

Stettler Regional Fire Authority Minutes June 24, 2011 @ 12:00 pm Stettler Regional Fire Station

Present:

Town of Stettler: CAO Rob Stoutenberg, Regional Fire Chief Mark Dennis, Regional Deputy Fire Chief Etienne Brugman, Councillor Steve Wildeboer, Councillor Malcolm Fischer, and Recording Secretary Veronica Salmon

County of Stettler: CAO Tim Fox, Councillor Greg Jackson, and Councillor Terry Schiffner,

Summer Village of Rochon Sands: Mayor Wayne Miller

Summer Village of White Sands: Councillor Lorne Thurston

Village of Big Valley: Mayor Rick Kargaard

Village of Botha: Mayor Josie Hunter

Village of Donalda: Mayor Bruce Gartside

Village of Gadsby: Mayor Fred Entwisle

Call to Order: Chairperson Steve Wildeboer called the meeting to order at 12:23 p.m.

1) Additions: None

2) Agenda Approval:

Moved by County Councillor Terry Schiffner that the agenda be approved as presented
MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

3) Confirmation of the May 12, 2011 Joint Cost Share Committee Minutes and April 8, 2011 Stettler Regional Fire Authority Minutes

Moved by Village of Gadsby's Mayor Fred Entwisle that the Stettler Regional Fire Authority Minutes from April 8th, 2011 be approved with correction to paragraph 8, should read as follows:

Fire Chief Mark Dennis reported Stettler Regional Fire Department may only update one command radio required for the new Alberta First Responder Radio Communication System, until equipment can be replaced in the future. Mark reported that the RCMP, Fire, Ambulance, Fish & Wildlife and Sheriffs will be able to communicate unlike before.

Moved by Town Councillor Malcolm Fischer that the minutes of the May 12, 2011 Joint Cost Share Committee and Minutes of the April, 2011 Stettler Regional Fire Authority Minutes be approved as presented.

MOTION CARREID
Unanimous

4) Business Arising from both sets of Minutes

None

5) Stettler Regional Fire Service Funding – Reports from Villages and Summer Villages

- a. Review letter from Summer Village of Rochon Sands
- b. Status of Villages of Botha, White Sands & Gadsby

Chairperson Wildeboer called on the Summer Village of Rochon Sands Mayor Wayne Miller. Wayne referred to the SVRS Stettler Regional Fire Service Funding letter condition #2 in regards to the call out fee be capped at \$3,000.00 per lot, he would like to address this condition on how to explain to the residents. He also addressed condition #1 stating: That a new Stettler Regional Fire Authority agreement that includes the governance agreements will be signed at the same time. Regional Fire Chief Mark Dennis stated the new agreement would not override the 2005 Governance Agreement. County CAO Tim Fox explained the agreement has expired. It was decided a new Governance agreement would be drafted.

A round table discussion ensued respecting what was considered an improved structure, Mayor Miller explained an improved structure would be a house/cabin or Recreational Vehicle parked and being used. It was addressed a bush fire on an empty lot can be more difficult to fight then a house/cabin fire at times. It was suggested village residents be made aware it would be in their best interest to get the maximum Fire Fighting insurance limit allowed.

The issue of Mutual Aid agreements was brought forward for clarification. Regional Fire Chief Dennis explained that each agreement with neighboring Villages is different and the agreement is between the Mutual Aid Partner and the Village. Each department which was called to assist in an incident would directly bill the Village where the incident occurred.

CAO Stoutenberg outlined that the \$88.00 per parcel per year was for department operating costs incurred by the Stettler Regional Fire Department. Mutual Aid costs are

to be borne by the municipality receiving the service provided by the Fire Department responding.

SVRS Mayor Miller explained the rate payers feel they are being charged double, once for the rate of \$88.00 per parcel and again if an incident occurs. It was expressed to explain the \$88.00 is like an insurance policy that an incident occurred it would be responded to, if called.

Chairperson Wildeboer called on Village of Gadsby Mayor Fred Entwisle to discuss the Village's position on the proposed agreement. Mayor Entwisle stated he would pay the 1st year, but questioned if that would lock them in for the 4 years, or if there was another way to compensate the Regional Fire Department the same amount requested, in the way of using money received from MSI. CAO Stoutenberg and CAO Fox both agreed this was something to be done internally within the Village of Gadsby's books and it was up to them on how it was done, but in the end the Stettler Regional Fire Department would still require the same dollar amount as in the agreement.

Chairperson Wildeboer called on Summer Village of White Sands Councillor Lorne Thurston to discuss the Villages position on the proposed agreement. Councillor Thurston stated the agreement was signed today. He went onto inform the group that the SVWS bylaw states if a fire starts on a lot the Fire Fighting bill goes to the property owner and if not paid it will be applied to the owners tax bill. Councillor Thurston suggested other villages amend their bylaws as well. CAO Stoutenberg stressed the importance of educating residents and their Councils of the costs involved in Fire Fighting and that the Councils should budget for incidents involving Village owned property as well.

Chairperson Wildeboer called on Village of Botha Mayor Josie Hunter to discuss the Village position on the proposed agreement. Botha Mayor Hunter stated she could not convince her Council to sign the agreement. They would like more time and would like Fire Chief Mark Dennis to come and speak to the Village of Botha rate payers, to justify the \$88.00 per parcel charge. Councillor Greg Jackson asked what the Botha Councillor's alternative solution would be. Botha Mayor Hunter expressed their Council did not agree with the \$88.00 per parcel rate, but did agree they should pay something but not that much. Councillor Jackson reminded Mayor Josie Hunter there was a handout that justified the rate of \$88.00 per parcel for operating costs. Mayor Josie Hunter stated her Council could not understand how the rate jumped so high, Councillor Jackson stated he believed it had been too long between agreements. CAO Stoutenberg mentioned the cost of equipment, training, operating, and safety legislation have risen considerably over the last few years. Councillor Jackson told Mayor Josie Hunter it was her responsibility to convince the rate payers. Chairperson Wildeboer informed Mayor Josie Hunter that both Town & County Fire Authority Council Members will recommend to their Councils to give 120 days notice to terminate the Fire Agreement between the Stettler Regional Fire Department and the Village of Botha.

Once the agreements are amended and signed by the Village of Gadsby, SVRS and SVWS they will be forwarded to the Town of Stettler and the County of Stettler Councils for execution. Once they are approved by both Councils, the agreements can be signed.

It was agreed that the Village of Botha Council would meet with Stettler Regional Fire Department Authority to discuss the agreement in full, date and time to be announced. It was agreed that in the fall the agenda would include a chance to review the 2005 Stettler Regional Fire Authority agreement.

6) Stettler Regional Fire Department administration work flow discussion:

a. 2011 goals

Regional Fire Chief Dennis presented his list of goals for 2011 and discussed each goal in detail. The noise in the radio system has been resolved. Once the agreements are in place Regional Fire Chief Dennis wants to look at the Village Bylaws and fine tune them.

It was mentioned how valuable the new program is, and that payroll will be done on the new system soon. When the system is updated and used the costs of operating will be broken down and better tracked. Mutual aid agreements will be reviewed and updated.

OH & S has done an audit of the Fire Station in Stettler and identified several items to be addressed. Deputy Fire Chief Etienne Brugman talked about the stresses of the Volunteer Fire Fighters and the stresses on their families when they are attending fires. He would like to see some recognition of this.

7) Regional Response Summary April – June

Fires	17
Motor Vehicle Incident	7
Alarms	2
EMS first response	4

Moved by Town Councillor Malcolm Fischer the Regional Response summaries be approved as presented.

11. Additions: None

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the Stettler Fire Hall Thursday, September 15th @ 12 noon.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by SVRS Wayne Miller @ 2:03 pm.