

SAFETY IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT

Our existing hall is at the end of its life. Funding to build a new fire hall will come from a loan that property owners will pay back over 20 years. The longer we wait, the more it will cost. Property owners served by the fire hall can support or oppose the loan in an Alternative Approval Process that is running June 2 to July 15, 2022.

A new fire hall is anticipated to cost up to \$16 Million, which includes permitting, engineering, total construction, contingency, demolition of the original hall, and interest payments during the construction period.

Property owners within the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue area would pay for the new fire hall annually through property taxes. The new fire hall would cost approximately \$43.10 per \$100,000 of assessed property value annually over 20 years, beginning when fire hall construction is complete. According to BC Assessment, as of March 31, 2022, the average residential property within the Improvement District is valued at \$820,477. Property owners with a home valued at \$820,477

would pay approximately \$354 annually towards the fire hall (\$43.10 x 8.2 = \$354). Owners of properties valued at less would pay less; owners of properties valued at more would pay more.

Approval from property owners to borrow funding is being sought through an Alternative Approval Process (AAP), a tool commonly used to determine whether there is community support for a project.

In an AAP, if less than 10% of property owners are opposed to an initiative, the AAP passes and the initiative (in this case, borrowing for a new hall) can proceed. Any property owner within the Improvement District boundaries who is a Canadian citizen and over the age of 18 is eligible to participate.

Residents who support a new fire hall do not need to take any action.

Residents are reminded that costs related to the fire hall are unavoidable. If we do not take steps now to build a new fire hall, the existing building might eventually have to be closed due to known risks to workers and volunteers. Information about the AAP, including important dates and how to submit an opposition form, is available at www.cowbayfirehall.com

I support a new fire hall for Cowichan Bay because the [existing] facility is not serving the community's needs and it will only cost more if we wait.

Local Resident

I support a new fire hall for Cowichan Bay so I can continue to protect and serve this community to the best of my ability.

Captain Christina Shepherd,
Volunteer Fire Fighter

FIRE FIGHTERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS ARE THERE FOR US WHEN WE NEED THEM.



INVESTING IN A SAFER FUTURE
NEW FIRE HALL FOR COWICHAN BAY

COWBAYFIREHALL.COM

LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT THE FIRE HALL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Community support is essential for us to build a new fire hall.

You can support this project by using your voice – telling others why you support a new fire hall for the volunteer fire rescue and helping clarify any misinformation that you hear. **Come to our Open House!** You're invited to our informal Open House to learn more about the new fire hall and meet our new Fire Chief!

DATE SATURDAY, JUNE 11
TIME 11 AM – 2 PM
LOCATION COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE HALL

Questions about the new fire hall and/or the Alternative Approval Process can be sent to aap@cbvfr.com. Please note we are a volunteer organization. We will respond to questions as quickly as we are able.

Our volunteers serve 10,000 residents in Cowichan Bay and the surrounding areas, working out of a 1977 building that is no longer safe or compliant. Cowichan Bay needs a new fire hall to keep the community and our volunteers safe.



Helping to keep our community safe since 1967
cowbayfirehall.com

The decision to pursue a new hall has been made after extensive exploration and study over many years:

1977	1998	2016	2018	2020	MARCH 2021	SUMMER FALL 2021	APRIL MAY 2022	JUNE JULY 2022	LATE 2022-2024	2024-2025	2025
Existing fire hall built.	Seismic stability study showed that fire hall is at significant risk of damage & may collapse in seismic event.	A second seismic study confirmed that the fire hall may collapse in a seismic event.	Feasibility study to explore and cost upgrade options.	Preliminary costing for upgrade options.	Citizen advisory committee recommends that the Board pursue fire hall replacement.	Assembly of project team and construction costing.	Comprehensive community information campaign.	AAP to seek community approval for fire hall funding.	Design, development permit, and construction tender	Construction of new fire hall	Demolition and clean-up of original fire hall

THE COWICHAN BAY FIRE SERVICE

Established in 1947, the Cowichan Bay fire service is run entirely by volunteers who drop everything to respond when they get a call. There are currently just under 30 volunteer fire fighters serving about 10,000 residents spread across parts of Cowichan Station, Koksilah, Cobble Hill, Arbutus Ridge, and other areas, along with Cowichan Bay (Electoral Area D).



Volunteer fire fighters give their personal time to serve their community. In addition to responding to emergencies, each year they take part in 50 training sessions, 50 maintenance sessions and countless additional training sessions, community activities, and charity events.



Not only do these volunteers fight fires, they are also often first to arrive on the scene of an accident or other medical emergency. The BC Ambulance service frequently dispatches volunteers because they are trained in First Aid and CPR and operate specialized medical equipment, such as an AED.

MEET THE NEW FIRE CHIEF

Starting May 16, the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue welcomes its first ever full-time paid Fire Chief.

Chief Robert Grossman comes to us from Pemberton, where he has been the Fire Chief since 2014. Chief Grossman has been a fire fighter for 25 years, both in Alberta and BC. He spent 15 years with the Salt Spring Island volunteer fire department and he's looking forward to being back near the ocean. In his spare time, Chief Grossman spends time outdoors and restores old cars.

"Fire departments don't just put out fires. We're there to do public education, help with emergency preparedness, conduct fire inspections, provide first response, and more. When it comes down to it, we hope to prevent more fires than we put out."

What does a full-time Fire Chief do? A Chief oversees the operation of the fire department and ensures that the extensive requirements of the Office of the Fire Commissioner and Fire Underwriter are met. Welcome Chief Grossman!



A NEW FIRE HALL FOR OUR COMMUNITY

The Cowichan Bay fire hall was built in 1977. Seismic reviews have found that the building may collapse in an earthquake and there is nowhere for volunteers to thoroughly decontaminate after exposure to harmful carcinogens. The longer we wait, the more it will cost.

Fire halls must meet WorkSafe BC requirements, BC Building Code and Fire Code requirements, and industry best practices such as those published by the National Fire Protection Association.

The existing Cowichan Bay fire hall has not had any structural upgrades since it was built in 1977 and it does not meet minimum requirements. The long list of issues with the building includes:

- Significant seismic deficiencies (it may collapse in an earthquake)
- Non-compliance with multiple aspects of the current BC Building Code
- Undersized vehicle bays that require custom-built trucks at great extra cost
- Improper spaces for decontamination after a fire response, potentially exposing volunteers to harmful carcinogens
- Improper areas for cleaning and storing fire fighters' Personal Protective Equipment
- Lack of training space
- Lack of washrooms and showers

Continuing to work out of the existing fire hall is not an option. If we do not take steps now to build a new fire hall, the existing building might eventually have to be closed due to known risks to workers and volunteers. The longer we wait to build a new hall, the more it will cost.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SAFETY FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

The new fire hall is planned for completion in 2025 and it will be built directly behind the existing fire hall to allow the fire department to operate out of the existing building during

construction. The new hall will be designed to post-disaster standards, meaning it will be able to withstand significant seismic events, and it will be sized to serve the area's growing population for a minimum of 50 years. Other key features of the new fire hall will be proper areas for decontamination after a fire to protect our volunteers from harmful carcinogens, proper storage

for Personal Protective Equipment, properly sized vehicle bays to accommodate modern fire trucks, and adequate training areas. As with most fire halls, there will be a commercial kitchen and some of the training areas will be available to be booked for community events.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE RESCUE? PLEASE CONTACT US!

We are actively seeking volunteers. Volunteers receive extensive emergency response and fire safety training, and become part of our close-knit, supportive community. Contact us at info@cbvfr.com or (250) 743-7111.

WHY IS FIRE HALL REPLACEMENT PREFERRED OVER RENOVATING THE EXISTING HALL? WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BUILD A NEW FIRE HALL?

The existing fire hall is no longer adequate. Doing nothing is not an option. The Improvement District mobilized a citizen advisory committee in 2020 to review all available information and make recommendations to the board. With respect to cost, the citizen committee recommended that:

"Analysis of all the information made available to the Committee made it clear that the best use of resources is to replace the existing building. Options that looked at renovation and additions to the existing building required sacrificing some operational

efficiencies and were as expensive as building new."

The Improvement District has been gathering information about upgrade options for a number of years. A new hall is preferred over a renovation because: 1) renovation would not be much cheaper (if at all) and

would not address all of the issues, 2) building a new hall allows the fire service to continue operating out of the existing building during construction, 3) a new hall will operate for at least 50 years, while a renovation will only renew the building for a limited time.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION