



2036 Marble Bay Road

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Van Anda BC V0N 3K0

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Phone messages and email are checked daily in the morning; urgent items will be responded to immediately, and non-urgent during office hours.

*Ratepayers should phone the Water Operator directly if they experience issues such as no water, low water pressure, or leaks.*

**Austin Rycroft: 604-413-1402**

*Members of the public are invited to join us at our regular monthly meetings.*

**VAID Regular Board**

**Meeting Dates 2023:**

Jan 18 - Feb 15 - Mar 15

Apr 12 - May 17 - Jun 14

Jul 12 - Aug 16 - Sep 13

Oct 18 - Nov 15 - Dec 13

Court of Revision: Feb 11

**AGM: Apr 22**

The VAID Trustees are working hard on your behalf to supply clean, safe potable water for home consumption and fire protection. Any ratepayers who have concerns or input, please let us know!

If you believe an error may have been made in your billing, contact the office as soon as possible. You can also register for the 2023 Court of Revision which will be held on Saturday February 11<sup>th</sup> at the Van Anda Firehall.

The Annual General Meeting will be Saturday April 22 at the Legion. Consider volunteering for your community as a Trustee; we will be voting for 2 Trustee positions. Make a difference in your neighborhood!

As a registered municipal public body, we are qualified to receive gifts of money, supplies or work-in-kind, and issue Official Donation Receipts that you can use in your tax return. *Thank you to our generous donors!*

**Water Quality:** Our water continues to be of excellent quality, thanks to the water treatment plant installed in 2020. The system filters, removes sediments and organics, and disinfects our water. Our water constantly exceeds Vancouver Coastal Health requirements. Water quality warnings in 2022 were cautionary only, after large volumes of water were used for firefighting; no notices were issued from test results.

**Leaks Status:** There is noticeable improvement in the volume of water being lost to leaks, however these are still being discovered and repaired. Many are on private property from older installations and leak detection is

ongoing. We are still waiting for the results of our application for the UBCM grant to replace many of the older AC mains, which are subject to cracking. The last of the steel lines will be replaced this year, regardless of grant status.

**Growth and Development:** Census numbers show population growth more than previously expected. District boundaries were amended to include 3 new properties with other properties added through subdivision. More development is underway, and real estate movement continues to be active. Residents can be assured that the developers pay for any system upgrades needed to provide water to their developments and cover the costs of any engineering reports that the board deem necessary to determine if current water users will be impacted. Owners whose properties are new to the district whether from boundary amendments or subdivision, or who receive new water connections, also pay the Development Capital Expenditure Charge of \$5,000 per unit, which will be applied to future costs of the water system.

**Climate Change & Water Restrictions:** The last 2 summers brought extended dry periods. 2022 lake levels did not get quite as low as in 2021 but took a long time to recover. Our water supply, Priest Lake, has plenty of water however we may need to deepen the water intake to be prepared for lowering lake levels in future summers. Seasonal water restrictions are put in place to manage the volume of water that is treated, as high usage can max out the plant capacity. Please ensure your hoses have attachments to restrict full flow and let us know of concerns about excessive water use.

And if you absolutely have to run water in winter to avoid freezing pipes, a trickle is all that's needed.

**Old Water Tank:** The old redwood water tank has been taken down and the wood is for sale, listed on Kijiji and Facebook Marketplace. A local contractor is handling the sale as part of a profit-sharing agreement with VAID.

**Employee Changes:** Ken Soles retired at the end of the 2022; we will miss his dedication and knowledge. We appreciate his years of hard work and his offer to assist in the future when needed. Austin Rycroft continues as Water Operator and will have the assistance of a second part-time Operator to be hired. We are very happy to have Heidi Sorichta back in the office as Administrative Assistant, doing the bookkeeping and providing admin support for Fire and Rescue. Sandra Haszard continues as Administrator, performing corporate and financial administration, tax assessment, water operator liaison and whatever else is required.

**Policies & Bylaws:** This year, policies were introduced to cover a wide range of topics, including Development, Purchasing, Information Handling, Conflict Handling, Safety, & Work Procedures. These can be seen on our website. Bylaws were thoroughly reviewed with many updates made for clarification and to provide for situations not previously covered.

**Tolls & Taxes:** We are happy to be able to keep the increase of Water Tolls and Parcel Taxes down to 3%, which is quite reasonable, especially given the inflationary pressures that hit us this year. Payment plans are available; see your invoice for details.

*Thank you, Van Anda Improvement District Board of Trustees*

*Ron Smith (Chair), Neale Berger, George Childress, John Colongard, Jane Waterman*

# Van Anda Fire & Rescue

## 2022 Newsletter

### Membership

As always, varies throughout the year. We were down to 9 members in the spring, some leaving for Covid non-attendance and others left the Island for work. However, 3 new members were recruited over the summer months.

Anyone interested in joining is welcome to attend a practice. These are held on Monday nights beginning at 6:30 pm. You don't have to live in the Van Anda District to join and there is a Volunteer Firefighter Tax Credit available for income tax purposes.

### Training

Hall training focuses on practical skills, hazard awareness, SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) training, pumper skills, traffic control, radio use.

Hydrant training ceased over the summer months while water restrictions were in place; however, resumed in October. Members train on hydrant hook-up and pressurizing the truck.

First Responder medical scenarios training is ongoing.

Forestry training resumed in March.

Some Firefighters received EMA accreditation, Critical Incident Stress Management training, Air Brakes endorsement, and Class 4 endorsement on driver's license.

### Equipment Upgrades

Four additional 4.5 SCBA's were purchased and put into service over the course of the year as per the replacement plan. Other upgrades include: 4 water extinguisher backpacks mounted into Engine 602, 2 new Duty Officer pagers were put into service, scene camera was purchased for Rescue, complete sets of Bunker gear were purchased for our newest members, 3 additional SCBA masks replaced 3 failed units, and 2 spotlights purchased for use during night calls.



### 2022 CALL OUTS

Medical calls - 24

Texada Rescue MVA calls - 11

Fires - 5

- chimney fire
- Smelter Ave house fire
- Duker Rd large grass fire (about 5 acres)
- Van Anda Custom Works fire, Lafarge water tanker attended
- Kirk Lake forest fire assist
- As per the mutual assistance agreement between the FDs, the GBVFD also attended the house, grass, and forest fires. We thank them for their valued assistance.

Other calls

- Tsunami watch
- public service call - homeowner locked themselves in their own basement
- duty officer call to check school
- 2 duty officer calls to check beach fires
- Hydro line down, 5.5 hours on scene

### **When will Van Anda Volunteer Fire Department attend outside the District's boundaries?**

The Fire Department is financed on a budget which is collected from taxes based on property values within the Improvement District's boundaries. VAFD's responsibilities lie with the ratepayers of Van Anda.

There are occasions; however, where the department will respond to calls outside the District. VAFD has a Mutual Aid Agreement in place with Gillies Bay Fire Department. Should the GBFD be dispatched to a call in Gillies Bay and they determine they require assistance, they will arrange for Fire Dispatch to page out VAFD. Once VAFD receives the call from Fire Dispatch, we can then attend in Gillies Bay and assist with their call.

Likewise, if there is a fire within Forestry's jurisdiction and they deem it necessary that they require assistance, they will have Fire Dispatch page out VAFD, assigning a Forestry Task number. Unless VAFD received a dispatch for the Mutual Aid Agreement or receives a provincial task number for a dispatch, we cannot attend outside our district's fire protection boundaries.

### **Funding & Reimbursements**

Road Rescue is separate from but performed by our Fire Department. It is usually funded through an agreement with qRD to provide Annual Operating Costs but this year only 30% of the usual amount was received. This occurred when we realized that the Fire Department was subsidizing Rescue costs and asked qRD for an increase. The annual funding was used by qRD staff to investigate if it was advisable for them to continue funding Rescue. The shortfall was made up partly by a qRD financial Aid grant, and partly by resubmitting requests for reimbursement from EMBC that were previously denied. Road Rescue Task Reimbursements - 13 requests dating back to 2019 have been submitted to Emergency Management BC for reimbursement. These requests cover reimbursement for vehicle and equipment usage outside Van Anda's boundaries based on the number of hours they have been tasked out. To date, 6 requests have been paid with 7 outstanding.

Forestry Task Reimbursements – 1 request has been submitted and is still outstanding. Forestry request cover reimbursement for vehicle use outside of Van Anda's boundaries and up to 4 firefighters as well as additional firefighters if needed.

### **General Information**

Fire Department and Firefighters are assisting BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) with patient movements and transport due to BC Ferries staffing shortages and BCAS staffing shortages.

10 W.A.S.P. Forestry Protection units were purchased (wildfire protection gutter mounted sprinkler systems). These sprinkler systems cover a 3000 sq ft. roof and are still available for sale to interested residents.

The Van Anda Volunteer Fire Department performed approximately 160 wellness checks on our at-risk stakeholders over the summer months. These checks are performed when daily temperatures reach 30 C. Cold checks will commence when the need arises this winter.

All Van Anda units participated in the Sandcastle Parade on July 13 and, again, took part in the Christmas Lights and Carols Drive-By on December 12.

Working with upper management at Lafarge on a Mutual Aid Agreement after Texada Rescue was called out to a MVA where specialized training was required. Mine Rescue personnel were requested from Lafarge and with supervisor's approval, attended on scene and assisted with the call. A proposal for a Mutual Aid Agreement has been submitted to Lafarge.

*Fire Chief Mike Craggs is currently on leave.*

*Mark Robert is acting chief and can be contacted at 604-414-9662*