

Creston Emergency Services Building

***iLC – September 2019 ***

With this article, I would like to provide an update on the status of the new Fire Hall for the Town of Creston. It's hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since the October 2018 municipal election in which there was a successful referendum for borrowing for the new Fire Hall and my re-election as your Mayor for the Town of Creston!

Town Council created the Technical Building Advisory Committee (TBAC) who have met 3 times so far during 2019 (January 21, May 30 and August 8). Their primary purpose is to provide transparency to the community, provide oversight and ensure accountability throughout the design and tendering process for the new Creston Emergency Services facility, continuing the work of the Fire Hall Advisory Select Committee (ASC).

In December 2018, our Interim CAO Michael Moore and I travelled to Toronto to meet with two senior officials with Choice Properties (a division of Loblaw's) to discuss the possibilities for purchasing the Cook Street property (2.14 acres) next to Pealow's Independent for our new Fire Hall. In February 2019, Choice Properties agreed to move forward with the Town's offer and in August, we signed the purchase agreement and at the time of publishing, we are just awaiting their signatures to finalize. Additionally, I am excited to announce that the purchase price was \$375,000, which is \$225,000 less than the price of \$600,000 originally budgeted for the property!

Discussions with BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) during 2019 also resulted in an agreement in principle for their participation in the new emergency services facility. The approximate 3,000 square foot addition to the new building will include an apparatus bay for three ambulances, equipment, lockers and four dorm rooms, two offices, a day room, and decontamination washroom. BCEHS and our firefighters will share many spaces, such as the kitchen area, which will eliminate duplication of space from having a separate station. With BCEHS participation, the new facility is estimated at a total 17,000 square feet from the original 14,000 square foot concept. The agreement will see the continuation of BCEHS leasing space from the Town of Creston in the new building with associated building costs for their portion borne by that lease agreement.

Another important function of the new facility is the "Emergency Operations Centre" (EOC) for any major incidents that may arise. Many of the spaces included in the new Creston

Emergency Services Building are designed to support the operation of the EOC while still functioning as a local emergency services facility.

It is very important to know that this new facility will have defined “dirty” and “clean” areas for all our firefighters, ambulance and emergency services personnel. This means any contamination to equipment and personnel from emergency incidents will be segregated from the “clean area” with very stringent building and ventilation designs.

Additionally, the Fire Rescue Training Center on Davis Road continues to be developed, with the “live fire” centre nearing completion. This training facility provides a safe and effective training area for all the volunteer firefighters in the Creston Valley.

Being involved with this process over the last 5 years has given me a great appreciation of the value our volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel contribute to our community. This new facility is being constructed to serve our Valley for the next 50 to 100 years. We are so pleased to have BCEHS integrate into the project to provide the community’s paramedics with the same safe workspace decades into the future!

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