



**WATCH LAKE – NORTH GREEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
5771 Green Lake North Road, 70 Mile House, B.C. V0K 2K1

July 1, 2020

Margo Wagner, Chair  
Cariboo Regional District  
Suite D, 180 North 3rd Avenue  
Williams Lake, BC  
V2G 2A4

**Re: Financial Grants to Independent Volunteer Fire Departments**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board:

On behalf of the Watch – Lake North Green Lake VFD and the tax paying property owners within our fire protection area I wish question the decision to cease all funding for the regional district's independent volunteer fire departments.

This fire department has never had to request large sums of money from the “grants-in-aid” program, with the last being a successful application for \$3000 to assist in the well drilling and plumbing for our Hall #2 at Green Lake. With careful budgeting and no administrative overhead, we have managed to establish and maintain a high-quality emergency fire service. The only funding comes from the annual payment of fire dues paid by the area's property owners, varying Community Gaming Grants and various fund-raising activities. Remuneration from our assistance to BC Wildfire during the Elephant Hill Wildfire combined with a Community Gaming Capital Grant and an anonymous donation has allowed us to finally purchase a new engine and put an end to the constant replacing of vehicles that are reaching the end of their acceptable age.

There are certainly other independent departments within the regional district that need financial assistance more than we do, but the manner in which this decision was made and the reasoning behind it are highly questionable. As far as we know, none of the area's departments were asked for input or discussion. Even the announcement of the decision has only reached us as a media release forwarded from another independent department.

The catch-all phrase “expose to legal risks” precludes any meaningful discussion we might have had, yet it lacks any logical explanation. For example, should a seniors' activity group receive a grant-in-aid and one of the members fall and sustain serious injury would not the same logic mean that the CRD would be exposed to legal risk by giving tacit support for the group. Similarly, does the CRD not provide some funding to 100 Mile House Search and Rescue? Had we and possibly some of the other independent departments been allowed to enter into some discussion of this issue we could have demonstrated proof of extensive liability insurance.

Our major annual expenditure is the cost of our liability insurance. Our fire fighters and directors are fully covered and we pay an annual WorkSafeBC assessment based on the number of fire fighters and the hours they put in during training sessions and call outs.

All of our members are fully trained to the mandate of the Office of the Fire Commissioner's *Training Standards Playbook* and our operating procedures conform to the requirements set out in Section 31 of WorkSafeBC's *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*. New members are not allowed front line participation until they have completed the necessary sections of the *Playbook*. Most of our members have also been trained and are equipped to work alongside BC Wildfire staff.

Our training and equipment have never been questioned by CRD or TNRD departments and we have mutual aid agreements with neighbouring fire districts. We have responded to fires in the Lone Butte area when many of their members were unavailable and have played a major role in fires at 70 Mile House. Our members were considered qualified enough to participate in the assembly of the emergency trailer shared with 100 Mile House and other local departments. Our members share training sessions with the South Green Lake VFD and both departments have members trained in WorkSafeBC level two first aid in order to provide internal medical assistance if needed for injured fire fighters.

The property owners in the Watch Lake and North Green Lake area receive very little in terms of services for their tax dollars and many of these people are part-time, recreational residents and, as such, do not receive the Home Owner Grant thus paying even more in taxes. It seems that they should be able to expect the same access to grant money coming out of their taxes as any other area within this regional district.

Yours truly,

T. S. Manion, President  
WL-NGL VFD

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