CITY OF NANAIMO

BUSINESS CASE - Nanaimo Fire Rescue: Fire Clerk

CURRENT OVERVIEW

The City of Nanaimo (the City) has a population exceeding 100,000 spanning 91.3 km^2; approximately 20 km long and 5 km wide.

Nanaimo Fire Rescue (NFR) provides all hazard response to the City, including emergency response to fires, medical calls, rescue incidents, and natural disasters and specialized services such as hazardous materials and technical rescue response. In addition, NFR operates the Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (VIERA) which is a learning institution which has served 284 fire department and industry clients across Canada including in BC, Alberta, Quebec, Northwest Territories, and Nova Scotia.

Nanaimo Fire Rescue (NFR) operates VIERA to reduce the cost of required training for Nanaimo Firefighters and offset the cost of the NFR operating budget. From 2019-2022, VIERA offset the cost of NFR operations by $207,663, $209,941, $257,449, and $245,914 respectively. This does not include the savings realized by avoiding the tuition, instructor, employee travel time and expenses for required training of NFR fire fighters.

Since 2018, VIERA fire department's invoices have increased 136% and student evaluations and non-evaluated registrations have increased 613% as seen in the figures below.
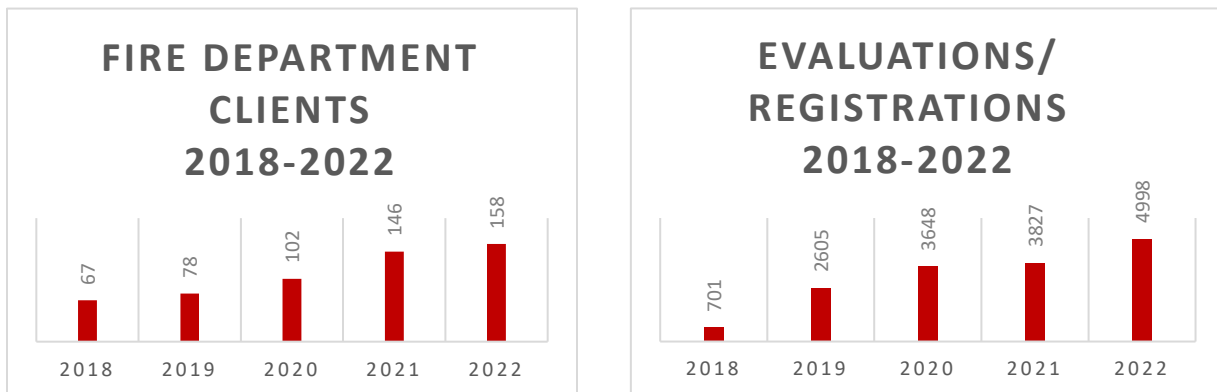
To support this growth, the NFR Administrative Assistant and Fire Clerk have had to direct a portion of their time towards VIERA clerical support (not included in figures above). In addition, VIERA has added a Fire Training Technician (2021 - 0.5 FTE) and Manager, VIERA (2022 – 1 FTE) which are included in the above figures. Further, in August 2023 the NFR Administrative Assistant was converted into a VIERA Coordinator to increase VIERA's administrative capacity.

BUSINESS ISSUE

The converted NFR Administrative Assistant position to VIERA Coordinator has reduced NFR's administrative capacity resulting in strain to perform essential functions effectively and efficiently, and reduced department resiliency.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Creating a Fire Clerk position is anticipated to increase NFR and VIERA administrative capacity to:

- Adequately provide administrative support to NFR operations, administration, and prevention.
- Improve timeliness of response to email and phone communication.
- More adequately maintain fire department records management requirements.
- Assist with VIERA operations including registrations, shipping course materials and certifications, and reporting certifications to the Pro Board and EMALB.

OPTIONS:

OPTION #1 – Fire Clerk Position

Create a permanent full-time Fire Clerk position reporting to the Nanaimo Fire Rescue, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration.

Benefits:

- Provide adequate administrative support to the NFR department.
- Improve timeliness of correspondence internally and externally.
- Provide assistance to VIERA allowing for more efficient operation of the business area and higher quality course offerings.
- Increase resiliency of department and reduce risk of employee burn-out.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to the operating budget.

Financial Analysis:

1. Position is a level 6 with an annual salary of $65,800 plus benefits. 2024 budget impact including benefits is estimated at $57,800 based on a April 1st start, 2025 budget impact is estimated at $89,700.
2. Additional annual costs are anticipated at $1,300 for computer charges.
3. One-time costs upon the creation of the position are project at $13,100. This includes the purchase of computer equipment, office furniture, and installation of an intercom camera phone and door release button.

OPTION #2 – Status Quo

Continue with the current organization structure.

Benefits:

- No increase to operating budget.

Weaknesses:

- Reduced ability to efficiently and effectively handle administrative responsibilities of NFR operations.
- Work between administrative support between NFR and VIERA will have to be prioritized resulting in risk of quality of services provided through VIERA.
- Risk of employee burn-out.

RECOMMENDATION

Option #1 is recommended.