



Piers Island Volunteer Fire Department

Chiefs Report

June 14, 2016

Dear Islanders,

This past year has been challenging for us yet rewarding nevertheless. I am honoured to have had the opportunity to serve this community lo these past 12 months. If I have one regret, it's that the volunteers who serve on the PIVD are not recognized for the countless hours they dedicate to the tasks and training which they are mandated to follow. These volunteers do what they do so you do not need to worry about preparing the island for a medical or fire or other emergency. I know this is not the proper forum to deliver this message but it needs to be heard: our firefighters and first responders are your friends and neighbours and what they do, they do for you. Unbeknownst to most, behind the scenes there also lurks a wonderful team of more volunteers who cut the grass, clean the hall, lug over fuel for ES and PIVFD, prepare pre-plans and purchase supplies. I also would like to acknowledge the never ending support I have had from my wife, Pauline. When I was fortunate enough to have the posting of Chief offered to me, I said that I could not do it without Pauline. And to this day, she works more than anyone I know and contributes mightily to the efficiency and pure joy of all the PIVFD does. Thank you Pauline from each of us in the Department.

### **Leadership**

The structure of the PIVFD includes the Chief, Deputy Chief and Risk Management Officer and now we have added the Medical Response Officer. Each of us is available to answer your questions or to listen to your ideas. We encourage you to engage with your fire department and to participate in our activities. We are always so pleased when an islander steps forward and offers to become involved either as a front line fire-fighter or support staff. Please visit us at: [www.piersisland.ca](http://www.piersisland.ca).

### **Firefighters**

Our focus this year has been on training to meet the standards of the Playbook competencies. This includes 4 practice sessions each month. We have been training "in-house" for efficiency and to save costs with a guest trainer attending on occasion. We have also had support from CREST radio technicians, BC Hydro, and the NSFD. As is the case in any fire department, the training never ends. We have now completed one full cycle of the Playbook.

### **First Responders**

Two of our senior FRs took specialized training in Nanaimo which enables them to be certified instructors. This is so critical to our island as we can continue to train our First Responder team in house and with the latest techniques. We now have 10 fully trained First Responders with more on the horizon intending to take the courses this fall. We also have acquired appropriate protective jackets for team members so they can be safe on any call out and so they can be readily identified at an incident scene.

Remaining to be further researched and coordinated, is the golf cart style ambulance. The research bit is for the best size and type to accommodate our needs and the coordination bit is waiting on the

completion of our electronic pre-plans. If everyone has golf cart access to the door of their home and/or to their dock head, this type of vehicle will be a welcome addition. You can help by co-operating with our pre-plan expert and by converting your little footpath into something which would accommodate golf cart entry.

Finally, the PIVFD has now taken training on the delivery of Naloxone (Narcan) in the event we need to respond to an opioid overdose on our island.

### **Facilities**

I hope you will all agree that the hall is looking good. We have tried to make small improvements throughout the year but I think it is time to consider some upgrades. Originally the hall was designed to have a concrete apron but that never materialized - none of us wanted a sea of concrete in front of the building. We do need somewhere exterior to the building to train, dry hose, and to maintain equipment. Rather than concrete, it might be possible to use coloured paving stones in front of the hall and leading up to the main entrance doors. The Trustees are currently looking into the costs and feasibility of this. I would encourage you to support this initiative and it would be very helpful if a volunteer with experience or knowledge came forward to champion this cause. I mentioned this last year at the AGM as well with little response so perhaps there is no appetite for upgrading the hall.

### **Equipment**

We have most of our Firefighters equipped with Turn Out gear and the trucks are running well after a few electrical issues were dealt with on the Pickup and on the Rescue vehicle. We acquired a new small portable tank for forest fire/centre of the island needs and we are ordering another forestry pump and hopefully some forestry hose so that we are well prepared if we have an interface fire.

### **Fire Prevention**

As has been evident by the piles of forest waste found on the roadside, our FireSmart initiative has begun in earnest. But FireSmarting is not a one-time effort. Rather, it must continue on a regular basis. I urge everyone who hasn't had a FireSmart assessment done yet to please contact us. We will be doing this work year round.

In conjunction with the Emergency Services team, every property on Piers was personally visited last summer with the intent of ensuring that every household had working smoke alarms. Early detection is key to saving lives.

The gutter cleaning/chimney sweep program has been such a success that it is being offered again this year - please take advantage of that. The cost is nominal - the result phenomenal.

### **Rapid Response**

We are able to get to the hall, geared up and on our way to your home within 10 minutes. You can help by keeping clear and open access to your property and in the summer, by leaving a garden hose (long enough to reach your roof) connected to your water supply. One of the best things you can do is to acquire one of the small dock pumps and lightweight hose. We will be offering up more information on

this as the summer progresses and we will again be holding training on the pumps for everyone at the fire hall.

### **Call Outs**

Over the past twelve months, we have had 5 medical call outs, one RCMP assist, as well as several smoke complaints.

### **Budget**

We were able to accomplish our goals and meet the needs of the fire department within the budget kindly provided to us by islanders. We do not anticipate any need for greater funding this coming year. We now have an electronic signalling system in place (*lamResponding*) which may one day replace our expensive pagers. In 2018, CRD will roll out a new CREST radio system which will require some one-time funding.

### **PIVFD Goals**

We were not able to achieve all of the goals we set out for ourselves last year. We fell short on graduating 10 Fire Fighters as Exterior Level Operations Fire Fighters. The time required to put so many through such a rigorous program and the time each Fire Fighter needs to commit, makes the goal difficult but worthy all the same. I am confident that by next time this year, we will have our ten.

We were able to maintain our 10 certified First Responders and hope to add at least 2 more this year.

We were unsuccessful in completing all the preplans as hoped. This project has been begun multiple times without finalization. We now have a great start at it with over 30% of the properties surveyed. I know that we will complete this initiative well before our next AGM.

Our wildfire action plan is in place. We have a dedicated trailer in the old fire hall loaded with hose and nozzles and a portable tank. The new pump should be here soon. We also had a Wildfire expert attend the island this spring who advised us that with our reservoirs pre-prepped with pumps and hose (as we have already done), we are in great shape should we have an interface fire.

As previously noted, we now have the PPE jackets for our First Responders and this year we will provide a jacket to every Fire Fighter who completes the Playbook training requirements.

Finally, I feel we have good compliance on the island in regards to smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in each household.

Respectively submitted,

Steve Cruise

PIVFD Chief