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For Immediate Release

## Fire truck replacements scheduled for Kersley, Lone Butte and Forest Grove

Several of the CRD's volunteer fire department trucks are on their last wheels and due for replacement according to fire insurance requirements. Currently, the CRD is holding alternative approval processes to replace fire engines for the Kersley, Lone Butte and Forest Grove volunteer fire departments.

"Like many local governments across Canada, the CRD is faced with replacing old and aging infrastructure like water lines, sewers and equipment including fire trucks," says CRD Vice-Chair John Massier.

"We have a lot of fire trucks timing out over the next five years and we have to replace them to keep our fire departments licensed and operating. Including the Interlakes VFD referendum last summer and these three AAPs this spring, we are planning for fourteen fire truck replacements before 2023."

To lower the impact on taxes, the Regional District is changing how it purchases trucks by moving to ten-year debt financing rather than five-year financing. This model spreads out the purchasing cost, creates the least impact on tax rates and helps the fire department build up savings for future maintenance and truck replacements.

"Major purchases like this can have a significant impact on taxes," Massier explains. "We are doing our best to keep taxes manageable by moving to a ten-year financing model. We are also saving the taxpayers money by holding an alternative approval process as referendums are quite costly."

Local governments need residents' permission to enter into debt financing arrangements longer than five years. To gather that permission, the Regional District has chosen to use an alternative approval process (AAP) to purchase new fire engines for Kersley, Lone Butte and Forest Grove.

"Last summer, we held a referendum to replace two fire trucks for the Interlakes VFD and 98 per cent voted in favour. That has given us the comfort level to use a more cost-effective form of public assent for these fire departments," states Massier.

"Basically, if you are a qualified elector in the Kersley, Lone Butte or Forest Grove fire protection areas and you are fine with the CRD purchasing a fire truck with 10-year financing, then you do not have to do anything. If you are opposed, you need to submit the official Elector Response Form."

An AAP is a 'reverse' form of public assent where the proposed change will go ahead unless at least 10 per cent of the eligible voters submit a signed Elector Response Form saying they are against the proposal. This means the CRD will purchase the trucks through ten-year financing unless 10 per cent of the residents in the specific fire protection areas object. At that point the proposal would go to a full referendum.

Visit [cariboord.ca/firedepartments](http://cariboord.ca/firedepartments) for the Elector Response Forms and a Frequently Asked Questions document for each AAP. The FAQs outline the impact on taxation for each fire protection area and provide more details on the alternative approval process. Signed Elector Response Forms must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 2019.

## Quotes:

- “The Kersley Volunteer Fire Department is an invaluable part of our community. I’m pleased this new engine will meet the department’s needs and support them in the selfless work they do as firefighters and first responders.”  
– Mary Sjostrom, Electoral Area A Director
- “I am a big fan of the Lone Butte Volunteer Fire Department and can’t thank them enough for their countless hours of volunteer service. This new engine is a needed replacement for the truck they are using currently.”  
– Willow MacDonald, Electoral Area L Director
- “Having equipment that is up to standard is critical for the work the Forest Grove Volunteer Fire Department does. Many thanks to all the volunteers that serve and protect our community.”  
– Margo Wagner, Electoral Area H Director

## Background Facts:

- Each engine/pumper truck will cost about \$400,000.
- The 10-year financing model is keeping taxes from increasing as much as they would under 5-year financing for all the fire protection areas.
- The Kersley VFD has \$150,000 available in capital reserves to contribute towards the purchase so the CRD will only be borrowing the remaining \$250,000 required.
- Under the 10-year financing model:
  - The Kersley Fire Protection Area is seeing inflationary tax increases only over the next 5-year financial plan (2019-2023) with a 2.5% tax increase each year. If the fire truck was purchased with 5-year financing, there would need to be a 15% tax increase in 2019.
  - The Lone Butte Fire Protection Area is seeing inflationary tax increases only in the next 5-year financial plan (2019-2023) with a 2.5% increase each year. If the fire truck was purchased with 5-year financing, there would need to be a 20% tax increase in 2019.
  - The Forest Grove Fire Protection Area is seeing an 8% tax increase in 2019 and 2.5% tax increases in the remainder of the financial plan (2020-2023). If the fire truck was purchased with 5-year financing, there would need to be a 26% tax increase in 2019.
- For an AAP, elector responses must be submitted on the official Elector Response Form. This form, or an accurate copy of it, is the only form that will be accepted. Forms are available from the CRD offices during business hours or can be downloaded at [cariboord.ca/firedepartments](http://cariboord.ca/firedepartments).
- In 2017, the CRD decided to standardize the trucks used by the volunteer fire departments for the next 15 years. After working with all the VFDs, a specific engine and water tender were chosen as the standard for all upcoming truck replacements. Within that standardization, each VFD works with CRD staff to ensure the truck fits the department’s needs.
- Depending on how these three assent processes go, the CRD expects to hold alternative approval processes for Deka Lake, 150 Mile House and Barlow Creek fire protection areas later this year.
- An alternative approval process saves the fire protection area’s taxpayers \$4,000 or more, compared to a full referendum.

- The following chart outlines the CRD volunteer fire departments requiring truck replacements in the next five years.

Department	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Forest Grove VFD	X			X	X
Lac La Hache VFD			X		
Deka Lake VFD		X			
150 Mile House VFD		X			
Lone Butte VFD	X				
Barlow Creek VFD		X			
West Fraser VFD			X		
Ten Mile VFD			X		
Kersley VFD	X				
Wildwood VFD			X		
Interlakes VFD	X		X		

- Interlakes voted on their fire truck replacements for 2019 and 2021 in a referendum on Aug. 18, 2018. Two hundred and fifty-five (255) people participated and 98 per cent voted in favour of purchasing the trucks with ten-year financing.
- The CRD's Protective Services department provides a variety of services throughout the Cariboo Chilcotin, including 9-1-1, Emergency Planning, Search and Rescue, Highway Rescue, Structural Fire Protection and Wildland/Urban Interface Fuel Management.
- The Cariboo Regional District has 14 volunteer fire departments. For more information about the CRD's VFD's or information about joining these groups of dedicated volunteers, visit [cariboord.ca/firedepartments](http://cariboord.ca/firedepartments).

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