



## **WATCH LAKE - NORTH GREEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**



5771 Green Lake North Road  
70 Mile House, BC, V0K 2K1

[www.wlmgfiredept.org](http://www.wlmgfiredept.org)

### *Newsletter - Winter 2014*

#### **A Short History**

Most of the news for this addition of our newsletter is actually old news if you read the 100 Mile Free Press, but we wanted to share it here to bring all property owners in the community up-to-date with the provision of emergency services. You may also have read much of the news about the dry hydrants in the GLARA Newsletter and on our own web site at [www.wlmgfiredept.org](http://www.wlmgfiredept.org). We are pleased to report that the hydrants are in the ground, protected and, most importantly, working as they should.



Dry Hydrants at Access 20

So, let us take a very brief look at how we got to where we are today. For the past 43 years the members of the Watch Lake - North Green Lake community have worked together to create a fire department of which they are justifiably very proud. Many people have been involved with the department over the years and their contribution of time and effort in keeping the community safe has not gone unrecognized. In recent years the combination of the skills many residents, assisted by donations of equipment and materials resulted in both fire halls being completely re-built. This provided all-season training areas and larger storage facilities to accommodate the increased size of newer vehicles. Through the careful juggling of finances the aging fleet of trucks was slowly replaced. To optimize the efficiency of this fleet, some of the vehicles serve two purposes. The two one-ton pickups are used for rapid transport to an emergency scene by the first responders. In summer both vehicles also carry a tote containing 250 gallons of water for the rapid suppression of spot fires in hard to reach areas. One of the trucks can also be affixed with a snow plough to clear the parking lots and to clear a path into fire or medical aid areas during the winter months. One of the tenders has rear-mounted pumps that can be used for fire-fighting thus turning the unit into a pumper for short-term use.

Even though the community is on the shores of two lakes, the rapid access to water can be a major problem. In total, the trucks carry a total of 7,250 gallons of water and an emergency tank holding another 8000 gallons of water was installed in the water system at Hall #1. This supply could be quickly exhausted in the event of a major fire and another supply must be available. The pumper trailer can fill the largest of the tenders in just over three minutes, but the lakes are inaccessible in early and late winter when the ice is unsafe. Furthermore, WorkSafeBC regulations will soon preclude entering the water or working on the ice surface to place the suction lines for the pumps. To solve this problem the department has been working on the design and acquisition of permits for the installation of two dry hydrants for the past year.

Dry hydrants are pipe lines that are dug into the lakeshore and run out into the lake at a sufficient depth to lie below the thickness of ice in the winter, providing a year-round source of water. This system has been successfully installed in other local areas so research began to find suitable locations here. Level road access and adequate water depth were important criteria in determining the appropriate locations. The permit applications with various government departments takes far longer than the simple digging of a hole in which to lay a pipe. Careful attention also had to be paid to past research in order to avoid known sites with an archaeological significance. In the end, Accesses #20 near 83 Mile Road and #14 just east of the y turned out to be the most suitable.

With the paperwork done and materials purchased both hydrants were built by Brian Beherrall in one day at each location. Screens were floated in the lake on either side of the excavation to keep the disturbance of the lake bed to a minimum and the units were completely assembled on location then carefully placed in the excavation. Subsequent testing has shown that the two four inch lines can be used simultaneously allowing for the filling of two tenders at the same time if necessary. To guard against vehicles accidentally hitting the hydrants, short pieces of culvert filled with gravel been placed to surround the units. (note: On November 15<sup>th</sup> our tenders were called out to provide mutual aid at a fire in the Lone Butte area. The hydrant at Access #14 efficiently provided ten loads of water for our truck, Lone Butte's tender and one from 100 Mile House to fight the fire.)

With the conclusion of this project, the department has reached a plateau that will allow us to continue to provide a high level of protection to serve this community for many years to come. Future plans may see the construction of a water system at Hall #2, but this can wait until we have raised sufficient funds. More importantly will be the saving of money for the necessary purchase of a newer pumper several years from now when the present number one unit has reached its age limit. One small project that will begin as soon as time and weather allow will be the installation of memorial flag poles at both halls to honour deceased members of the department. It has taken a lot of work by a lot of people, but this community has created the best possible fire/emergency service for a community of this size on a very modest budget.

We hope that everyone will enjoy all of the wonderful winter activities that our lakes have to offer. Our fire fighters and first responders are there to assist in any emergency, but, as always, your safety starts with you.

Roy Allan  
President, WL-N.GL VFD

## **Women's Auxiliary Report**

Our Auxiliary has had three meetings since our last newsletter. During that time I have enjoyed getting to know the members better. We worked on how to improve our Bake sale in the spring and what would work better for next year. It is our biggest event of the year and so like to make it the best possible occasion we can.

We had a luncheon at the Little Horse Lodge on Sept the 12th to say goodbye to Kathy Wilson. She will be sadly missed by us all. She has since shared her experiences in her new digs and is very happy and glad to be near her son and daughter. She sends her warmest regards to all she has left behind and hopes you all have a very nice Christmas Season and a wonderful coming year.

Our meeting in October was small in attendance but a decision was made that we would combine our Christmas and appreciation dinner together this year. Our event will be on November 29<sup>th</sup>. It will be held at the Watch Lake Community hall. Little Horse Lodge will be catering the event. Desserts will be made by our ladies and you all know how many wonderful bakers we have in the auxiliary so make sure you sign up for the dinner. If you wish to bring a guest you can pay for a dinner for them as well. All firefighters, first responders, board members, auxiliary and spouse's dinners are covered by the Auxiliary. No Late comers will be able to attend as we need to let the chef have a head count by November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Please let Donna Grimshaw know by this date. We appreciate your kind cooperation.

Our last meeting of the year was a luncheon held at the Little Horse Lodge. It was well attended and all of us had a wonderful time enjoying a final time together for this year and arranging the final details for the coming event. We so hope to see you this November 29<sup>th</sup>. And wish you all the best during the holiday season and coming year.

Joyce Smeltzer.  
President, Women's Auxiliary

### **A Service Too Vital To Lose**

So far this year the First Responders have been called-out to ten medical emergencies. Of these seven were to properties with paid fire dues, two were to unpaid properties and one was a roadside incident. The retirement and recreational nature of this community places a high priority upon having a locally based emergency service. Unfortunately, as the operating costs of the fire department rise and the number of trained medical aid personnel drops off it becomes more difficult to justify the continuation of the First Responder service. Where did they all go? While we still have a fairly healthy roster of fire fighters, the number of trained first responders has taken a sharp reduction over the past two years. Sadly two members passed away, two resigned as a result of pressures from other interests, seven of the most highly qualified members work away from the area for extended periods of time and cannot be counted upon to be in the area 24/7. It's up to the community. We need more volunteers for the First Responder service alone. Free training, free uniform, free equipment and you get to meet a lot of people who want only to dedicate a couple of hours a week to serving the community. If you can help, please contact Chief Andy Palaniak at [wlnglvfd@gmail.com](mailto:wlnglvfd@gmail.com).

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Jan.		424	1207	895
Feb.		444	831	798
Mar.		513	974	929
Apr.	161	623	1103	1000
May	305	673	822	1059
Jun.	287	527	885	1058
Jul.	386	626	1226	1154
Aug.	306	504	807	1412
Sept.	444	513	827	1379
Oct.	436	629	1028	1388
Nov.	402	586	665	
Dec.	366	923	764	

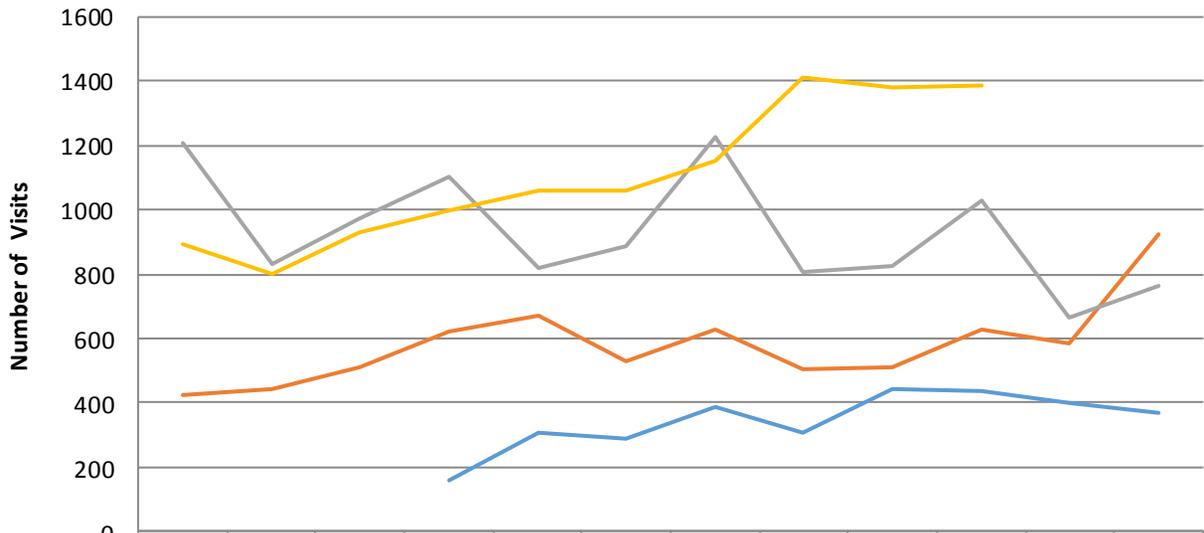
### Website News

Our web site continues to grow in followers. In August of this year we had the highest number of visits since the site was opened. Many of these visits were responses to the fire dues/taxation question and that possibly led to the record interest seen throughout September and October.

Please feel free to submit any fire department related information that you believe will be of interest to the community.

Bob Nathane  
Director/Webmaster

### Number of "wlngfiredept.org" Website Visits Per Month



	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
2011				161	305	287	386	306	444	436	402	366
2012	424	444	513	623	673	527	626	504	513	629	586	923
2013	1207	831	974	1103	822	885	1226	807	827	1028	665	764
2014	895	798	929	1000	1059	1058	1154	1412	1379	1388		

## **Financial Report:**

Please take a look at the current financial statements on the last pages of this newsletter. Also, attached to the annual invoice you will see the following notice:

***The future of your emergency services depends upon  
the payment of annual fire dues and volunteer time.***

***More volunteers are urgently needed.***

***Without more volunteers and  
without more property owners paying their share of the annual fire dues,  
we will be forced to begin curtailing some emergency services.***

***If you can spare two hours per week to train as a firefighter or first responder,  
please contact Chief Andy Palaniak at [wlnqlvfd@gmail.com](mailto:wlnqlvfd@gmail.com).***

***Summer residents, part-time residents and shift workers welcome.***

Every year it becomes more difficult for us to cover all of our operating expenses with the income derived from the annual fire dues. At the last Annual General Meeting the membership approved a \$20 per year increase in the fire dues. We believe we can keep this increase down to \$10 per property, but we need all property owners to pay their share. There are still 20% of our neighbours who are getting a free ride at the expense of those who wish to see us continue to provide quality fire emergency services. Please encourage your neighbours to do their part so that we can continue to enjoy the lowest possible fire insurance rates for this area without having to further raise the annual fire dues.

Because so many of our residents travel away from the area for extended periods of time, we need to keep the number of volunteers on the roster as high as possible. Unfortunately the number of trained First Responders has dropped off and that service is now in jeopardy. This has always been an extra service that we have tried to provide, but with a lack of funding and a shortage of personnel it may soon be temporarily cancelled.

Guy Aggiss  
Director / Treasurer

## **Fire Dues / Taxation**

This past summer we distributed a questionnaire in which all property owners in this fire service area were asked to sign either for or against conducting a referendum or petition to ask the Cariboo Regional District to collect the annual fire dues through taxation. We had almost 200 responses with only one opposed and three people didn't seem to understand the question. It would now appear that a referendum or petition will be delayed pending the outcome of negotiations with the CRD Board of Directors. Janis Bell the CAO of the Regional District and Bruce Rattray the CRD Director for Area L have already met with us to discuss the issue. At the first meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup> board members presented the case for remaining independent and having fire dues collected in conjunction with annual property taxes or to have a funding formula similar to that granted Search and Rescue. We covered department history, the effective management of our finances that has allowed us to develop the high level of service we currently enjoy and the substantial increase in annual property taxes if we were to become a CRD department. Ms. Bell requested copies of our audited annual financial reports for past years which were later mailed to her. Although cordial, this meeting produced no resolution to our funding issue. We did, however, agree to reconsider the positions on both sides and meet again.

This second meeting, held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, was equally non-productive. The CRD is holding firm in their position that we must become a CRD department in order to obtain any funding through taxation. We were presented with a document titled *CRD Volunteer Fire Departments Must Have and Must Do List* that in its introduction stated, "all volunteer fire services that receive tax based funding from the CRD are required to comply with all of the following conditions, guidelines, requirements and standards." The sub titles of this document cover such requirements as "policy and procedures", "documentation and record keeping", "budgeting and purchasing" and "training." In every category we meet or exceed the CRD expectations. However, even though it is nice to know that our fire department meets and exceeds established standards, our intention is not to attempt to conform to these guidelines in order to become a CRD department. We wish only maintain our independence and to have our fire dues collected in conjunction with annual property taxes.

A major stumbling block to any compromise solution to this issue arises in the section titled *Inventory and Assets*. Here it states, "**independent fire departments that become CRD departments must sign ownership of all assets over to the CRD . . .**" Until directed otherwise by the membership, the Board cannot recommend such disposition of the department's assets. Through the careful management of our annual funding and the judicious use of annual lottery grants covering training, safety and equipment acquisition, we have gone from near bankruptcy in 2006 to over \$900,000 in assets at the end of the 2013 fiscal year. This has been accomplished through a tremendous community effort and by the donation of land, goods, services and labour. The community's assets are not something we can simply sign over to the CRD without appreciable benefit to the community as a whole. We anticipate further discussions with the CRD, but at this time they appear unwilling to enter into a contract with us.

We could ask the community to vote again on the question of joining the CRD Emergency Services. If this vote were to pass the resulting tax increase would see the resignation of many of the fire fighters who have already said they will not volunteer their time if they are being forced into paying higher taxes to cover the services they are already providing. Most members of the board who have managed to build and operate the department on limited funds for the past seven years would become redundant and would also resign. We would end up with two up-to-date fire halls complete with training facilities, seven vehicles and no staff. As stated before, if the staff did remain and the department continue to function as a CRD department, there would be no appreciable benefit to the community with regard to insurance rates, only higher taxes.

As the Treasurer mentioned the membership passed a motion allowing us to make a \$20 increase in the annual fire dues. However, since the twenty five property owners who had paid their dues for five years in advance to aid in the rebuilding of the halls are now back to paying annually, we had sufficient income to reduce that increase to \$10 per property. The rates for 2015 will be \$170 for developed property and \$100 for undeveloped. Unless we have assistance in collecting fire dues from the CRD and if we don't have more than 80% of the community paying their share, we will have no alternative but to ask the membership to approve an additional increase. We maintain that we will still be paying far less in annual dues for fire service than the fees included in taxes in other CRD areas.

As discussed several times in the past, the first responder service is **not** part of the fire department's mandate, but an extra service that we try to provide as the number of trained personnel and finances allow. Unless we have assistance from the CRD, more property owners paying their annual dues and a few more volunteers, particularly from the Watch Lake area, we will be forced to suspend this service by the end of this year.

Please plan to attend the Annual General Meeting on February 22, 2015. Your input is vital to our continued success.

# Income Statement

01/01/2014  
to 11/21/2014

## REVENUE

Revenue

Donations	763.90
Government Grants	3,000.00
Fire Supression Revenue	0
Fire Dues	<u>41,827.05</u>
Net Revenue	<u>45,590.95</u>
Other Revenue	
Interest Revenue	289.29
Miscellaneous Revenue	<u>1,946.55</u>
Total Other Revenue	<u>2,235.84</u>

**TOTAL REVENUE** 47,826.79

## EXPENSE

### Vehicle Expenses

FR11 V Expense	598.40
T 11A (1977 FORD)	332.95
T 11 V. Expenses	1,212.99
E 11 (old) V. Expense	-6,500.00
E11 V Expenses	2,139.67
FR 21 V. Expenses	619.98
E21 V. Expenses	23,283.81
T 21 V Expenses	747.79
SHOP SUPPLIES	<u>240.64</u>
Vehicle Expense	<u>22,676.23</u>
<b>Vehicle Expense</b>	<u>22,676.23</u>

Vehicle Fuel	
FR 11 Fuel	372.87
T 11 Fuel	312.69
E 11 Fuel	297.16
FR 21 Fuel	121.87
T 21 Fuel	361.27
E 21 Fuel	<u>435.46</u>
Vehicle Fuel	1,901.32
Misc. Fuel	34.80
Bulk Fuel	1,520.91
Vehicle Insurance	12,313.00
Freight Expense	72.88
Freight Expense	321.00
Total Vehicle Expenses	<u>16,163.91</u>

### Payroll Expenses

WCB Expense	<u>656.64</u>
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### Total Payroll Expense

656.64

### General & Administrative Expenses

Accounting & Legal	300.00
Advertising & Promotions	904.03
Business Fees & Licenses	2,211.48
Courier & Postage	987.44
Insurance Building & Liability	12,668.00
Bank Charges	172.00
Fire Fighting Equipment	30,879.98
Office Supplies	1,492.61
Rent	643.89

Repairs & Maintenance (Buildings) 6,298.40

Telephone	-
Tools	443.71
Miscellaneous	616.33
Mileage	1,458.50
Meals & Accomodations	226.80
Utilities Hall 1	1,671.69
Utilities Hall 2	1,714.19
Training Expenses	2,081.40
First Responder Expense	503.16
Freight Expense	<u>161.58</u>
Total Expenses	<u>2,746.14</u>

**Total General & Admin. Expenses** 65,435.19

**TOTAL EXPENSE** 104,931.97

**NET INCOME** -57,105.18

**WATCH LAKE NORTH GREEN LAKE VFD**  
**Balance Sheet As at 11/21/2014**

**ASSET**

**Current Assets**

Petty Cash	300.00	
Gaming Bank Account	7,864.58	
General Bank Account	<u>32,532.30</u>	
Total Cash		40,696.88
GIC Hall 2		3,400.54
GIC Truck		0.00
Accounts Receivable	<u>0.00</u>	
Total Receivable		<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b><u>44,097.42</u></b>

**Capital Assets**

Fire Fighting Equipment	<u>67,317.59</u>	
Net Fire Fighting Equipment		67,317.59
Vehicle	<u>452,500.00</u>	
Net - Vehicle		452,500.00
Building	<u>335,400.00</u>	
Net - Building		335,400.00
Land		<u>22,100.00</u>
<b>Total Capital Assets</b>		<b><u>877,317.59</u></b>

<b>TOTAL ASSET</b>		<b><u><u>921,415.01</u></u></b>
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**LIABILITY**

**Current Liabilities**

Accounts Payable		1.62
WCB Payable		0.00
GST/HST Paid on Purchases	<u>-4,110.72</u>	
GST/HST Owing (Refund)		<u>-4,110.72</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b><u>-4,109.10</u></b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITY</b>		<b><u>-4,109.10</u></b>
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**EQUITY**

**Equity**

Retained Earnings - Previous Year		982,629.29
Current Earnings		<u>-57,105.18</u>
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b><u>925,524.11</u></b>

<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b><u>925,524.11</u></b>
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<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		<b><u><u>921,415.01</u></u></b>
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