



Alberta Beach

Box 278 • Alberta Beach • Alberta • TOE OAO
Telephone: 780-924-3181 • Fax: 780-924-3313

October 14, 2022

Town of Onoway
Box 540
Onoway, AB
TOE OAO

Attention: Mayor Kwasny

Re: Fire Services Meeting

After attending the Fire Services meeting on Oct 5, I have concerns about the administration of Onoway Regional Fire Services that I would like to bring to the attention of you, your Council, and your Administration. My concerns center primarily around the division of responsibilities for both decision-making and administration of Onoway Regional Fire Services, as well as communications with member municipalities and our contracted service provider, NWFR.

According to Onoway's Contract with the Service Provider and our contract with Onoway, the Fire Services Committee has "such duties as the town, the other municipalities, and the committee deem appropriate"; this includes making recommendations for how reserve funds set up for the fire committee are to be used. Traditionally, the Committee is responsible for setting strategic and other direction, particularly with regards to medical call outs, mutual and automatic aid, setting the budget, utilization of reserve funds, and invoicing disputes. The Town has been responsible for day-to-day administration including invoicing, meeting preparation and follow-up, record-keeping, and communicating with the Service Provider and member municipalities, including Alberta Beach. After having reviewed email correspondence between Onoway Administration and NWFR and attending the Fire Services Meeting, I have concerns about the accountability of decision-making as well as the quality and frequency of communication with both the service provider and member municipalities.

During the meeting there were concerns brought up about record keeping and communication, particularly in regard to certifications and qualifications, but also around invoicing. I appreciate that the Town is going through significant administrative changes that may be having a considerable impact. However, it is ultimately the Town that is responsible for the administration of our collective Fire Services. The finger pointing and blame towards both our Service Provider and previous administrator without any accountability on the part of the Town was disconcerting.

Based on my, and my administration's, long history with NWFR it's difficult to believe that Chief Ives would not be willing to provide information on his certifications in a timely fashion, had it been requested of him. It's also difficult to believe that he would not be willing to work with your administration to sort out any invoicing concerns. Further, it was not fair to level accusations at NWFR without a representative being there to respond. Additionally, I understand that it can be difficult for a

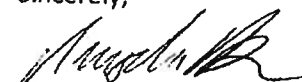
new administration to sort out how a previous administration was organized. Therefore, is it possible, that some of the concerns around qualifications and invoicing are stemming from an abrupt administrative transition in Onoway with no formal turnover, as opposed to poor behavior on the part of previous administration and NWFR? I believe that respectful dialogue between Onoway, NWFR, and member municipalities would have gone along way to alleviating frustration, finger pointing, and confusion.

Finally, during the meeting, your Interim CAO frequently referred to an audit that he will be conducting into invoicing. I do not believe that the Fire Services Committee has requested this audit. Can you please clarify under whose direction is the audit being undertaken and what problem is trying to be solved? Also, who is paying for this audit? If there is no motion from the fire services committee to do this, I expect that the town will be covering all associated costs.

I respect that Onoway made decisions to change their administration. However, there has been a lack of communication regarding these changes with the member municipalities who have put their trust in Onoway to faithfully administer this life-saving service on our behalf. I encourage you, now that you have a permanent CAO in place, to engage in constructive, respectful, and informative dialogue with NWFR and the member municipalities so we can ensure the sustainability and success of our collective fire service.

If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Angela Duncan
Mayor

Cc: Town of Onoway Council
Town of Onoway CAO
Bernie Poulin, Chair, Fire Services Committee
Alberta Beach Council