

Area D Directors Report- February 2022

In this report:

- Directors Open House
- Vaccine Mandates
- First Responder recruitment
- 2022 Budget update, part 2

Director Open House

Thanks to Chelsey and LINKS for hosting the first in a series of virtual Director open houses. The first one was well attended with great discussion. We had folks from Johnson Landing, Argenta, Lardeau, Kaslo and Allen Subdivision. Topics covered supports for our community halls, economic development work, land use planning for Area D in 2022, vaccine mandates and the upcoming local government election.

LINKS and I will continue to host these the last Thursday of the month from 130-230.

Vaccine Mandates

A large part of my work for the past month has been addressing questions, concerns, and requests regarding the vaccine mandates. Public health orders are under provincial authority and thus outside local government, but residents have asked both me as Area D Director and the Village of Kaslo to use our political voices to encourage a change to the Public Health Orders.

The impacts to service delivery at recreation, transfer sites or other public facing RDCK services have fallen under provincial jurisdiction and are directed by the Public Health Orders, I want to clarify they have not been political decisions I have been involved in. Where I do have authority regarding COVID policies is in regards vaccine policies for staff, as required by Work Safe BC. Both boards I am Director on, RDCK and CBT have brought forward policies to guide vaccine requirements for staff.

At both board tables where I was provided an opportunity to vote, I opposed the policies for the following reasons:

- This should not be a political discussion amongst people who are not doctors or scientists
- The ability to gain a legitimate exemption and supports for those who medically cannot receive the vaccine is negligible to nonexistent in our health care system
- Vaccine injury does occur and needs to be a part of the healthcare system supports for mandates to not be punitive inclusive of options for those who cannot get the vaccine

The need to mask and distance are undebatable, at the local government level, public health orders, but the option for vaccine requirement is an employer's duty to determine. The vaccination policy for RDCK and CBT did move forward by board decision despite my opposition. The RDCK policy has an accommodation for those that do not want to provide their medical information; no one was to lose their employment or valued position at our Volunteer Fire Department's across the district.

I am reporting here the vote I cast on these policies and reason behind my opposition in answer to those looking for me to make a statement. Please contact your MLA and MP to discuss the issues further.

First Responder Recruitment

Both the North and South end of Area D are recruiting for First Responders!

I cannot emphasize enough how important the role is of our everyday neighbors who train and make themselves available to respond and assist in medical emergencies. With the decreasing capacity in our health care system, these roles are evermore essential. We are hoping to recruit specifically in the Lardeau Valley and Ainsworth areas.

First Responders provide medical prehospital care in support of BC Ambulance and often bridge the gap in patient care between a 911 call being placed for an ambulance and the ambulance arriving on scene.

First Responders serve as members of the Kaslo and Area Volunteer Fire Department, however they only deliver medical prehospital care. All training and PPE is provided.

Interested, potential First Responders may also apply through the 'Expression of Interest' link online at <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/main/services/fire-services/volunteer-as-a-firefighter.html> and select Kaslo as your Fire Department.

One last note, while first responders do work within the fire department, that service jurisdiction is limited to within Cowan Rd and Fletcher Falls due to fire regulations however we do have and need first responders in all of Area D, stay tuned for the creation of a new service to address this gap.

If you are interested in joining the first responders, please contact Doug Yee: dyee@rdck.bc.ca

Budget 2022 – Part Deux.

Area D has 24 services, some across the whole area and some are defined services, such as fire that only has participants in the region from Cowan Rd. to Fletcher Falls area.

The RDCK board has had our first budget meeting for 2022. We reviewed the following services:

General Admin (GA), Rural Admin (RA), GIS, building and planning.

GA is all members of the RDCK, RA is rural areas only, GIS is all participants minus Castlegar, building services is all rural areas as well as Kaslo, Nakusp and Salmo. Planning services are rural areas only.

All numbers provided here are draft and specific to Area D, not the RDCK as a whole which are available.

GA covers all our collective costs, from Nelson head office, Creston office, Director stipend and expenses, conferences, and other common costs. This service also has an allocation formula for expenses that support department through various services such as Information Technology (IT). For 2022, requisition (taxation) in this service is proposed at:

2022: \$41,201 = .081/\$1000

2021: \$37,780 = .085/\$1000

Two actions from the board to look at reductions in this service are to review the building upgrades needed at Lakeside for a leaking roof, HVAC, and other repairs and if they qualify for Community Works grants. The second was for Directors to inform staff which conventions they will be opting to not attend in person, reducing expenses. The annual conventions Directors attend are: FCM- Federation of Canadian Municipalities, UBCM- Union of BC Municipalities, AKBLG- Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments.

Our asset management planning will be through this service as well; however, each asset to be assessed will be reviewed at the service level it operates for opportunities to use grants for the work. An example of this is the Kaslo Fire Hall; as an asset of the RDCK, we are now required to have a long-term asset management plan in place. I will apply Community Works grants for this work and remove it from the Kaslo/Area D Fire hall requisition needs

Rural Admin (RA) is only rural electoral areas, not municipalities. A portion of rural area Director stipend and expenses as well as administrative support for our advocacy work, upcoming 2022 municipal election costs and bylaw is all housed in this service.

2022: \$70,822 = .14/\$1000

2021: \$67,128= .15/\$1000

GIS Geospatial Information Systems

This service has seen exceptional demand from increasing real estate needs for information, our work in lidar to assess known and potential land hazards, and the overall RDCK mapping interface that provides multiple levels of information regarding land. Despite this increased demand, we will see a reduction in taxation in this service. We have adopted a policy that will guide this service to a fee for service model opposed to full taxation to residents. The model proposed is similar to building and resource recovery where fees are charged to respective projects to ensure there is cost recovery via the user opposed to all on property taxes. Some expenses will remain in taxation where there is a common benefit such as the RDCK webmap interface that residents access to gain knowledge specific to land use.

2022: \$10,130 = 0.02/\$1000

2021= \$11,914= 0.02/\$1000

Building

This service covers all of our building inspectors and is funded with partial taxation and partial fees recouped through permits. We will be doing a review of our permit fees in 2022. This service has seen capacity issues in 2021 that are anticipated to continue. The need for qualified inspectors has been identified since 2020, before the pandemic, and has been compounded with the last two years of rural influx seeing record breaking building and permit application. We have seen several retirements of long-time inspectors and have been recruiting from across the province. We will have another opening for a new inspector in the north end of the RDCK region this spring. The following budget has been reduced post board debate, we are using some funds from reserves and increasing anticipated revenues. That updated number will be available at our public budget meeting.

2022: \$33,466= .06/\$1000

2021: \$26, 247=.05/\$1000

Planning

This service covers all land use planning and crown referrals across all 11 electoral areas. I have mentioned in previous reports that Area D will be working on phase two of our community planning discussions. The budget includes work for various areas to review current land use policies inclusive of changes to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and cannabis regulations.

2022: \$41,013 =.08/\$1000

2021: \$42,062= .09/\$1000

Central Resource Recovery

Resource Recovery is garbage, recycling, organics and all other services offered at our transfer stations. In the RDCK, this service is split between three sub-regions, the west, east and central. Area D is a part of the central service.

To see the budgets for Central Resource, right down to the cost of operating Kaslo Transfer, Marblehead, recycling and the new organics program:

[eSCRIBE Agenda Package \(rdck.ca\)](https://www.rdck.ca/eSCRIBE-Agenda-Package)

Highlights:

- Central Resource taxation for 2022 is proposed at a 3% increase, this is down from 7% at our November review and down from 15% in the 5 year financial plan
- We separate out the organics program so we can properly identify the cost of the service as the plan is to have it cost recovery via user fees, no taxation
- I hope to start discussions on rural supports for in house organics management as we complete the construction and first phase of curbside for cluster development areas.
- COVID sick leave has increased expenses along with increased costs for cleaning and PPE
- Taxation vs fee ratio for all resource recovery (garbage, recycling, organics, appliances etc) 50.3% taxation, 29.2 % in user fees, 11.2% in surplus and 9.3% in other
- an important note is the true cost of recycling. Rebates are budgeted at \$173,228.73 whereas the cost of the whole recycling program is 626,570.51. So while the provincial policy is that the creators of the materials be responsible for the end life of the product, we know rural areas are not seeing these costs covered to the level they should be. This has been an advocacy issue the RDCK Directors have pursued for over a decade.

2022: \$209,699

2021: \$203,592

Kaslo and Area D will have a household hazardous waste event in 2022 and every year moving forward. They average about \$20,000 to do, depending on volumes of materials received. There has been an eco-depot opened in Nelson that is accessible to all residents.

Our next budget meetings are – you are invited! Cause you know, democracy!

RDCK Budget February 18, 9am

To join the meeting: <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/meta/events/events-list/meetings/rdck-board-budget-meeting-1.html>

Kaslo and Area D Public meeting March 7, 6pm

To join that meeting: <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/meta/events/events-list/budget-meetings/public-budget-meeting-kaslo-area-d-1.html>