



MCLEESE LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

June 30 2020
McLeese Lake BC

Margo Wagner, Chair
Cariboo Regional District
180 D North 3rd Avenue
Williams Lake, BC
mwagner@cariboard.ca

Dear Margo:
Re: Funding for Independent Fire Halls

The McLeese Lake Volunteer Fire Department Society would like to have its objections noted regarding the decision to stop all funding to Independent Volunteer Fire Departments within the Cariboo Regional District.

We object to this decision being made without any discussion with the Independent Departments. If there had been a discussion, perhaps we could have resolved any concerns the District has regarding liability. It is difficult to resolve something in which we have had no input.

I believe that all of the Departments carry liability insurance. We can provide those documents. We have coverage through WorkSafeBC and can provide those documents. As Societies, we carry directors' insurance and can provide those documents.

If the District has concerns regarding oversight in training levels, we can provide our training records. We train according to the BC Fire Service Minimum Training Standards Playbook. We train to the requirements of BCWS. We train to the protocols and standards established by BCEHS. We participate in CRD training events whenever permitted and would do so more often if the training were offered to us. We would be happy to participate in practices with CRD Departments if we were permitted but it has been indicated to us that this is not encouraged. We fail to see how the District is in any way liable when we continue to train to standards, despite the lack of support in that regard.

It has been indicated to me that we are also no longer eligible for special event grants. I would like to know how funding a community event such as Fire Prevention Week or a Community Thank You event could possibly have liability issues for the CRD.

While we do get grants from other sources, some of those limit what we can spend the funding on, to strictly Firefighting Equipment. That leaves out a lot of First Responder Equipment & Supplies as well as Traffic Control Equipment & Supplies and other operating expenses such as office supplies and equipment.. Our First Responder team answers more calls than the Firefighters and as we are on Highway 97 (the busiest traffic route through Central BC), Traffic Control is an extremely important component of what we do.

We would also like to point out that our grant application this year was, primarily, First Responder Equipment & Supplies. We feel that our services to the community and the travelling public on Highway 97 are being minimized by the denial of this grant.

As volunteers, it is demoralizing to think that our efforts to provide these critical services lacks importance and the benefit of support in the eyes of the District.

It has been a difficult year so far. All of our regular fund raising events to date have been cancelled and future events are continuing to be cancelled. All the while our expenses have increased. We have had to purchase extra PPE for our First Responder Team to comply with BCEHS protocols to keep our team and members of the public safe. So the cancellation of support by the District is just an additional kick in the proverbial pants.

When you have Volunteer Fire Departments in rural areas that supply so much in the way of services, including public information and education, disaster response and emergency operations, in addition to Firefighting, Wildland Protection, First Response and Traffic Control, to the otherwise unprotected areas, it is not so much to ask that we continue to receive the annual grants that the District has always offered to its Non-profit Societies within its boundaries.

Sincerely

Torey Lee
Director

Ian Hicks
President & Deputy Chief
MLVFD