

Rural Municipality of Murray River  
October 5, 2023  
Northumberland Arena

Public Meeting to Consider:

- 1) The Disposal of the Land Occupied by Murray River Fire Department (MRFD), at less than market value, and
- 2) The Request from the Murray River Fire Department for separation from the municipality

There were approximately 55-60 people in attendance.

Official Trustee of the Rural Municipality of Murray River (RMMR), Robert Hughes, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed those present. He introduced the firefighters at the head table, Chief Troy Ferguson, Deputy Chief Robert MacLeod, Captain Tyler Spencer, Assistant Deputy Stephen White and Interim CAO Jill Walsh.

An agenda was presented, and background information provided.

Deputy MacLeod presented the rationale and explanation for the request for separation. His points included the desire of the MRFD to:

- plan for its future by building on its successful past;
- continue to practice the understanding they always had with the Village of Murray River that the MRFD would run its own affairs;
- have equal relationships with all residents, most of whom live outside the RMMR;
- uphold the commitment of members and their families to the way of life of a volunteer firefighter
- come to a satisfactory resolution and continue to provide great fire coverage.

Official Trustee Hughes briefly outlined the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding which has been agreed upon by the RMMR and MRFD, and also requested any comments about two terms that had been discussed but not agreed to. Those were the suggestions that the RMMR appoint a member to the board of the incorporated MRFD and that the land and building revert to the RMMR, should the MRFD vacate the property being transferred.

The floor was opened for public comments.

Two speakers requested clarification on whether the 5-year freeze on fire dues applies to the whole fire district. It does.

Official Trustee Hughes was asked whether he sees any potential negative impact from this proposal. He personally does not, but he is seeking input from the community before making his decision.

One speaker questioned why this became an issue, and was advised the Province is requiring many rural areas to adhere to legislation by either running their fire departments or making them independent.



The next speaker referred to the Municipal Government Act and the changes that have come about since that legislation was enacted.

A question was raised about the need for legal advice. The meeting was advised that legal counsel is usually obtained when a municipality faces matters with legal implications for the first time.

Deputy MacLeod offered the MRFD view of the two items that were discussed but not agreed to. The MRFD wants to run its own affairs, and if the MRFD ever needs to move, it will need the sale of the current site to finance a move.

Another speaker stated that the land the fire hall sits on was given by the Province for the expressed purpose of building a fire hall.

A former firefighter stated that the members of the MRFD worked for nothing to build the building, and they should get what they're asking for now.

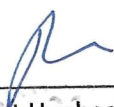
Another speaker stated that the quality of fire service has been excellent, and firefighters contribute even more to the community through the other community organizations they become involved with.

One speaker asked the audience to stand if they agree to the fire department becoming independent. Many or all present stood.



Another speaker stated if there was a seat on the board for Murray River, every other community served by the MRFD should have one as well, and that is not practical.

There being no further speakers, Official Trustee Hughes again thanked all those present for attending, and stated his intent to keep the process moving along.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

  
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Robert Hughes, Official Trustee

Nov 10, 2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
  
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Jill Walsh, Interim CAO

Nov 7/23  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date