

# Gillies Bay Improvement District Newsletter

July 2013  
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Gillies Bay Improvement District  
[www.gillies-bay.ca](http://www.gillies-bay.ca)



GILLIES BAY  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## A Note from the Board

### GBID:

Kathleen Boeriu	Chair
Jim Mason	Trustee
Mave Leclair	Trustee
Linda Holmes	Trustee
Warren Kiland	Trustee
Bridget Andrews	Administrator
Ken Taylor	Water Operator
Ken Taylor	Fire Chief

### Boil Water Advisories

Gillies Bay issued a boil water advisory on May 27, 2013, due to a peristaltic pump tube failure. Since then, we have experienced extremely high seasonal turbidity at the source and throughout the system, which has resulted in failed water samples since then. Until the quality of our water reverts back to its 'cool-weather' norms, we will not receive permission from Vancouver Coastal Health to lift the advisory. We have published a boil water update as well as additional information about the factors causing our boil water advisory online.

Rate-payers are encouraged to visit our site ([www.gillies-bay.ca](http://www.gillies-bay.ca)) and click on the top menu 'water quality' and 'boil water advisory' to access this information.

### Gillies Bay Pipe Repair Rumours

Over the last few months, our Administrator has had several inquiries about the tax increase and infrastructure repairs and renewals. Several concerned rate-payers have asked, "Is the GBID planning to replace all the pipes in the water system next year?"

This is not the case, nor would it make any sense to do so. Some of the pipes in the water system are 40 or 50 years old, some are newer. Pipes and fittings will be replaced when they reach the end of their service life and/or when an opportunity is

presented to do so (for instance: when other work is being done on the line and it would make sense to include renewal of a section of pipe in the project).

The money from the tax increase is being placed in what is called a Reserve Fund – this is basically another name for a savings account. Only, a reserve fund has very strict and stated intentions. Money can only be released from a reserve fund by resolution/disbursement bylaw passed at a board meeting, and for the purposes for which it was collected. In this case, funds are earmarked for capital improvements (another way of saying big jobs/purchases of things that will last many, many years).

The reason rate-payers are contributing to this reserve fund now, is so that the system has the money on hand when the repairs need to be made. If no money is set aside ahead of time, that would mean we would have to borrow money to make the repairs, which means not only would taxes increase anyway, it would increase the total funds needed in order to cover the interest due on the loan. That only wastes time and money. If you wish to obtain more information about reserve funds, or infrastructure renewals or repairs, please contact us, or contact the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

## NEWS - Volunteer Fire Departments

### Volunteer Fire Departments

On July 8, 2013 the GBID held a Special Meeting about the possible amalgamation of the Gillies Bay and Van Anda Volunteer Fire Departments. The potential for a conversion to the Powell River Regional District was also discussed.

As the Fire Chiefs of both departments have pointed out, we (Texada Island) are rapidly approaching a crisis point in our fire departments due to poor membership, recruitment and retention.

It is clear that major changes need to be made immediately. Were the two departments to amalgamate into one Texada-wide fire department, membership would benefit through the possible expanding of our protection boundary, and finding new volunteers through that expansion.

It would also reduce the minimum number of members that we currently require. Currently, Worksafe requires Gillies Bay VFD to have 15 members and one chief. Same with Van Anda – that's 32 members in total. A single Texada Fire Department would require 15 members and one chief for the entire island.

Texada Rescue would also be part of this amalgamation effort.

The possibility of a conversion to the PRRD was initiated by the fire chiefs in 2012. The Improvement Districts were approached and began discussion with the PRRD later in the year, agreeing to embark on a feasibility study to determine the costs, benefits and challenges that a conversion would present.

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ **Next Meeting:**  
Tues, Sep 10/2013 @  
GB Firehall - 7pm
- ◆ **Special Meeting**  
TBA - Regarding the  
Fire Department(s).  
Watch for notices in  
the Express Lines,  
around town & online



**2013 MEETINGS**  
7PM @ GB Firehall

Tues, March 12<sup>th</sup>

Tues, June 11<sup>th</sup>

Tue, September 10<sup>th</sup>

Tues, December 10<sup>th</sup>

### How to Contact the District:

Phone

604-486-7757

Email

info@gillies-bay.ca

Mail

PO Box 102, Gillies  
Bay, BC, V0N 1W0

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.gillies-bay.ca](http://www.gillies-bay.ca)

*"News - Volunteer Fire Departments" continued...*

The PRRD has asked for a letter stating that should a petition of the tax-payers be successful in approving a conversion to the Powell River Regional District, the GBID would be willing to transfer all fire department assets to the PRRD (including the GBID/VFD hall and property on which it stands). The trustees have expressed reluctance to send this letter without more information on costs vs. benefits of such a conversion.

At the special meeting, it was stressed by the rate-payers that more information was needed before they would support such a letter as well.

There are questions about whether an amalgamation of the two departments could happen without Regional District involvement.

The Improvement Districts are in the process of answering that question. We have received favourable feedback from the Ministry, and will continue to gather this information and work together with Van Anda Improvement District until we have a clear set of options in front of us.

No matter which route our communities take, the service would still result in the two firehalls continuing to reside in both communities, while working together under the umbrella of one *Texada Volunteer Fire Department*.

The trustees wish to make sure that rate-payers are kept informed along the way, and when the time comes to decide on a path, that rate-payers will have all of the facts and options laid out in order to make an informed and confident decision.

## Amalgamation or Conversion...or both?

### Amalgamation Advantages

These are just a few of the potential advantages, should the two fire departments (and Texada Rescue) amalgamate:

- Enhanced ability to meet Worksafe requirements
- Pooling of equipment and resources
- Increased fire protection coverage
- Less liability and instances where VFDs respond outside of their boundaries
- Larger tax base = potentially lower rate of taxation per parcel
- Sharing of expenses and training
- Consistency in training and equipment-familiarity for members

There are many benefits to this possible amalgamation.

### PRRD Conversion Advantages

The following has been implied, through discussion with the PRRD, and review of preliminary feasibility study reports.

- Better access to training
- Managerial efficiencies and expertise
- Economies of scale
- Access to provincial and federal grants
- Access to cheaper insurance

The same questions we always get:

1. Will our taxes increase?
2. Will the economies of scale and grant access be offset by changes to administration, management and regulatory burden/standards?
3. What input will tax-payers have on spending?

So far, we have not received concrete expense forecasts to share with rate-payers. When the Improvement Districts have these figures, they will be presented to the public.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

It should be obvious that the reason these drastic steps are being taken/considered is due to poor response to requests for volunteers. We NEED members!

Please contact [info@gilliesbayvfd.ca](mailto:info@gilliesbayvfd.ca) or call Ken Taylor at 604-414-3703 if you are willing to make a large or small time commitment. Anything is appreciated!

## Social Media Policy

The GBID publishes this newsletter as one means of keeping rate-payers informed. However, the best way to stay informed is to attend our regular meetings. We realize that many of our residents can't make it to meetings, and we're always happy to answer inquiries outside of the meeting room.

As social media continues to play a more dominant role in people's lives, we have faced greater pressure than ever to use Facebook as a means of publishing information, outcomes of

meetings, and to answer general inquiries. The problem with this is fairness and access to information. There are still many people today who don't have access to the internet, or don't know how to use it. In order to offset challenging questions around fairness and conduct, the GBID has decided to keep a 'notice board only' presence on all social media applications. Residents can continue to reach us by all traditional methods: email, telephone or at our meetings.