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Dear residents and property owners of the Seton/Shalalth fire protection service area.

The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) understands that residents and property owners have questions about changes to fire protection services in the Seton Valley, and the SLRD wants to ensure that they have the information to determine the best approach for the community. Fire protection services are an important amenity, and the SLRD is committed to supporting communities that wish to maintain or establish fire protection services.

As such, the SLRD is holding a community meeting on Sunday September 29, 2019 from 3-5 p.m. at Crane Hall, Sk'il' Mountain Community School, 100 Sk'il' Mountain Road, in Shalalth, BC to engage with residents and property owners about fire protection services.

This meeting is an opportunity for residents to learn about their existing fire service and discuss options for moving forward. Time will be allotted for Q&A.

At the meeting, the SLRD will:

- Present the recommendations from the 2013 Fire Services Review;
- Present the work done over the past years to begin implementing many of these recommendations;
- Discuss options for the delivery of fire protection services;
- Discuss operational and financial implications associated with each option;
- Gather community input.

Standards for training, occupational health and safety, equipment and deployment have become much more stringent over the years. This has made the operation of volunteer fire departments more difficult, demanding and expensive than in the past. Due to changes in legislation and regulations for rural volunteer fire departments, the SLRD undertook a review of fire protection services provided throughout the region.

This review resulted in the 2013 Fire Services Review Report and was a critical first step in updating the operation and administration to current legal and safety standards. (This Report is available here: <https://www.slrd.bc.ca/inside-slrd/current-projects-initiatives/fire-services-review>.)

The Seton Valley Volunteer Fire Department (the "Department") originated as a community-led volunteer initiative many years ago. Despite the incredibly dedicated, energetic and creative volunteer service provided over decades, the Department currently does not comply with the minimum standards required by the Office of the Fire Commissioner's Structure Firefighters Training and Competency Playbook (known as the "Playbook").

As such, at the meeting, the SLRD will be reviewing a range of options for fire protection services, including:

- I. Fire brigade (i.e. similar to current structure);
- II. Fully functioning Playbook and Fire Safety Underwriters (“FUS”) compliant department;
- III. Fully functioning FUS compliant department with SLRD regional administration (i.e. similar to Area D SLRD fire service at Britannia Beach);
- IV. Possible amalgamation of the Department with Tsal’alh Seton Lake Volunteer Fire Department if that is acceptable to Tsal’alh;
- V. Cease operations.

Note: Some of these options would require changes to the existing bylaw, including an increase to tax requisitions per residence (but may result in savings in fire insurance premiums) and would require an elector approval process to increase the maximum annual requisition amount.

After the meeting, the SLRD will undertake a survey of residents and property owners to determine the most preferred option for fire protection services going forward, and any next steps required.

We hope that you will join us for the meeting and participate in the survey to have your say on the future of fire protection services in the Seton Valley.

A flyer with additional meeting details is attached for your information.

Sincerely,



Sarah Morgan
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Emergency Program Manager