



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: CS-BRD-069

From: Trish Morgan, General Manager of Community Services

Date: March 11, 2021

Subject: Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021

RECOMMENDATION #1: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board give the Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021 first and second reading.

RECOMMENDATION #2: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board give the Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021 third reading.

RECOMMENDATION #3: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board appoint Tyra Henderson as Chief Election Officer and Tabatha Young as Deputy Chief Election Officer for the purpose of conducting assent voting (referendum) for the Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION #4: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board authorize that assent voting (referendum) for the Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021 be held on Saturday, July 17, 2021 in accordance with the Local Government Act.

RECOMMENDATION #5: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board approve the Assent Voting question for Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021, as follows:

"Are you in favour of the Peace River Regional District adopting Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021, to expand the fire protection boundaries to include the provision of fire protection services in the communities of Briar Ridge, Riley's Crossing and South Dawson at a maximum annual tax requisition limit that is the greater of \$176,000 or \$4.068 per \$1,000 on the net taxable value of land and improvements in the service area?"

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

In 2017, residents of Briar Ridge approached the Electoral Area "D" Director enquiring whether fire protection services could be expanded to their area. Upon discussion with the City of Dawson Creek a study was undertaken to examine the feasibility of expanding the fire protection area.

On March 18, 2018, the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

MOVED/SECONDED/CARRIED

That staff be directed to initiate discussions with the City of Dawson Creek to determine its interest in providing fire protection services to the Briar Ridge and South Dawson rural areas to determine the estimated resources and costs that would be required to provide the service; further, that staff report the results back to the Electoral Area Directors' Committee.

In June 2019, both the City and the PRRD received a petition with 78 signatures from property owners in Briar Ridge requesting the service.

Between 2018 and 2021, staff and elected officials met a number of times to determine the resources and cost to provide the service to additional properties. In January 2021, the Electoral Area Director presented the City with an updated proposal that would see the fire protection area expanded to include an additional 224 properties in Briar Ridge, Riley's Crossing, and South Dawson. The City accepted the proposal. The next step in the expansion process is to seek approval of the Regional Board to hold an assent voting process and conduct public engagement with those in the proposed expanded service area.

Elector Approval

Before adoption of the Bylaw, approval of the Inspector of Municipalities is required. After the attached bylaw receives three readings, the bylaw will be forwarded to the Inspector for approval. Approval is anticipated to be received around the middle of May.

After Inspector approval is obtained, but prior to enacting the Peace River Regional District Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Fire Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021, the Regional District will conduct assent voting day targeted for July 17, 2021, with advanced voting to be scheduled in the two weeks prior to the general voting day.

Should the proposal achieve assent of the electors (50% plus 1 vote of the total number of votes received), then the service will become available to the expanded area on January 1, 2022.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Not Applicable to Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The City of Dawson Creek and PRRD are in their fourth year of the five year fire protection agreement. Under this agreement, the City will receive \$276,000 from the PRRD for providing fire protection in the rural fire protection area in 2021.

Should the electors approve the expansion, the following will apply:

- \$73,971.73 (plus the current contract fee) for the first year of service (2022) funded through requisition from the expanded service area at a tax rate of \$1.0214 per \$1,000 of assessment. This is the same rate that the existing Dawson Creek rural fire protection area is paying for the 2021 service.
- In subsequent years, the yearly requisition contribution will be included into the existing fire protection area, not to be below the first year rate of \$73,971.73.
- For 2023, a 5 year service contract will be renegotiated for an additional 5 year term with this proposed area to be included.
- An additional three year commitment of \$25,000 per year from Area 'D' Peace River Agreement funds for the equipment needs of the Dawson Creek Fire Department for a total of \$75,000.
- The total for the first year of the expanded service (2022) will be \$98,971.73.

\$15,000 has been budgeted in 2021 for costs associated with a public engagement and an elector approval process.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

A communication plan will be developed to inform residents about the proposed service and voting opportunities. The PRRD will work with staff from the City of Dawson Creek to hold a virtual town hall and develop an information package for distribution in May 2021.

As required, PRRD communications will be neutral and fact based. Residents will be provided information about the service being proposed, the financial impacts and opportunities to vote.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Item	Timeline	Status
1. City of Dawson Creek provides approval of Electoral Area D proposal to expand the service area	Approval provided February 22, 2021	Completed
2. Regional Board provides 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd reading of the amendment bylaw to expand the fire protection boundaries	March 11, 2021	In Progress
3. Bylaw sent to Inspector of Municipalities for approval	March 12, 2021 sent (give 6-8 weeks for return)	Pending
4. Communications plan developed to inform communities of the proposal	Mid-March to Mid-April	Pending
5. Public engagement to inform the community of the proposal and voting opportunities	Mid-May 2021	Pending
6. Assent voting (referendum)	July 17, 2021	Pending decision of Inspector of Municipalities
7. If approved by the electors, fire protection service commences in expanded areas	January 1, 2022	Pending

Attachments:

1. Draft Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2439, 2021
2. Dawson Creek-Pouce Coupe Rural Fire Protection Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 710, 1990
3. February 22, 2021 Letter from City of Dawson Creek RE: Expansion of Dawson Creek Rural Fire Protection Service Area
4. May 30, 2019 Petition from C. Hegge RE: Rural Fire Protection
5. December 2017 Dawson Creek Fire Protection Area Review