



WATCH LAKE - NORTH GREEN LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

5771 Green Lake North Road
70 Mile House, BC, V0K 2K1
www.wlmgfiredept.org



Summer/Fall Newsletter 2026

Board of Directors (contact: wlmglvfd@outlook.com)

Gisele Polisenio, Chair | Tom Bachynski, Vice-chair | Barbara McKeown, Secretary | David Kneale, Treasurer
Ron Thurston, Past Chair | Roy Allan, Grant Writer | Lee Granberg, Insurance | Bob Nathane, Website/Facebook
Alan Watrich, Fund-raising | John Dustan, Director | Cory Rushinko, Director | Laura Dewar, Membership

Notification of our Annual General Meeting

Saturday, October 10th • 10:00 a.m. • Watch Lake Community Hall

After the AGM: Open House & Firefighter Appreciation • BBQ lunch by donation

Fire engines and apparatus on display

Paid-up members may vote at the AGM. If you cannot attend in person, please complete the proxy on the final page so another paid-up member can vote on your behalf.

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL FIRE DUES: \$375/YEAR

About \$31.25 per month - just over \$1 per day for local fire protection.

Why We Are Asking Members to Support an Increase

At this year's AGM, members will be asked to approve an increase in annual residential fire protection dues to \$375 for properties paid before January 1st. The fee would increase by an additional \$50 after January 1st. Commercial rates will also have a comparable increase while undeveloped properties with no permanent structures will remain at \$100.

We recognize that no one welcomes an increase in costs. Your Board does not take this request lightly. For many years, we have worked hard to keep fire dues as low as possible while maintaining the equipment, training and resources needed to protect our community.

The cost of providing effective fire protection has increased significantly, and our current dues are no longer sufficient to responsibly fund the department for the future.

This summer alone, our volunteer firefighters responded to 10 callouts in just three weeks. Every response adds wear to our trucks and increases the cost of fuel, hose, tires, repairs, equipment and supplies. At the same time, we must build reserves so aging fire engines and other apparatus can be replaced without sudden, unaffordable increases.

This is your fire department, and your vote matters.

Why the Increase Is Necessary

- 10 callouts in just three weeks during wildfire season, with increased fuel, tire, repair and hose-replacement costs.
- Fire engines and other apparatus eventually age out. We need adequate reserves to replace vehicles over the next 5 to 15 years.
- Grant funding is never guaranteed. We were not successful in obtaining a UBCM grant this year.
- Fire dues have increased far more slowly than the cost of operating and equipping a fire department over the past 20 years.

The directors and service providers are volunteers and receive no personal benefit from increased fees. Fire dues are used to provide and sustain fire protection services.

How Does \$375 Compare?

Based on the CRD-managed fire-service examples listed below, the proposed dues remain competitive with tax-funded fire protection in surrounding communities.

WLNLVFD - proposed residential dues	\$375.00
Lac La Hache example	\$403.30
Interlakes example	\$647.88
Forest Grove example	\$755.28

Keeping our volunteer department financially sustainable helps keep fire protection local - and affordable.

We Have Stretched Every Dollar

In the last few years:

- SCBA upgrade valued at approximately \$140,000: obtained for \$13,000, plus a generous \$7,000 member donation.
- Replacement engine: obtained used at less than \$30,000 rather than purchasing a new engine costing approximately \$800,000.
- Improved Fire Underwriters Survey rating: upgraded from 5 (not rated) to 3(b), which may help some members qualify for lower insurance premiums if their insurer uses FUS grades.

We are not asking members to fund wasteful spending. We are asking for the resources necessary to maintain what years of careful purchasing, fundraising, donations and volunteer service have built.



Our newest acquisition This truck replaces our aging First Response vehicle and sprinkler protection unit trailer. It will be fitted with a water tank, pumps and hoses, and will be provide water for our tenders and engines, and for fighting hard to access fires. It's so new to us that we haven't even put our name and logo on it yet.

What Your Fire Dues Helped Protect This Summer

10

callouts in
3 weeks

9

wildfires within
our protection area

500+

properties

24/7

community
readiness

The map below shows nine wildfires within and five near our fire protection area. The red line at the lower left marks the northeast perimeter of the Pear Lake Fire, the approximately 169,000-hectare fire responsible for our area's evacuation order and alerts.



Lightning-strike fires were our biggest threat this year and continue to be a concern. Although we have had some recent rainfall, drought conditions mean grass and forest fuels can dry quickly.

Our firefighters also responded to grassland fires, downed power lines and a structure fire earlier this year. The training and equipment supported by this community allowed crews to knock down fires quickly before they became a more serious threat.

How many volunteer fire departments in British Columbia have three water tenders? Not many - but ours does. In a rural area where water supply is critical, that capability matters.



Prepared people. Reliable equipment. Local response.

Responsible Planning Protects Tomorrow

A volunteer fire department cannot plan only for today's calls. Trucks age. Pumps, hose and protective equipment wear out. Training must continue. Insurance, hydro, heating, fuel and repairs all cost more over time.

The Fire Underwriters Survey requires apparatus to be replaced before it ages out if we are to maintain our rating. That means the department must build reserves years before a replacement vehicle is needed.

A modest increase now is intended to reduce the risk of much larger, sudden increases later.

A Strong Department Can Benefit Every Property Owner

- Our Chief successfully improved the department's Fire Underwriters Survey rating from 5 (not rated) to 3(b). Members are encouraged to contact their insurance company and advise them of our 3(b) rating. **If your insurer uses FUS grades when setting premiums, the improved rating may reduce insurance costs.**
- Our Hall 1 engine/pumper also had to be replaced to maintain that rating. Through the Chief's contacts, the department obtained a new-to-us engine at very low cost. With modest improvements, it is expected to help maintain the Hall 1 rating for another seven to eight years.



Please Consider a Donation

Annual fire dues do not cover the entire cost of operating the department. Fire trucks, insurance, utilities, repairs, firefighter training and protective gear are expensive. We apply for grants annually, but grants generally provide only partial funding and are never guaranteed.

- Mail: Watch Lake-North Green Lake Fire Department, 5771 Green Lake North Road, 70 Mile House, BC V0K 2K1
- Online: www.wlmgfiredept.org - visit the Fire Dues page and scroll to the Donation box.
- E-transfer: wlmglvfd@outlook.com (autodeposit enabled; no security question required).

A Community Worth Protecting

Our fire department is more than trucks and equipment. It is neighbours helping neighbours - volunteers who train, respond and give their time because this community matters.

That spirit was on full display at the Firefighter Appreciation BBQ on August 22nd.



A Heart-warming Story That Deserves to Be Shared

After lunch, a mom and her daughter walked through the door. The little girl, Acelyn, was holding a homemade card and a plastic bag. Gisele, our VFD Chair, led Acelyn to the stage and announced that she had organized her own lemonade and cookie stand to raise money for the fire department.

Her card read, "Thank you for all your hard work, love Acelyn." In just a few hours that day, Acelyn raised \$178 to donate to the department.

There was cheering, clapping and more than a few teary eyes. Acelyn enjoyed a piece of cake, received her own toy fire engine and met many of the firefighters. The next afternoon, Fire Chief Andy and Fire Officer Ed drove Engine 21 to Acelyn's house, where she was treated to a ride in the fire truck around the neighbourhood.

Acelyn's card will be framed and hung on the wall at Fire Hall #2.

Acelyn, thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.



PLEASE VOTE YES AT THE OCTOBER 10 AGM

For about \$1 per day, the proposed dues help keep our volunteer fire department trained, equipped, local and ready when our community needs it most.

Protecting our community is a responsibility we all share.

Thank you to our firefighters, volunteers, members, donors and neighbours for supporting local fire protection.

Annual General Meeting Proxy

If you cannot attend the Annual General Meeting on October 10th in person, please forward this proxy to a paid-up member of your choosing who will be attending and can vote for you.

Proxy No.: _____(please leave blank)

I, (print): _____

of local area address: _____

as a paid-up 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 Department (Society), to be held on:

Saturday, October 10th, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Watch Lake Community Hall

Signed: _____

*Valid only on the date shown above.