

# FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT 2025 BUSINESS PLAN

Committee of the Whole

# DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Response to emergency incidents (fire & medical)
- Fire and life safety inspections and investigations
- Firefighter training (meeting BC Minimum Training Standards)
- Fleet and facility maintenance
- Fire Prevention & public education (school and elder programs)
- Community Fire Safety Events (FD Open Houses)
- Mutual Aid Agreements (multiple departments)
- First Nations Fire Service Response Agreements
- Protection of Municipal Forest Reserve
- Review of proposed development, subdivision & building plans
- Fire Safety Plan reviews meeting BC Fire Code requirements



# CORE BUSINESS

The Fire Services Department is organized into five key areas:



Fire  
administration



Training and  
emergency  
response



Fire  
inspections



Fire prevention  
and public  
education



Fire dispatch and  
communication

# STAFFING LEVELS

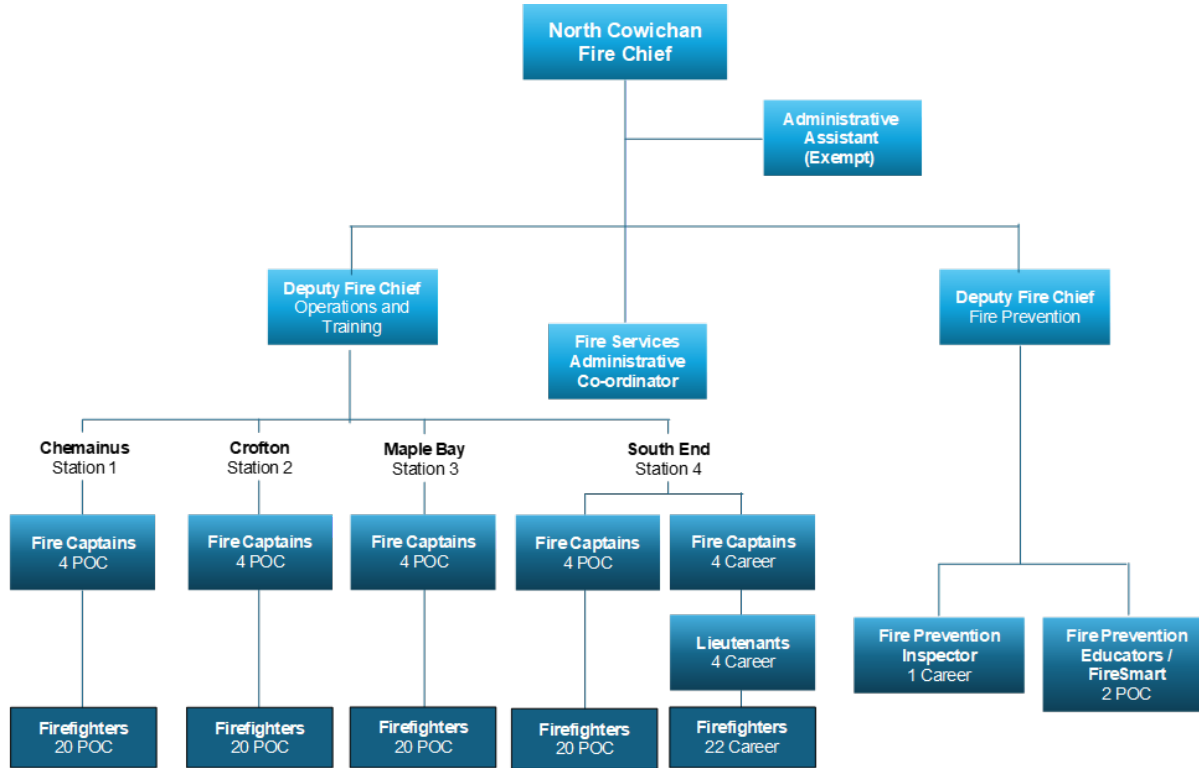
123

Total positions  
as of  
July 1, 2024

- 3 Full-time, permanent exempt
- 1 Full-time, permanent North Cowichan CUPE
- 8 Paid on-call Station Chiefs/Deputy Chiefs
- 110 Paid on-call firefighters
- 1 Paid on-call Captain of Fire Prevention & Community Risk Reduction

(Exempt 3; Fire Department CUPE 117)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



# 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments	Strategic Alignment
Completed the hiring of a full-time training officer	Service
Completed the onboarding of the new 2024 recruit class (largest to-date)	Service
Completed the 5-Year Strategic Planning process with Tim Pley and Associates	Service/Economy
Completed an audit and review of the department's Operational Guidelines	Service

## 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS – CONTINUED

Accomplishments	Strategic Alignment
Replacement South End Fire Engine with expected delivery in 2025	Service
Completed the renewal of three First Nations Fire Service Agreements	Service
Exhaust extraction system for three stations completed in early 2025	Service



# CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

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## Fire Services



### PRIORITY 1:

Climate Adaptation  
Planning: emergency response to greater risk of floods or forest fires



### PRIORITY 2:

GHG Mitigation: plan for adoption of electric fleet and equipment where possible



### PRIORITY 3:

Climate Adaptation: emergency response to flood/heat events

# 2025 BUSINESS PLAN

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
On-call Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Strategy (start 2025)	Service
Fire Underwriters Survey Review completion	Service
Implement Standard Operational Guidelines and Policies	Service
Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF)	Service
Implement Strategic Plan for Fire Service (Tim Pley Report 2024-2030)	Service/Economy
Develop and implement an annual training program for North Cowichan Fire (all stations)	Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
Continue in building wildfire interface capacity	Environment
Purchase two fleet vehicle to support staff growth and operational requirements	Environment
Continue to build and enhance service delivery to First Nation communities	Engagement
Hire a fire inspector to assist in fire prevention activities	Service

# OPERATING BUDGET – ENHANCED SERVICE REQUESTS

## NET NEW STAFFING REQUEST

Position	Rationale	Implications of Deferment	Projects Deferred	Budget Impact
<b>Fire Inspector / Public Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended through the Communications and Leadership Effectiveness proposal</li> <li>Conducts support for fire inspection requirements as per B.C. Fire Code minimum inspection standards</li> <li>Continue to assist in developing Community inspection program</li> <li>Assists in code enforcement follow-up</li> <li>Maintains training education and certification in Fire Inspections</li> <li>Assists in cause and origin investigations</li> <li>Supports fire prevention programs with paid on call personnel</li> <li>Provides input into plans, examinations accordance with fire codes</li> <li>Supports Deputy Fire Chief in their absence</li> <li>Takes part in after-hours call outs. If required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of data entry</li> <li>Mandatory input of Records falls behind, leaves Fire Dept non-compliant</li> <li>WorkSafe BC data record in requirement falls behind, creating liability of not maintaining accurate records</li> <li>Lack of Fire Pre plans to meet OFC mandated standards for Interior level of service adopted by Council</li> <li>Increased workload for current exempt staff</li> <li>Increased pressures on Paid on Call members</li> <li>Increased pressures of commercial building development annually</li> <li>Increased Business License Fire inspections pressures</li> <li>Increased volume of referrals and occupancy inspections pressures</li> <li>Increased pressures from code and safety complaints</li> <li>Delay in implementing recommendations from Communications and Leadership Effectiveness proposal.</li> <li>Lack of coverage for fire investigations required by new <i>Fire Safety Act</i></li> </ul>	<p>Pre-fire planning to meet minimum standards in the OFC Play Book</p> <p>Paid on Call Company inspections</p> <p>Public Education involvement in the community</p>	<p>\$76,440 + 30% benefits (est) = \$99,372</p> <p>Source of Funding: General taxation</p> <p>\$74,529 (potential start date of April 2025)</p>

# PAID ON-CALL STAFFING PILOT PROGRAM

- As part of the Tim Pley Strategic Work Plan recommendations, the pressures on the paid-on-call model were identified in recommendation 6.3.
- The department is committed to exploring methods that use paid on call members while balancing their health and wellness while maintaining life safety emergency services.
- Our pilot program will start in September and use our current members to voluntarily staff shifts that will provide quicker and right-sized emergency responses. In 2025, this will result in a net increase of \$100,000 per month for four months.
- This pilot will maintain service delivery and will also provide limited assistance in maintenance, fire prevention and public education events.

# NEW FIRE STATION LAND ACQUISITION

- Fire Services are special in that they need to have stations placed in specific geographic areas to meet response times.
- As part of the 2024 Strategic Work Plan, this was identified by the consultant using GIS data, combined with the Fire Underwriters recommendations.
- In 2025, we propose exploring all options to purchase land in the northern part of the South End response area. This land will need to have critical features such as close highway access and open areas to facilitate building and large vehicle movements.

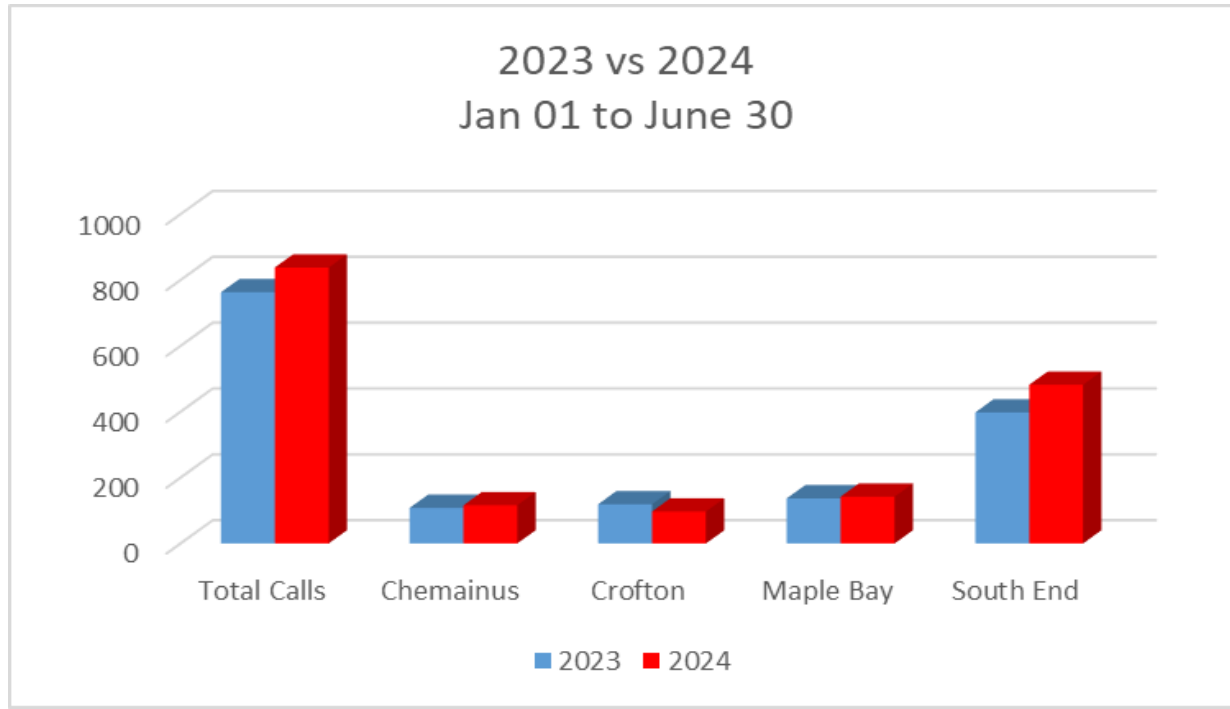
# EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT FUND VEHICLE REPLACEMENT

- Our 2024 equipment replacement fund contribution rate was set at \$475K. Several factors that have impacted the significant cost increase to fire apparatus include:
  - New exhaust emissions (80K plus)
  - Price of raw materials
  - United States Dollar exchange
  - Limited production of fire apparatus
- In 2025, an increase in our equipment replacement fund is required to maintain our current fleet of apparatus. Based on conversations with the Director of Finance, a total contribution amount of \$950K is required.
- Note: In 2022, we purchased an aerial ladder for \$1.4M, and we have recently purchased a new engine for \$1.4M in 2024.

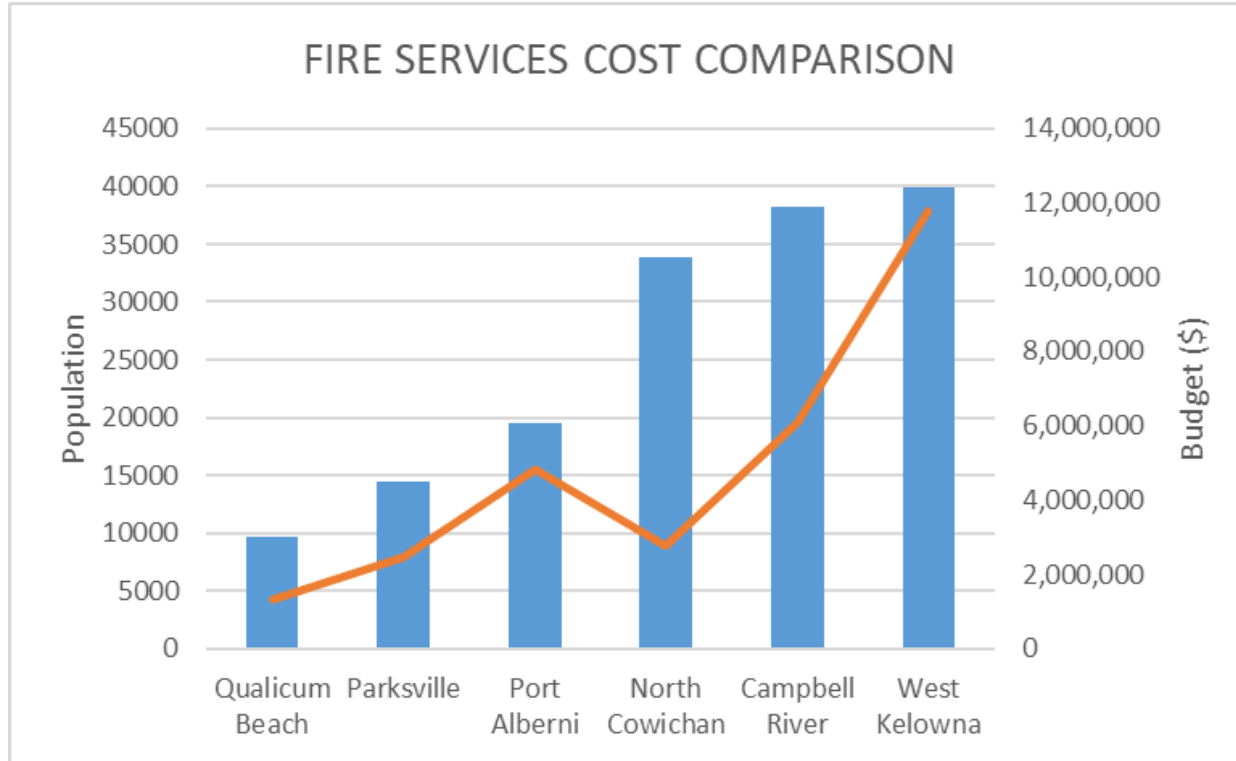
# FIRE SERVICES

2024 – total calls 838

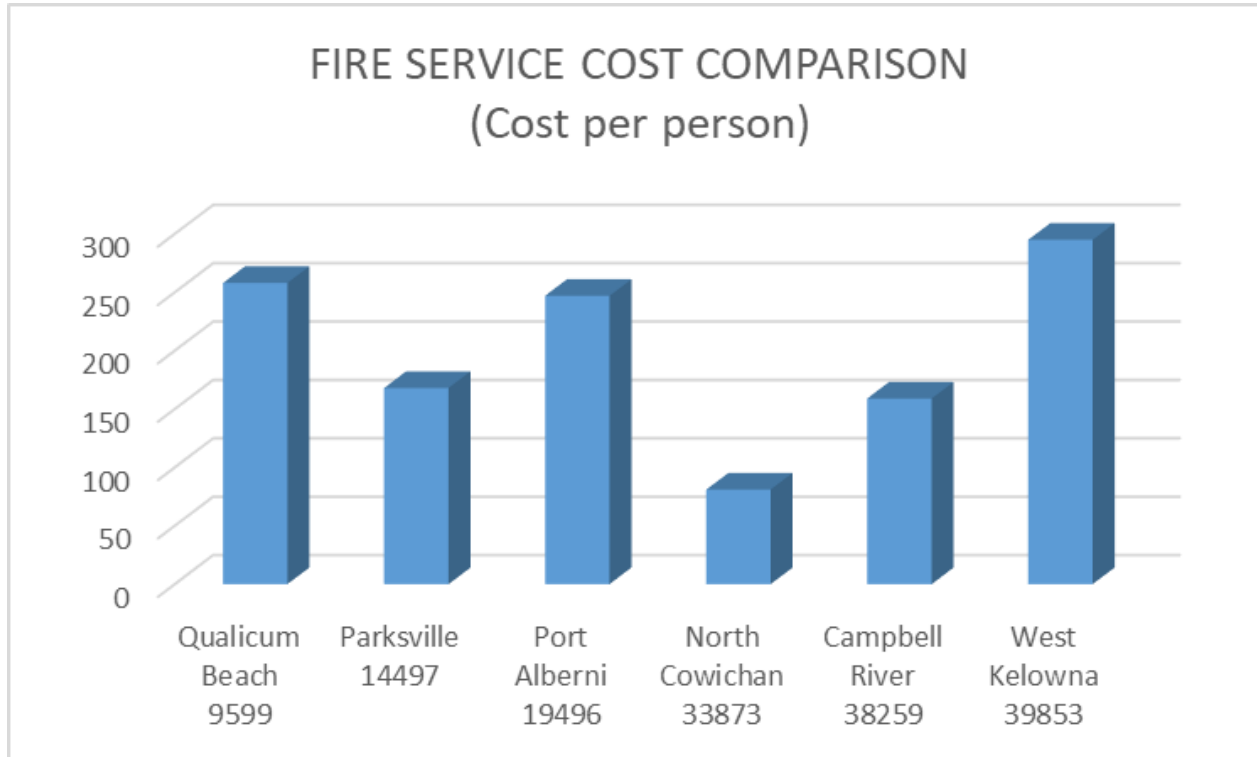
2023 – total call 734



# FIRE SERVICES COST COMPARISON



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# OPERATING BUDGET

	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	\$ Change	% Change	2024 YTD	Supplemental	\$ Change
<b>REVENUE</b>							
Fire	\$ 274,048	\$ 355,385	\$ 81,337	30%	\$ 303,770		
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 274,048</b>	<b>\$ 355,385</b>	<b>\$ 81,337</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>\$ 303,770</b>		
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Fire	\$ 2,955,777	\$ 3,207,428	\$ 251,651	9%	\$ 2,544,213	\$ 899,529	\$ 1,151,180
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 2,955,777</b>	<b>\$ 3,207,428</b>	<b>\$ 251,651</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>\$ 2,544,213</b>	<b>\$ 899,529</b>	<b>\$ 1,151,180</b>