was no insurance for fire fighters whatsoever
- 3 bay hall = our First Responder truck was parked outside and ice-cold in winter
- our wildfire trailer was also parked outside
- we had a small portable generator so that some of the lights worked during power outages
- we had 1 Engine and 2 Tenders and a Chief`s vehicle that we had bought and fixed up for \$1,500
- a lot of our equipment was obsolete

TODAY

- we have invested millions into a 6-Bay-Hall, the best and nicest station in the whole region!
- We have 2 Engines, two tenders, had bought a brand-new chiefs vehicle, have an SPU (that we don`t need) and.... Yes... still the same FR vehicle (that will be replaced next year)
- All our trucks and trailers are professionally maintained by CRD fleet (every 6 month, cost: \$34,000)
- 5 years ago, we switched from the heavier steal bottles for our SCBA`s to lighter Carbon fiber cylinders and from a capacity of 30 min. to about 45 min (Investment about \$160,000)
- We offer our FF a great Gym with professional equipment and a nice lounge to hang out...
- All FF are insured and we bumped up their insurance recently by 500% (\$1,900 to \$8,700)

- The brigade (FF social club) stipend roughly doubled since 2009 to about \$10,000 today
- We have a 3-shipping-container training center (still in development)
- A few years ago, the commission doubled the stipend for our officers
- Today, 12.4% or \$36,600 of our OP budget goes to our FF (Stipend, Brigade, Insurance, Appreciation Dinners)
- We have 3 offices, a wet training room, proper rack rooms, a commercial turnout gear washing machine, a fenced area for our scrap cars, a 3-storage-training tower and much more...
- Between 2012 and today, our operational expenses (excluding debt service but including capital items) have increased by 49% from \$262,000 to \$390,000 (2024 budget).
- And of course, we have now hired a highly competent Chief who will bring the training of our FFs to a whole new level!

Yes, there is certainly room for improvement and the bar is being raised by OFC and OHS every year, but we should also acknowledge that we have already come a long way and that the working environment for our FFs has improved significantly in the last 10 years!

Falk Wagenbach, Chair East Sooke Fire Commission