



September 14, 2020

Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department Board of Trustees  
Belcarra Council & CAO  
Anmore Council & CAO  
Fire Chief Jay Sharpe, SVFD  
Greg Smith, Metro Vancouver

VIA EMAIL

Re: SVFD Board of Trustees

As you are all aware by now Belcarra is undergoing an assessment of their Village Water System, much like the one Anmore engaged in a few years ago but with one notable difference. Which we will explain during our comments with respect to the related sequence of events.

During our last Fire Trustee meeting Mayor Belenkie made a motion to have the trustees vote to direct Chief Sharpe to complete and sign an application for a Fire Underwriter Survey or FUS of the SVFD.

As our shared SVFD currently enjoys the top rating (3A) and preferable insurance rates for our residents. Both Chief Sharpe, Metro Van, the Chair and the Trustees, were interested in exploring the necessity and relevance of such a survey as it relates to Belcarra's water system.

Mayor Belenkie was asked by the regular Fire Trustee Chair supported by all others at the meeting, if he would entertain withdrawing his motion to obtain more information before deciding. A motion which was certain to be defeated, until we could expedite a study by Metro Vancouver to advise us as to the benefit and relevance of a FUS to a Belcarra water study.

Mayor Belenkie, insisted on keeping the motion on the floor, so it was then seconded by Anmore Trustee Kim Trowbridge and summarily defeated as expected and we believe as it should have been.



Directing a Fire Chief to sign documents he is not eager to sign, without all the surrounding facts would be in our view, irresponsible for all trustees representing our two communities.

The trustees at the table made it crystal clear at that time that they did not wish to “BLOCK” (Mayor Belenkie’s words) Belcarra from any village initiative. However, like Anmore, it was suggested that Belcarra could easily complete its water system study to a successful conclusion without involving SVFD in an FUS. An exercise which all, save Mr. Belenkie, believed to be a largely irrelevant to the evaluation of the Belcarra water system capacity.

We now know from subsequent misleading communications, in both emails and verbally at a recent Belcarra Town Hall, that Mayor Belenkie was simply grandstanding so he could falsely represent the Trustees as blocking or delaying the Belcarra efforts to study and enhance their water system.

The prudent decision of the trustees is borne out by the report now received from Metro Vancouver dated September 8th. This report is recommended reading for all those who have been given cause to question the trustee’s decision by Mayor Belenkie’s very biased account of the meeting and the attendees intentions.

In summary it confirms that the SVFD has enough trucks and only the Belcarra truck needs replacing in 2021 to remain in good standing with the FUS guidelines. Further details can be read in the posted agenda for the September 17, 2020 SVFD Board of Trustees meeting on the Metro Vancouver website, but suffice to say, the FUS is not the right tool to evaluate the Belcarra water system.

Further, the unnecessary exercise can only result in the possibility of higher insurance rates for residents in both communities, while not supporting or contributing to expediting Belcarra’s water study. Admittedly, the chance of an adverse effect is slight but does exist and in any event does nothing positive with respect to the water system.

In addition, ISL Engineering, who we understand is currently working on a report for the water system, can confirm as was the case in Anmore, that there is no connection with their water system report and the proposed FUS. Further, it is our belief that ISL likely never requested a FUS to be completed to assist in the Belcarra report.



What is particularly egregious and has prompted this letter, is Mayor Belenkie's constant and false accusations that the Fire Chief, Metro Vancouver representatives, Chairman and the Fire Trustees, have engaged in a "coverup" as it relates to equipment replacement.

To be clear all trustee meetings now and in the past, have been conducted on the record, all have been minuted and all minutes are available to the public as are all the meetings themselves.

Equally important to note, all meetings include senior representatives from Metro Vancouver, the governing body to which the SVFD reports.

It's quite difficult to understand how anything could be "covered up" from Metro Vancouver while they are in the room and equally difficult to understand how someone who relies on the SVFD to protect their family and fellow residents could assert the Chief, Metro Vancouver, the Chair or the Trustees would engage in anything untoward.

In our view Mayor Belenkie owes a formal apology to Chief Sharp, Darrel Penner, Metro Vancouver staff and the Belcarra Fire Trustees who give of their time voluntarily to try and make Anmore and Belcarra safer places to live.

We as Anmore representatives do not seek or require an apology, as we have seen the veracity with which Mayor Belenkie attacks his own council members for voting their conscience if they don't agree with him. In the case of the last fire trustee meeting, we believe both Belcarra trustees conducted themselves with integrity and in the best interest of their community and have been vilified for it.

We as Anmore trustees also voted our conscience and clearly understand that Mayor Belenkie is in strong disagreement and will likely remain so, even in the face of all the facts to the contrary.

Therefore we do not expect any remorse for his false and defamatory comments to all his colleagues.

We would like to express our displeasure and regret for how our colleagues from Belcarra have been treated for doing their jobs and also for putting Chief Sharpe in the most untenable position possible without any information or rationale to support the request made of him.



We apologize to Chief Sharpe, Chair Penner, Metro Vancouver and the Belcarra Trustees on behalf of Anmore for any part we have played in the defamation of their reputations and good intentions, by not being more vocal sooner about the false accusations levelled against them.

This is not how we do things in Anmore and we do not wish to be party to this type of fear mongering and mischaracterization of the facts going forward.

We will not be silent if this behaviour continues, as this is not the way Anmore wishes to be represented or conduct its business.

On behalf of fellow SVFD Board Trustees Councillor Trowbridge and Councillor Weverink, yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John McEwen", is written over a light blue grid background.

**John McEwen, Mayor**

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