

Part Two
Anmore Alternative News March 5 2015 Retirement Interview
with Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department
Chief Larry Scott

Retirement is a time for reflection and for new beginnings. As you retire from so many fruitful years as the Chief of the Sasamat Volunteer Fire Department the Anmore Alternative News pays tribute to you and would like to ask the following questions.

- How is the SVFD structured?



Chief Scott: The current structure has evolved due to necessity. One side is the operational side the other the administration side. Together we fulfill the mandate and bring everybody back home safely.

Fire Chief (Governance/Administration): The fire chief is responsible for the overall management of the organization, reporting to the trustees, to the province, to the GVRD for funding, budgets, and training policy - set up the mandate, making sure you follow mandate and don't do more than what you're mandated to do, provide the overall governance structure, and determine how a person will behave and operate in the department.

Deputy Fire Chief (Operations): The operational chief is responsible for ensuring the training matches the mandate, equipment suits the mandate, takes care of the calls, and manages how you do business in the field.

Training Division: In addition to all of their other responsibilities, there is a group of folks that create the training curriculum. They determine the specifications, they investigate lesson plans and delivery in other departments, and then they customized the training for the Sasamat Department.



Equipment Officer: The equipment side of things goes from the big trucks and equipment to the smaller side requiring the personal touch, like pagers and radios. Another recent example, was someone coming in to do nozzle and appliance maintenance.

Safety Officer: The Safety Officer makes sure that we are in compliance with Work Safe BC. Members are considered high hazard employees for this purpose and there are operational guidelines for everything to do with safety - because of the nature of the fire department there is greater scrutiny for safety.

Special Task Groups: Folks come together if they want to perfect a special topic such as ice rescue. They can form a little group, get special training, and then train others.

District Chiefs: there is a District Chief for Anmore and there is a District Chief for Belcarra.

Then there is the captain structure, lieutenant structure, and the firefighters.

Incident Command: Overlapping all of this is the ability to have some resiliency so that, if none of the officers can show up, one of the firefighters becomes the incident commander. S/he delegates different aspects to different people dealing with a call out. If you didn't know the voices, you would not know who is in charge because they're referred to as Command. This structure is very flexible and doesn't rely on particular people to be there to do certain things.

The Association: The Firefighter's Association is a registered society. They have a constitution, and by-law and a mandate to operate as a separate function of the department. They do not report to the trustees or to the GVRD. They are a separate fundraising side of the department - the social side of the department.

When I became Fire Chief, the Association was responsible for appointing people to lieutenant, captain, and fire chief. At that time there were no particular qualifications for these positions. I felt there had to be a level of accountability on who was providing leadership in any level, so we changed that structure. Officers are now appointed by the trustees through delegation to the chief who gets delegation through a policy.



There is a lot more accountability. As well, the province has stepped in and established a new level of accountability through the training standards handbook. The officers, lieutenants, and captains have to take training, take exams, and get certification from the province. As well, they can take other

courses to move up through the ranks. That's a lot of pressure on the members themselves to find additional time to take that training.

AAN: This is really quite amazing since they're doing this without remuneration just because they are good people.

Chief Scott: That's right. I like to encourage them to do this because it is something that they can take with them. When you are more knowledgeable, you are more marketable to yourself and others.

Being successful gives you a boost. If it's been a while since you have been in school, what might have at one time been intimidating is now doable. In a supportive group environment, it is not so intimidating. When you get the certificate, there is the sense of accomplishment and the satisfaction of having done it.

AAN: This is a little to the side, but along the same lines, we have been following the Firefighters' Stair Climb competition and the sense of accomplishment that comes from participation in it. Why do they do it?



Chief Scott: Because it's there. And because they can.

- You were recently recognized with the Queen's Jubilee Medal. Will you please describe this honour and why you think you were chosen to receive it?

Chief Scott: The reason why I was chosen? I don't know. The value of it is that it was a prestigious medal that was presented to me by a nomination, and it went through a separate selection committee. The other ones I got were for being old. If you started at the department and you stayed 20 years, you got a medal. The Queen's Jubilee medal had no recognition of how long I did it, it recognized what I did. To me someone put my name forward, and another group evaluated what I did, and then I was chosen for the honour. That's what's important for me.



- What do you value most about your many years with the SVFD?

I value the fact that whatever was said, done, or implemented by policy or best efforts, has come home.