

Date October 30, 2024
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Subject Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service - Assent Vote Results

BACKGROUND

The RDEK had received requests from property owners in portions of Electoral Areas C and E to establish rural fire protection to include properties in the Wycliffe and St. Mary Lake Road areas.

The establishment of a Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service had been a Board strategic priority for many years and with renewed interest from the community, staff were directed to look into what a potential service would look like for portions of Wycliffe and St. Mary Lake Road.

After review of the proposed service area and in consultation with the City of Kimberley, it was determined that both parties were keen to move forward on the project and work toward establishing the Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service, conditional to the approval of the electors.

The proposed service would have been provided by the City of Kimberley Fire Department and would have included:

- fire protection and fire suppression; and
- the RDEK would have provided the City of Kimberley with a water tender and installation of an underground water tank.

Costs for fire protection services would have been recovered by a property tax on all land and improvements within the proposed service area. The service establishment bylaw had a maximum requisition of \$1.75 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value; however, it was anticipated the actual cost to be lower for the first few years.

Bylaws No. 3331 and 3332 had received three readings and approval of the Inspector of Municipalities but required elector approval prior to adoption.

Bylaw No. 3331 – Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service Establishment Bylaw – would establish a service to provide fire protection to the rural Kimberley area within a portion of Electoral Areas C and E. This bylaw also outlined the service area boundary, the participants, and the maximum amount of annual requisition.

Bylaw No. 3332 – Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service Loan Authorization Bylaw – would authorize the borrowing of \$935,000 amortized over 15 years to purchase a water tender and underground water tank for providing fire protection service to the Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service Area.

The assent voting process is based on a question to electors which asks for elector approval for both bylaws. Qualified electors within the proposed Service Area had an opportunity to vote “Yes” or “No” on the following question:

“Are you in favour of the Regional District of East Kootenay adopting Bylaw No. 3331 and Bylaw No. 3332 to:

- establish the “Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service” to provide fire protection to the rural Kimberley area within a portion of Electoral Areas C and E;
- borrow up to \$935,000 amortized over a maximum of 15 years to purchase a water tender and underground water tank for providing fire protection service, serving the Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service; and
- annually requisition a maximum of \$1.75 per \$1,000 of the net taxable value of land and improvements to pay for the service?”

Voting opportunities included an advance vote on October 16, 2024 and general voting day was held on October 26, 2024. Both voting days were held from 8:00am to 8:00pm at the RDEK Board Room in Cranbrook. In addition, voting by mail was also available for eligible electors from September 26 – October 26, 2024.

RESULTS

The official results of the Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service Assent Vote were declared on October 30, 2024 at 1:00pm as follows:

YES: 63 NO: 120

The establishment of a service to provide fire protection will **not** be proceeding as elector approval was not received.

There were 331 folios in the proposed Kimberley Rural Fire Protection Service area. 251 (76%) folios were within Electoral Area C and 80 (24%) folios were within Electoral Area E.

Voter turnout was 36.8%, determined by an estimated 497 eligible electors, and 183 valid ballots received.

The Declaration of Official Voting Results and the Determination of Official Voting Results are attached for your reference.

NEXT STEPS

Planning and discussions with City of Kimberley for fire protection services will cease and costs associated with the assent vote will be charged to Electoral Area Administration.

Attachment