



WATCH LAKE – NORTH GREEN LAKE

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

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

www.wlmgfiredept.org



Newsletter - Fall / Winter 2013

**Annual General Meeting – Saturday, February 15th at 1:00 p.m.
Watch Lake Community Hall**

Seasons Change

Fall came to an abrupt end this year. Toward the end of October it looked as though we may have taken the boat out of the water too soon. Warm days and flat water tempted us to get the water skis out for one last run. A couple of days later we were looking for the x-country skis. Winter is definitely here. We hope everyone got up on their roofs and cleaned their chimneys during the summer since it is now a pretty dangerous job to attempt. The sudden snowfall brought branches down on the power lines and the south side was without power for several hours. With the cooler temperatures the first house fires of the season are often caused by overloaded wood stoves. Your firefighters are there for you, but do you really want them tramping through your living room to cool down that red-hot stove or, worse yet, pouring water on the remains of your house? If you didn't change the battery in your smoke detector when we turned the clocks back, please get it done before the colder weather sets in and before you start decorating your house for Christmas. Far too often the holiday season is marred by a serious fire.



The Department has had a relatively uneventful year and we hope 2014 will be the same. There was one grassfire caused by an untended campfire that came close to becoming a major event. This occurred on an unpaid property and the owner was charged and paid the \$2000 minimum fee. Quick action on the part of a passing motorist who called the fire department kept this fire from igniting a trailer on the property and saved the surrounding forest.

A major fire at a remote cabin, however, went unreported until the owner discovered the smoldering remains. The cause of this fire was suspicious and the officer in charge called in the RCMP to investigate. It is up to all of us to be vigilant and to report any fires or suspicious activity by calling 911. In addition to these callouts, so far this year there have been 10 other incidents ranging from a mutual aid call to assist the Lone Butte VFD in fighting a house fire in their area to several motor vehicle accidents and responses to burning trees that had fallen on power lines.



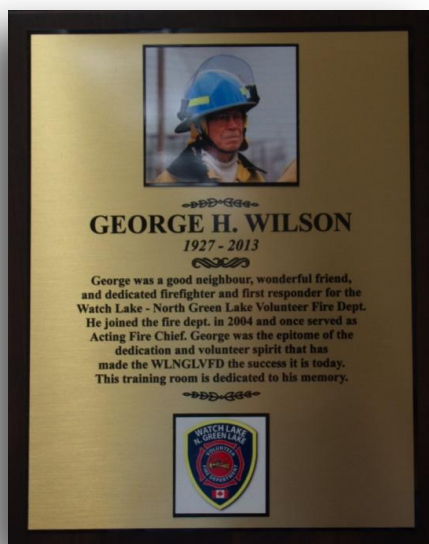
First Responder Training

Our First Responders, on the other hand, have been kept busy with 11 medical aid callouts throughout the year. These calls saw our crews responding to serious situations from a stroke that ultimately resulted in the passing of one of our members and the sudden passing of a long time supporter of the department to several callouts for first aid treatment for cuts, scrapes and multiple wasp stings. The First Responder Service, as stated in our bylaws, can only be provided when there are sufficient numbers of personnel trained and available. As our numbers drop this service like, that of the rest of the Department's activities, becomes threatened. We live in and enjoy a community that is predominately recreational and retirement in nature. As such, the services of trained emergency medical personnel are called upon more often. If you feel you can help out even as a First Responder only, please volunteer a small portion of your time to become involved.

Firefighters Memorial Fund

Initially, in memory of George Wilson, Bob and Susan Nathane started the fund with a very thoughtful donation. Bob hoped that the fund would grow and be used as either a bursary for the children of members of the Department or for the purchase of specialized equipment that had not been included in the annual budget. We soon found, however, that invested funds would not grow very rapidly and that we would have to find ways to use the money without using it up and losing its original intention. Kathy Wilson liked the idea behind the memorial fund and asked that donations in lieu of flowers in honour of George be made to this fund. Upon the passing of Alex Nowick, his wife Barb asked that similar donations be made to the fund in the memory of Alex. Thus it became the *Firefighters Memorial Fund*. There has been some suggestion of building cairns and raising flag poles with the money, but we are not that wealthy and must look to more practical uses. In discussion with other Board members, we have deter-

mined that along with volunteers from the community we can possibly create both of these features on our own in the coming year at no expense to the Department.



Bob asked that some of the memorial fund money be given to the Department to aid in the completion of the George Wilson Memorial Training Room. Future growth of this fund will come from memorial donations, bequests and other ways of adding to it. Money will be drawn from the fund for occasional special purchases that have not been covered in the annual budget; then no further money will be withdrawn until the first withdrawal has been replaced. Members commemorated by contributions to the fund will be acknowledged on a small plaque affixed to the specific piece of equipment purchased.

Finances

Our Treasurer will give a detailed accounting of our finances later in this newsletter; however, a brief overview shows that we will just get by once again. Rising costs of fuel, insurance and equipment maintenance are putting an increased strain on our budget. We had hinted in news releases that we would be asking the membership to consider an increase to the annual fire dues at the Annual General Meeting in February. We may, however, be able to postpone the request for this increase since those who pre-paid their dues for five years to help provide funding for the reconstruction of the two halls will be back to paying their dues annually. This will provide a much-needed \$5,000 to the operating revenue. Fortunately, BC Lottery Grants and other fund raising activities have allowed us to make further improvements to the buildings, to save for the purchase of a replacement truck and to cover the costs of safety materials and training. Any cut-backs in these grants will force us to cover some of the safety and training costs with funds from the operating budget.

The sticker for 2014 will be sent out with the receipt for your 2014 fire dues. Please affix the sticker to your address plaque to indicate that your current dues have been paid. If you will not be returning to your property at Watch or Green Lake within the next couple of months, please indicate this when you submit your payment and we will have the sticker put in place for you. The current fees of \$160 for developed property and \$90 for undeveloped property is a small price to pay compared to the taxes paid for the same service in other areas. These fees are also very small in comparison to

the increase in insurance costs we will all be charged if our Department is to fail due to a lack of funding or a decline in volunteers.



If you have any concerns that require our immediate attention please contact any one of the Board members. See the website for contact information for members of the Department.

We hope you all have a safe and enjoyable holiday season and coming new year. Your firefighters and first responders are there for you in case of emergency, but only you can prevent the emergency from happening in the first place.

Roy Allan,



President, WL – N.GL VFD

Chief's Report

Fortunately, as our President mentioned, this has been a relatively quiet year for our Firefighters. Our First Responders, on the other hand, have a full range of calls from very serious incidents to minor injuries. We were all saddened by the tragic loss of two of our members, George Wilson and Bob Smith and by the passing of a long-time supporter, Alex Nowick.

The Board members have stressed the need for more volunteers on numerous occasions. We do have a good number of very dedicated and well-trained volunteers, but we are all getting older and some of us like to travel to warmer places in the winter months. We need more members of the community to step up and give a little of their time to help us to continue providing this vital service to the community. Much of this appeal for new volunteers was published in the Summer Newsletter and has appeared in other articles in the local newspaper. Unfortunately we have had no response. We currently have a roster of 28 members. Of the firefighters 11 are also trained as first responders and an additional 4 members are first responders only. Our Auxiliary also has about 25 active members who work hard to organize fund-raising events.

In all, this is a good turnout for a community of our size and it looks good on paper, but some members are only part-time residents and a few others travel south during the winter months. Many are retired, like all of us they are getting older, and feel that someday they will have to retire from active duty as well. Understandably this casts a dark cloud over the future of our department. We are approaching the member crisis that has plagued other areas and unless we find new members to begin training, we may be facing an eventual closure. The loss of our Fire Department would have very serious impacts on our community. First of all, it would mean an end to rapid medical aid with no fire emergency response at all and, secondly, all of our fire insurance rates would jump to the highest possible category. This increase would, no doubt, be greater than the \$160 we currently pay to keep our fire department active.

You can help. We encourage any residents, either full or part-time, to drop by on a Tuesday practice or give me call, Andy Palaniak, at 250-456-7460 (e-mail: wlnglvfd@gmail.com) and see how you can donate just a few hours of your time to the protection of your community. Anyone with carpentry, mechanical or first aid skills would be particularly welcome. The Auxiliary too can always use people who can spare a bit of their time to assist at special events. If you can help out here please contact Giselle Polisenio at 250-395-9082 (e-mail: ggpoliseno@gmail.com). The firefighters meet most Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. to practice their fire fighting skills and

to perform maintenance on the equipment. Practice scenarios are set up so that members get as much live-fire experience as possible. We really do need your help. Just think of all the perks you get in exchange for a few hours of your time:

- free cap, tee shirt and jacket,
- turnout gear, helmet, boots, all-purpose firefighter's tool, radios and coveralls are provided,
- also provided for capable applicants is self-contained breathing apparatus,
- all First Responder and Firefighter training including driver's license upgrade (if necessary) and CPR is provided for all,
- free ride in a fire truck with lights and siren, and, most important of all, you gain the respect and admiration of your neighbours for contributing to this vital community service.

Visit the department on any practice night and meet the people who proudly devote some of their time to the protection of our community. Read Bob Nathane's article about the website further in this newsletter and visit the site to learn more about the people and equipment that are there for your protection 24 hours of every day of the year. Consider this your official invitation. Don't wait --- or it may be too late.

Andy Palaniak,
Fire Chief

Fire Dues:

We are often asked, "why are my fire dues so high?" In fact, compared to other areas in the Cariboo and Thompson/Nicola Regional Districts, they are not that high at all and at the Annual General Meeting the Board of Directors may have to ask the membership to approve a moderate increase to attempt to catch up with inflation. The rising costs of our operating expenses including fuel, insurance, electricity and the replacement of firefighter equipment have risen to the point that they can no longer be covered by the present income from fire dues. Local areas that have the cost of fire protection included in their taxes pay considerably more than us for their emergency services. If we were to have at one time gone with CRD Emergency Services, we might have a couple of newer engines, but we would certainly pay a lot more in our annual taxes. Below are some of the rates we have presented at previous General Meetings. If you missed these meetings, you may find the comparisons interesting. This chart is based upon a random property value of \$300,000 times the rate for fire protection per \$1000 of assessed value plus (in some cases) a base fee.

Forest Grove	$\$300,000 \times 1.607/1000 + \30	= \$512.10
Interlakes	$\$300,000 \times 1.445/1000 + \50	= \$483.50
Lone Butte	$\$300,000 \times .6878/1000$	= \$206.34
Miocene	$\$300,000 \times 1.918/1000$	= \$575.40
S. Green Lake	$\$300,000 \times .9713/1000 + \50.85	= \$342.24

Watch Lake – North Green Lake – flat rate – undeveloped land	= \$90.00
developed property	= \$160.00

Had we become a part of the CRD Emergency Services everyone would have to pay their share, but we would all be paying a lot more. We have kept our costs down for as long as possible, but as the Treasurer's report will point out, it becomes more difficult to make ends meet every year. Please attend the Annual General Meeting

Alan Boyd
Director

Insurance (reprint in part from Summer Newsletter)

Members of the board of directors are often questioned about how the money taken in through the annual fire dues is spent. There are certainly no secrets with our finances. A financial summary is distributed to the Board members for discussion at their regular meetings. A biannual report is distributed to the membership at the Summer and Annual General Meetings along with an audited report at the AGM. If anyone has further concerns, the books are open for inspection by arranging a mutually convenient time with our treasurer.

By remaining independent of the CRD Emergency Services we continue to enjoy one of the lowest annual rates for fire protection in the Cariboo. Fortunately this is supplemented by the annual training and safety grant from BC Lotteries. However, even with a low annual income this community has, over the past five years, managed to build two new, well-equipped fire halls, replace two of the aging fire engines, add a newer tender and the two one-tons with their attachments.

One unavoidable expenditure is insurance. The nature of our activities requires coverage for just about everything. The department has insurance covering its assets, as well as personal liability coverage for fire fighters, first responders and directors. The assets include two fire halls, trucks and equipment with ongoing updates. Total cost for insuring our trucks alone is \$9,300. The two fire halls, along with equipment and liability insurance costs \$12,456. WorksafeBC coverage for on-the-job injury costs another \$940.50.

Insuring the fire halls and trucks is straightforward, while liability insurance requires extra consideration as exposure is always a concern. On this note, in working with our insurance provider of Capri Insurance, Clayton Prince, this policy is widely reviewed each year, looking for potential shortfalls and discussing at length with board members and any interested membership.

Having proper coverage in today's world is an absolute necessity. It is also one of our largest yearly expenses. Having adequate insurance coverage gives us the confidence to move forward as a fire department and in supporting our first responders to do the job necessary to protect our community.

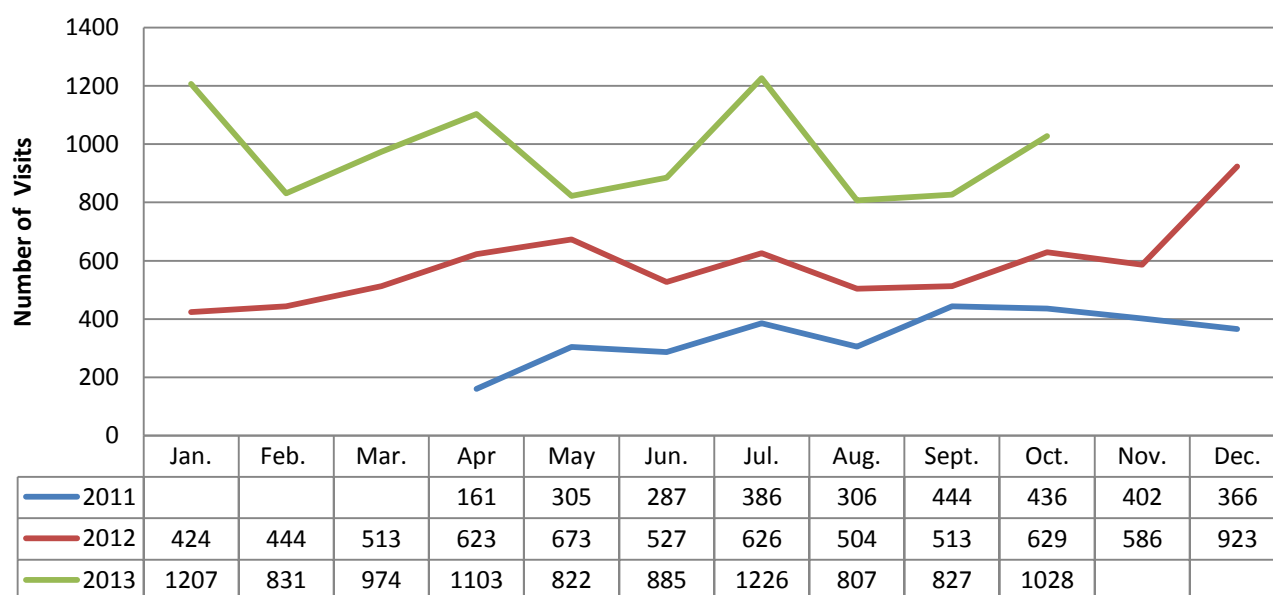
Thank you, membership, for your financial support. Without it, none of the above would be possible.

Lee Granberg
Director / Insurance

Fall 2013 Website Review:

Society membership usage of the Watch Lake-North Green Lake Volunteer Fire Department website continues to grow in leaps and bounds. Over the past nearly three years of its existence, visits to the site have grown nearly 250% (see chart below). We've tried to make it a source of fire dept. information, such as the purchase of new equipment, ways to better protect your property from fires, seasonal outdoor burning restrictions, building of a new training room, and establishment of a memorial fund honoring deceased members of our firefighting community.

Number of "wlngfiredept.com" Website Visits Per Month



Also of interest to everyone should be the articles we regularly post to the "Events and News" tab on the website. Recent titles that have been of great interest to Society members include: clarifying myths about what to do during earthquakes; the dangers of asbestos faced by fire fighters and property owners; reasons not to use cell phones when fueling your vehicle, and making agreements between fire departments in the area to share services when necessary.

Newsletters in the future will continue to be posted to the "Newletters" tab. Our Summer 2013 newsletter was done that way and proved very successful. It saved us a lot of postage expense, and was able to be viewed in living color. For those with new e-mail addresses, please notify us through the "Contact Us" tab. You will be notified via e-mail when newsletters have been posted to the website. (Society members without e-mails will continue to receive newsletters in black and white via regular mail.)

Our Facebook page, which can be accessed directly from the website, has proven to be very popular. We use Facebook to keep you apprised of what is happening in the North American world of firefighting, what our individual firefighters are doing when not practicing or racing to the next fire, and to ask you what you think of the fire dept, and any suggestions you may have. If you are a member of Facebook, and enjoy the information provided, please click on the "Like" button to let us know you appreciate the information we provide.

With the assistance of Dimps Horn, we have created a history of the Shorty Horn Memorial Fire Hall." If you haven't read the article yet, please check it out under the "About Us" tab. If anyone has information on the history of the "Sonny Johnson Memorial Fire Hall", please contact me at bob@bnathane.com, so I can complete that section.

Thanks for your great support of our website and Facebook page. They have proven to be vital tools for us in getting important information out to you.

Bob Nathane
Director / Web Master

Chimney Fires

It is wood stove season again and chimney fires are the most common reason for callouts this time of year. A chimney fire can destroy your home, so here's what you can do to avoid one this season. Be sure to use well seasoned wood because it creates less creosote in your chimney. Creosote buildup is the main cause of chimney fires. You can also remove buildup by cleaning your chimney regularly. If you can't clean it yourself, check the yellow pages under chimney for someone in your area who can do it properly for you. If you care for your chimney you will be much less likely to have a chimney fire. If one does occur, there are things you can do to save your house before the fire department gets there. Remember, we all are at our own homes, and have to get out and to the hall to get the fire truck, and then get to your house. If it is safe, here's what you can do yourself.

1. Get all people and pets out of the building.
2. Call 911.
If it is safe and you have a path for exit you can do the following:
3. Open the stove door wide and throw a small container of water into the fireplace. The steam will help smother the fire. Repeat if necessary.
4. Use the fire tongs to remove the logs and place them in a metal container. Close the stove door then take the logs outside into the snow.
5. If you have a fire extinguisher, (of course you do) spray it into the wood stove.
6. Close the door of the stove and get out of the building.
7. Wait outside for arrival of fire department. They can use the thermal imaging camera to look for hot spots and make sure it is out.

Jayne Palaniak
Training Officer

Collections

First I would like to thank those of you who have submitted their fire dues by the deadline of March 1st each year. It means so much to our fire department to see that our community supports the continued spontaneous volunteer work within our small district. To your neighbours who have not tendered their dues as of yet, I would ask that you talk to them and see if they would support the overall community in the provision of this valued service. I have and will keep phoning and driving to those residences who have not as yet responded.

There are many excuses for evasion of this duty but there is one whole year in order to acquire this amount and it can be done if we all pull together! At the time of this writing, there are 40+ dwellings on properties who refuse to pay their dues which creates a burden to the operational objectives of the department and to those dedicated to having the leading, first-rate fire department in the Cariboo. In closing, I sincerely wish that all of our members will proudly display their 2014 white stickers on their address plaques.

Bill Thomas
Director / Collections

Membership:

2013 has seen a noticeable increase in Society membership with slightly over 80% participation by property owners in our coverage area. Compared with the last couple of years, this represents an increase of about 3-5% in the number of members. A large portion of the credit for the increase goes to Director Bill Thomas for his dedication to making a personal visit during the summer months to outstanding properties. His efforts to explain and promote the benefits of participation in our Fire Department Society have yielded very positive results. Many thanks Bill.

Coupled with Bill's contribution, we have made significant strides in getting our membership lists and property ownership lists updated. Hopefully, this will make life easier for Treasurer Guy Aggiss when it comes time to invoice property owners for the upcoming year's Fire Dues. It is vitally important for us to have current contact information for all properties in our coverage area, so please contact us either by e-mail or regular mail if any of your contact information has changed.

We are also embarking on a program to have all of the WL-NGL Fire Department Society's documents and files updated and consolidated at Hall #2. We have acquired a number of filing cabinets recently just for this purpose and we are setting aside a secure storage area to provide convenient access. When this process is completed, members will be able to contact the Board of Directors for access to our files, should questions arise.

Ken Leyland
Director

The Auxiliary's News

It is hard to believe that 2014 is just around the corner. This year, the Auxiliary was very busy with successful events including Garage and Bake Sale, Raffle ticket sales and the Open House Bake Sale. With the hard work and devotion from these special ladies, I am very happy to announce that in 2013, the Auxiliary accomplished in raising over \$4544.00 for the Fire Department.

The winners of the Raffle Ticket Draw on September 14th:

1st Prize – 'Field of Green' Queen Size Quilt – Karin Forbes

2nd Prize – 16 Pieces 'Ducks Unlimited' China Set – Kit Davidson

3rd Prize – Wooden Planter – Wendy Picton

4th Prize – Roy Vickers – King Fisher II print – Evelyn Holmes

On October 19th, the Auxiliary had a Firefighters/First Responders Appreciation Dinner which was held at the Watch Lake Community Hall. Fifty-three people attended the dinner and everyone had a great time. We are planning to do this again next year and hope to see you there.

Calendar of Events for 2014

Auxiliary's AGM scheduled for Saturday, March 1st at the Shorty Horn Memorial Fire Hall (Hall #1). Social at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting commences at 10 a.m.

Raffle ticket sales

Garage and Bake sale will be on Saturday, May 17th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sonny Johnson Memorial Fire Hall.

Open House and Mini Bake and Garage Sale – Tentatively on Saturday, August 2nd.

Firefighter's Appreciation Dinner will be in mid-October.

If anyone has extra storage space and would like to help the auxiliary, please contact me. There are residents that call us during the year to see if we would like items for our garage sale, but due to the lack of room, we are not able to take anything unless it is closer to the date. Thank you.

We wish to take this opportunity to once again thank everyone in the Watch Lake/North Green Lake community for supporting all our events throughout the year and to wish you all a safe and peaceful holiday season.

For more information about the Auxiliary, contact me at 250-395-9082. New members are always welcome.

Gisele Poliseno
President

Financial Report:

Please take a look at the year-end financial statements attached to this newsletter. We have reached the end of another year with no debt. Year after year the operational costs of running our Fire Department continue to rise. As mentioned in the President's article above, we will have the people who paid their dues for five years in advance back to paying annually, giving us a boost of \$4000 that we didn't have in the 2013 budget. We have gone through considerable "belt tightening" yet we have reached the point where at the Annual General Meeting the Board may be forced to ask the membership to consider an increase in the annual fire dues. If all property owners in our protection area paid their fire dues we would not be considering an increase at this time. Over the past six years we have seen the cost of fuel alone rise from \$0.85 to \$1.40 per litre. This rate of increase has almost been equaled in the cost of insurance, heating fuel, electricity and basic equipment replacement. The annual dues paid by property owners just cover the general operations of the department. Due to the effects of inflation our fire dues rates in the future will have to be addressed. Fortunately, training, health and safety equipment (including first responder supplies), electronics, vehicle replacement, construction and renovations are covered by grants, donations and fund raising.

In the following financial reports the revenue looks very healthy, but bear in mind that a portion of this is the dues paid early by those property owners who will not be back in the area until after the March 1st deadline.

Guy Aggiss
Director / Treasurer

**WATCH LAKE NORTH GREEN LAKE VFD
Balance Sheet As at 11/15/2013**

ASSET

Current Assets

GIC (HALL 2)	3,373.33	
Petty Cash	300.00	
Bank Account Gaming	4,496.18	(2097.29 left from construction for truck) leaving 2398.89
Bank Account General	<u>11,882.91</u>	
Total Cash		20,052.42
GST Receivable	<u>-1,384.15</u>	
Total GSTReceivables		-1,384.15 (received 1384.15 mor than we claimed)
Accounts Receivable	<u>0.00</u>	
Total Receivable		0.00
GIC (TRUCK)		<u>24,378.00</u>
Total Current Assets		<u><u>43,046.27</u></u>

Capital Assets

Equipment	67,317.59	
Accum. Amort. -Furn. & Equip.	<u>-12,790.34</u>	
Net Equipment		54,527.25
Vehicle	337,981.44	
Accum. Amort. -Vehicle	<u>-56,657.78</u>	
Net - Vehicle		281,323.66
Building	<u>335,400.00</u>	
Net - Building		335,400.00
Land		<u>22,100.00</u>
Total Capital Assets		<u><u>693,350.91</u></u>

TOTAL ASSET 736,397.18

LIABILITY

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable		0.00
Prepaid Fire Dues	<u>5,234.00</u>	(last of the prepaid fire dues)
Total		5,234.00
GST Paid on Purchases	<u>-5,331.04</u>	
GST Owing (Refund)		<u>-5,331.04</u> (we will be claiming approximatley 50% of this)
Total Current Liabilities		<u><u>-97.04</u></u>

TOTAL LIABILITY -97.04

EQUITY

Owners Equity

Retained Earnings - Previous Year	754,226.53	
Current Earnings	<u>-17,732.31</u>	
Total Owners Equity		<u><u>736,494.22</u></u>
TOTAL EQUITY		<u><u>736,494.22</u></u>
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		<u><u>736,397.18</u></u>

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Income Statement 01/01/2013 to 11/15/2013**REVENUE**

Revenue	
Fire Dues	36,478.55
Donations	569.00
Fire Fighting Revenue	3,652.00
Net Revenue	40,699.55

Other Revenue	
Government Grants	24,378.00
Interest Revenue	0.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	600.00
Total Other Revenue	24,978.00

TOTAL REVENUE 65,677.55

EXPENSE

Expenses	
First Responders Expense	3,593.17
Training	3,015.90
Fire Fighting Supplies	12,630.77
Work Safe BC	203.80
Net Expense	15,850.47
Freight Expense	351.38
Expense	19,795.02

Expenses	
Accounting & Legal	300.00
Advertising & Promotions	782.50
Tools	777.03
Business Fees & Licenses	2,380.80
Courier & Postage	515.79
Vehicle Fuel	2,230.63
Vehicle Expense	10,308.66
Vehicle Insurance	8,863.00
Insurance (Building & liability)	12,468.00
Bank Charges	174.00
Office Supplies	1,433.74
Mileage	800.25
Miscellaneous Expenses	2,206.67
Rent	50.00
Building Repair & Maintenance	17,547.35
Telephone	0.00
Accommodations & Meals	186.07
Utilities Hall 2	1,278.35
Utilities hall 1	1,312.00
Expenses.	63,614.84

TOTAL EXPENSE 83,409.86

NET INCOME -17,732.31



Proxy

No: _____

I, (print): _____

of local area address: _____

as a fire dues paid member of the
Watch Lake – North Green Lake
Volunteer Fire Department (Society)
give my proxy to:

(print) _____

to vote on motions and resolutions raised
at the Annual General Meeting of the
Watch Lake – North Green Lake
Volunteer Fire Dept. (Society)
to be held on
Saturday, February 15, 2014*
at the Watch Lake Community Hall

Signed: _____

*valid only on date shown above