



FCABC President's Report

May 2008

It is with great pleasure that I submit the following President's Report to the Board and Membership for my 2007 – 2008 term as FCABC President.

Over the last year a number of issues and events have taken place in addition to the Fire Service Model Project that continue to dominate our agenda. With respect to the Fire Service Model Project, the goal is still to have a draft report ready for circulation to a number of stakeholders by the end of June. Based on the input/feedback received from this review, it is expected that this draft write-up will be revised during the first half of September 2008 and the final document will be presented to the Solicitor General by the end of September/early October. Arrangements have been made to have the Project Manager Mike Sommers and myself present an overview of the Fire Service Model Project at this year's Conference.

With respect to other FCABC business, two very important issues occurred within the last year.

The first being the announcement of Rebecca Denlinger, as the new Fire Commissioner for the Province. Fire Commissioner Denlinger will be attending our Conference in Kamloops and along with her staff they will be providing an update on the second important issue, that being the impact/recommendations from the Coroners' Inquest into the death of Fire Fighter Chad Schapansky.

A number of recommendations were made from this Inquiry and they are as follows:

"[...] The Office of the Fire Commissioner created a Leadership Group of individuals representing the key interests and stakeholders impacted by this Inquiry to review the recommendations [...]."

The Leadership Group was then divided into two Working Groups who were tasked with the responsibility of developing strategies which would address the issues raised in the Inquiry recommendations. The three recommendations were:

- 1. The Office of the Fire Commissioner in conjunction with the Justice Institute develop and establish clear minimum training standards for volunteer fire fighters in British Columbia.*

2. *The Office of the Fire Commissioner together with the employer of volunteer fire departments in British Columbia (Districts, Municipalities and Regional Districts, etc) initiate and maintain a regular inspection and audit process to ensure volunteer fire departments and fire fighters meet provincially recognized standards for equipment, training and operational policy.*
3. *The Office of the Fire Commissioner provide a copy of [the] Judgement of Inquiry to all volunteer fire departments in British Columbia” (note: recommendation #3 was completed in May of 2006).*

With respect to recommendation #1:

The OFC confirmed that the Training Standard for all fire fighters in British Columbia, established by Minister’s Order in 2002, is still in effect. This Order stated that the training standards for fire service personnel in British Columbia are those published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The Order issued by the Fire Commissioner under the authority of the Fire Services Act states that “[...] the Fire Commissioner must, for fire suppression, establish minimum standards for the selection and training of fire services personnel [...].” The OFC therefore proposed the following:

1. *That all volunteer fire departments **and** the Authorities having Jurisdiction for those fire departments be provided with details of the minimum training standards for volunteer fire fighters in British Columbia.*
2. *That all volunteer fire departments **and** the Authorities having Jurisdiction for those fire departments be provided with details of how they may access assistance in developing and/or sustaining volunteer fire fighter training programs which will ensure their fire fighters are trained in accordance with the Provincial standards.*
3. *That all Authorities having Jurisdiction for volunteer fire departments in British Columbia be instructed to review their “Bylaw for Establishing and Operation of a Fire Department” to ensure that the services to be provided by their volunteer fire fighters are supported with the appropriate resources to train those volunteer fire fighters to carry-out those services.*

With respect to recommendation #2:

[...] recommendation 2 highlighted the fact that there is no one document in existence that provides the ideal checklist for regular inspections and audit processes for volunteer fire departments in British Columbia. The review also revealed that the risk management of volunteer fire departments involves an understanding of the expectations of a number of independent agencies. e.g. WorkSafe BC, Ministry of

Transportation, Motor Vehicles Branch, Ministry of Health, Office of the Fire Commissioner, etc. Some of these agencies have their own inspection and audit requirements and the strategies outlined below are not designed to replace or incorporate those requirements. The intent of the proposals is to raise the level of awareness for all matters relating to the safety of fire fighters and the responsibility of establishing and operating a fire department. [...]

The Office of the Fire Commissioner therefore proposed the following:

- 1. That the Office of the Fire Commissioner issue to all Authorities having Jurisdiction for the establishment and operation of a volunteer fire department, a two part checklist that highlights the documentation and activities that are deemed mandatory to the operation of their fire department. Part-One of the checklist focuses on the Governance and Authority, Staffing and Operation of the department. Part-Two focuses on the Record-keeping and Health and Safety of the Fire Fighters.*
- 2. That the Office of the Fire Commissioner meets with the appropriate representatives of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, the Ministry of Community Services, Fire Chiefs Association of British Columbia, Volunteer Fire Fighters Association of British Columbia and WorkSafe BC to ensure a clear understanding of the intent and content of the checklist.*
- 3. That the Office of the Fire Commissioner maintains an Advisory Committee to assist in the maintenance and enhancement of this checklist.*
- 4. That completion of the checklist be the responsibility of the Authorities having Jurisdiction and that the Office of the Fire Commissioner not be tasked with any ongoing administrative responsibility with respect to this checklist.*

The review and recommendations related to the Coroners Judgment of Inquiry into the death of Chad Schapansky will have a tremendous impact on the delivery of fire service in BC. Many small departments may/will struggle implementing these recommendations, however, for the safety of our fire fighters these recommendations are long overdue and should be adopted by the AHJ as soon as possible.

As FCABC President and as a Board member for the CAFC, I attended the 2008 Government Affairs Week in Ottawa March 10th to 12th. This is my second year attending these sessions and I found this year was as valuable as the last. The CAFC collectively are raising the awareness of the fire service at the Federal level which will fit well with the issues we are facing here in BC and that require senior levels of Government support (both Federal and Provincial), such as: volunteer recruitment and retention issues, funding concerns, and training issues to name just a few.

As I reported in the Chieftain the Millennium funding project continues to be a source of contention not only in BC but also in Alberta and parts of Ontario. The CAFC is continuing to explore alternative funding sources other than raising membership dues. A committee has been struck to review and develop guidelines in the area of partnerships with outside organizations/associations. In the fall of 2007 the FCABC Board requested, on behalf of the BC Fire Service, a three month moratorium on the Millennium/CAFC campaign in BC and as you Executive Board we will make this request again in 2008. This three month suspension of their campaign will hopefully avoid any confusion/conflicts with respect to the major annual MD Drive that many BC Fire Departments hold in the fall.

On behalf of the Association, I attended a meeting in Brandon Manitoba, re: Inter-Provincial/Territorial Fire /Emergency Management Partnership. Discussions centered on how other western provincial provinces are managing issues such as federal/provincial integration, interoperability, training, communication systems challenges, etc.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Retired Fire Chief Glen Sanders for the work he did on behalf of the FCABC with respect to the Motor Vehicle Incident Response Working Group. A few items worth noting from this working group are as follows:

- The Highways Road Maintenance contractors (HRMC) will be given the responsibility for flagging and long term traffic control by the MOT.
- The Coroner's Office will rely on BCAS to confirm a fatality and the Coroner may not attend scene but will authorize or arrange for removal of the deceased.
- PEP has committed to a review of the reimbursement rates for an out of district response.

The following is a list of other issues that the Board or I have been attending to on behalf of the FCABC membership over the last year:

- Shortly after the BC Conference as President I attended on behalf of the FCABC the Alberta Fire Chief's Conference in Edmonton;
- As President I attended the Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Service in Ottawa on behalf of the FCABC;
- The 2007 MOF Reimbursement Rate Document was signed off by the Ministry of Forest, the OFC, and myself on behalf of the FCABC. The 2007 rewrite of the OG's was based on the Provincial Fire Department reimbursement rates. Copies can be obtained through the FCABC Office. A special thanks and recognition must be made to Fire Chief Phil Lemire, White Rock for the work he has done and continues to do on behalf of the FCABC with respect to this issue.
- As the BC Board rep participate/attend monthly CAFC Board meetings;
- I attended a number of EMBC – Fire Rescue Advisory Board meetings in preparation for the 2010 Olympics. I would like to thank 2nd VP Jeff Lambert who made himself available when I was unable to attend due to conflicting schedules;

- A letter was sent to the D/Minister Freeman asking for the transfer of the 2006 Fire Code to the Office of the Fire Commissioner;
- Letters were sent to Fire Chief Associations across Canada requesting support of Chief Garis's brief on the "Elimination of Residential Hazards Associated with Marijuana grow Operations and the Regulation of Hydroponics Equipment". Fire Chief Len Garis, Surrey continues to work on a number of issues besides the associated concerns he has with respect to grow-operations and I like to take this opportunity to thank Fire Chief Len Garis for his tireless work on behalf of our Association;
- First Responder Agreements – The Board looked into the issue of our members signing these agreements and after seeking an opinion from the MIA made recommendations to our members not to sign these agreements;
- A letter was sent to the Honorable Ida Chong and UBCM re: consideration of the options identified from the Task Force on Community Opportunities for the fire service;
- Provided a written response on behalf of the FCABC to the "Assisted Living and Residential Care - Fire & Safety" report as requested by Director of Licensing Community Care Facilities Health Protection Ministry of Health;
- Renewed FCABC insurance policies;
- Renewed the contract with Highlander Services Ltd (Ann Hancock/FCABC Administrator);
- Signed contracts on behalf of the FSLG with SMG Columbia Consulting Group Inc. Dugal Smith & Associates, Manitou, Inc., and Gordon Routley;
- Dealt with RAP Review Committee appointments/concerns/issues as well as the Provincial Medical Leadership Council appointments/concerns/issues;
- Attended and/or participated in a number of meetings with Associate Deputy Minister Wes Shoemaker, Acting/Deputy OFC Richard Simpson and OFC Rebecca Denlinger ;
- Starting in 2007 the Justice Institute of BC requested the FCABC along with the OFC, Associate Deputy Minister, Emergency Management Wes Shoemaker, and JI Senior Staff to take part in the selection process for a new Director for the Fire & Safety of the JIBC. After a number of unsuccessful candidates were considered a final selection was made in 2008 - Robert "Wayne" Stevens (some of you may remember Mr. Stevens from his days with the Richmond Fire Department);
- The Basic Firefighter Training Program is now completed and a number of Departments have either already delivered the program in their area or are scheduled to later in the year. Special thanks to Deputy Fire Chief Dean Colthorp, Abbotsford who has championed this project;
- Through Associate Deputy Minister Wes Shoemaker I was introduced to the recently appointed Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General – John van Dongen. Arrangements are being made for a more formal meeting in the very near future and I intend on raising a number of issues facing the BC Fire Service with him as well as provide him with an overview of the Fire Service Model Project.
- Attended the FPOA 49th Annual Conference Opening Ceremonies in Campbell River and brought greetings on behalf of the FCABC.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members who took part in developing the FCABC Briefing Book and especially Dave Mitchell, Ann Hancock, Jeff Lambert, Tom DeSorcy, and Doug Wade. This living booklet was presented to new Fire Commissioner Rebecca Denlinger (as well as Associate Deputy Minister Wes Shoemaker and Deputy OFC Richard Simpson) and will serve as an introduction to any new FCABC members of our Association.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of the Executive Board members for their dedication and hard work especially FCABC Administrator Ann Hancock.

Respectively submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. R. Gamble', written in a cursive style.

Stephen R. Gamble, CFO, MIFireE
FCABC President