

FIRE HALL TASK FORCE UPDATE

The Task Force held an update presentation and discussion forum on October 9th. Plans for the proposed Fire Hall were displayed. The presentation covered the key findings and work of the Task Force since being formed in January. Details were provided for the design concept for the proposed new Fire Hall and the site, and plans for maintaining fire and rescue service operations during construction. The presentation also covered the recently concluded project cost estimates, potential savings, estimated repayment costs, and projections of referendum and construction timelines.

The handout material from the October 9th meeting is posted on the MIID website at: www.miidonline.com

At the September 23rd MIID Board meeting, the Task Force presented three recommendations summarised below:

- To adopt the Task Force developed architectural and engineering designs and outline specifications as the Fire Hall proposal;
- that based on a detailed cash flow projection, the maximum borrowing required is \$3.4 million;
- and that the Board seek necessary Government approvals and initiate any necessary borrowing referendum.

The Board subsequently adopted the recommendations unanimously, and have submitted the proposal for Government approval.

It should be noted that the borrowing projections are conservative, carry a healthy cost and inflation contingency of \$370,000, and that the Task Force has identified additional future cost savings in the order of \$180,000.

The Task Force also made a recommendation that the amount to be borrowed, using low interest rates through the Province, be financed over 20 years as a tax based on property assessment. At the maximum borrowed amount the projected annual tax rate would be approximately \$50 per \$100,000 of assessment. An alternate flat parcel tax was also examined. The Task Force recommended the assessment based tax model as the fairest model for apportioning costs relative to values protected, a model which provides for the most cost effective and risk averse collection of revenue through the surveyor of taxes, and the only model which would permit offset for Homeowner grants, and deferment of taxes by property owners over 55, and for those with disabilities or with limited means.

The Board determined that they needed more time to research and clarify the tax models, and at Mayneliner deadline had not yet concluded their deliberations on the Task Force tax model recommendation.

If Government approvals are forthcoming in a timely manner, a borrowing referendum would most likely be held in Spring 2011. Tentatively, and subject to Board actions, a Task Force information meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2011, and a MIID Board public referendum meeting for January 29, with a possible vote in mid March. It is anticipated that the referendum will make provision for a mail in ballot to accommodate vacationers and off island owners.

To review all Task Force information and recommendations, and for updates, please check the website at www.miidonline.com

If you have any comments, concerns, questions, or information to share, please contact the Task Force directly at esctfc-miid@shaw.ca

Submitted by Bill Warning, (Chair), on behalf of the Task Force.