

SECOND PUBLIC MEETING
PROPOSED LOCAL SERVICES BOARD FOR GIDLEY, PELLATT, PELICAN & UMBACH
July 17, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 Barry Baltessen with 34 people in attendance. Copies of an information brochure, a financial projection, information on the formation and operation of a Local Services Board, along with the Local Services Board Act were made available.

He introduced committee members and thanked them for their efforts. Barry Bennett, PUFF Fire Chief, was introduced along with Larry Lundy from the Office of the Fire Marshall. Barry provided a brief overview of the Pellatt United Fire Fighters history and present make, which included the most current financial information. He indicated that PUFF was financially secure at this time. However, the current method of generating revenue results in only 30-40% of the residents paying with the remaining operating costs funded by revenue earned by the fire team and fund raising. An LSB would provide a mechanism to ensure that all residents who receive fire protection services are contributing to the costs and would also provide a means to apply for government grants to assist with capital improvements. There was also a brief explanation of what a local services board is and what the goal of this local services board would be. The proposed LSB for Pellatt, Gidley, Umbach and Pelican townships would be formed to deliver fire protection services only through a contract with PUFF. The territory covered was identified. Barry explained the process from the date of the vote to the establishment of the LSB, indicating that it would take a year or longer. It was explained that a board of 5 local residents would have to be voted in. Once established, the LSB would be required to have an annual general meeting to present the audited financial statements, along with the fire protection budget and levy which would be voted on by those attending the meeting.

A question and answer session commenced at 7:20.

Will this LSB be taking over the Local Roads Boards? This LSB has requested power to provide fire protection services only so the existing roads board would continue on as in the past.

Can the same people currently on the PUFF board be on the LSB board and is this a conflict? The possibility exists, however all positions are voted on and all inhabitants have a vote. It was recognized that this is a small community and it is often the same community-minded people who volunteer their time.

A question was raised about the voting process and how many votes are allowed per property. It is one vote per person, as long as that person is a resident, over 18 and a Canadian citizen. A quorum is not required. It is a simple rule by the majority of the people who cast a vote at the meeting. It was explained that this is the procedure as we have no access to tax roles for information about who lives in the area.

What would be the quorum required for the first meeting? On August 14, the number of people who attend and vote will determine the outcome. The results of the vote and a package of additional information would then be forwarded to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. The Ministry will review the material and provide a response.

How will the vote be conducted? The method of voting is at the discretion of the chair and can be either a show of hands or a ballot. McKenzie Clearwater, for example, used a ballot. Who will be the chair? Barry Baltessen will chair the vote meeting.

In response to a question about the percentage of funds provided by voluntary contributions, Fire Chief Bennett explained that the fire fighters and board are tired of fund raising. They are counting on the LSB to provide a steady and known means of revenue to cover the operating expenses incurred for building maintenance, vehicle maintenance and replacement and training. Barry Baltessen indicated that according to the most recent financial statement for the year ended May 31, 2010, voluntary contributions were \$43,832. The remainder of the funds came from revenue earned by the fire team and fund raising. Fire Chief Bennett added that many of the donors had exceeded the suggested contribution rate, with \$3000 and \$1000 donations amongst them.

In response to a question regarding the amount of money collected to replace vehicles, Barry Baltessen responded that \$6000 was included in the budget as an amount to be set aside in reserve to provide funds for vehicle replacement.

There were concerns over whether all money collected for fire fighting would be forwarded to the LSB by the government. It was explained that 100% of the money would be given to the LSB.

A concern was expressed about the lack of information about the proposal in the PUFF newsletter. It was explained that the idea was in its inception at the time the newsletter was printed and mailed. Follow-up concerns were expressed about the initial Wednesday

night meeting and overall communication efforts. It was felt that this left no opportunity for seasonal residents to attend. It was explained that the Newsletter and request for contributions were mailed out prior to making the decision to move forward with the LSB initiative. The first meeting was held on a Wednesday to accommodate local residents and this Saturday meeting was being held for the benefit of the seasonal residents. An overview of the requirements in the Act for posting meeting notices and communicating with the community was provided. It was noted that the legal requirements for providing notice of the meetings were exceeded by the committee.

A number of additional questions were asked about the specific powers of this LSB and the addition of other powers. It was explained that the only service or powers being requested for this LSB was fire protection. A concern was raised about how easy it might be to add more powers. The process of adding powers was explained further indicating that the addition of powers would require a whole new process of public information meetings and a vote.

When will the vote take place and how will it be conducted? The voting date is August 14 and the method to be used has not been determined. As mentioned previously, the voting method is at the discretion of the chair. Are advance polls or proxies allowed? The Act does not provide for this.

Will the LSB have access to the tax roll information? Yes it would and it would be bound by the Privacy Act and could not disclose this information to any other organization including PUFF.

Discussions about the committee presenting the information at the Laclu Campers Association annual regatta took place. It was agreed it would be a good venue to get the message about the proposal out and the committee agreed that it would attend.

What proportion of the population is seasonal versus full time? Fire Chief Bennett replied that it was likely in the area of 50% seasonal and 50% full time residents but cautioned that it was a guess.

There were a number of questions about the ability of the LSB to control the fire protection levy. Barry Baltessen indicated that the local residents control the levy as it must be voted on annually.

Will the adoption of an LSB change PUFF's relationship with other organizations that it deals with? The formation of an LSB would not affect how PUFF interacts with other organizations, specifically with the Office of the Fire Marshall.

There were additional questions asked about the powers being requested by this LSB and the ability to add powers. Barry Baltessen assured that this committee and the PUFF board are requesting the power of fire protection only for this LSB. He also advised that additional powers could not be arbitrarily added by the LSB and that this same process of public consultation and a vote would have to take place. Larry Lundy further clarified that the formation of this local services board was for fire protection only and that additional powers could not be arbitrarily added by the LSB. All matters under consideration by the LSB would have to be voted on by local residents. He further advised that fire protection services would be provided under contract by PUFF, who would present a budget for fire protection to the LSB which would be reviewed at a public meeting and approved by those present. Larry also provided information on the number of LSB in place or being considered.

There was a question regarding which method of assessment the LSB would use, a flat fee or a % based on property value. It was explained that the amount of the levy would likely be one amount for every household rather than based on a portion of the assessment of the property. Residents were told they would have a chance to vote on the levy annually.

In response to a question about the ability of the LSB to incur a liability that the residents would be responsible for, Barry Baltessen responded that it could not.

In response to a question about the number of meetings that the LSB is required to conduct, it was noted that it would be required to have one meeting per year. It was recommended that the meeting be held at a time when seasonal residents could attend. There was a follow up question regarding the make up of the board. It was noted that Board members have to be nominated and must be residents of the area. An LSB is a form of local government, a council representing the people in the area.

In response to a question about when the LSB would be in place, Fire Chief Bennett responded that the process would take at least one year. There was confusion regarding who to pay for this year. It was confirmed that contributions to PUFF would continue until the Minister approved our application to form a Local Services Board.

Maps of the proposed area were available for attendees to view. A tour of the fire hall was offered. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.