



City of Parksville  
Office of the Mayor

January 16, 2024

Via email:

[vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:vanessa.craig@rdn.bc.ca)

Regional District of Nanaimo  
6300 Hammond Bay Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9P 6N2

Attention: Vanessa Craig, Board Chair

Dear Chair Craig;

**Re: Motion for Submission to Annual Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Convention**

At the January 15, 2024, regular meeting, Parksville City Council passed the following resolution:

- 24-008      1. THAT the Council of the City of Parksville endorse the following resolution in principle and that the resolution be forwarded to the Regional District of Nanaimo Board for approval and submission to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities for consideration at the 2024 annual AVICC convention:
- WHEREAS BC fire rescue service departments, operating under career, composite, or volunteer models, are experiencing increased demands in emergency medical response calls in support of the BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) system;  
AND WHEREAS the fire departments that provide these services, authorized under the Emergency Medical Assistant (EMA) first responder program, currently receive no remuneration for their critical support within the BCEHS system;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities endorse and advocate for the establishment of a remuneration system for BC fire rescue service departments providing medical care in conjunction with the BCEHS system, with considerations for the cost of personnel, training, and replacement of consumed supplies.

The resolution and associated background that appeared on the Parksville agenda are enclosed for reference.

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It is our hope that the Regional District of Nanaimo Board will consider this motion at its January 23 Board meeting and endorse it for submission from the RDN to AVICC for consideration at the annual convention.

This important issue affects many local governments and fire departments far beyond Parksville and it is our hope that the resolution may carry more weight at AVICC coming from the RDN, whose geographic area includes numerous fire departments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug O'Brien", written in a cursive style.

DOUG O'BRIEN  
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: D. Holmes, CAO, Regional District of Nanaimo  
J. Hill, Manager of Legislative Services/ Corporate Officer, Regional District of Nanaimo

## **MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE AVICC**

**Motion Title:** Provincial Remuneration for Emergency Medical Services Provided by Fire Departments

**Moved by:** City of Parksville

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**Whereas** BC fire rescue service departments, operating under career, composite, or volunteer models, are experiencing increased demands in emergency medical response calls in support of the BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) system;

**And whereas** the fire departments that provide these services, authorized under the Emergency Medical Assistant (EMA) first responder program, currently receive no remuneration for their critical support within the BCEHS system;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities endorse and advocate for the establishment of a remuneration system for BC fire rescue service departments providing medical care in conjunction with the BCEHS system, with considerations for the cost of personnel, training, and replacement of consumed supplies.

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### **Background:**

In British Columbia, local governments as well as Fire Improvement Districts authorize and facilitate emergency medical services through fire rescue services, which operate under various models: career, composite, or volunteer. These services are provided in conjunction with the BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) Ambulance system. The fire rescue departments currently receive no remuneration or compensation for supplies or costs of training or deployment to these medical assistance calls in support of BCEHS. The current resolution requests that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) members support UBCM advocacy for a system of remuneration for medical care responses within the BCEHS system.

Key Considerations:

#### **Direct Costs of Service Delivery:**

- **Personnel Costs:** Departments incur costs for each emergency response, including payment to members and career staff wages<sup>[3]</sup>. A compensation model similar to forestry deployment is proposed.

- **Equipment Costs:** The need for compensation or replacement of equipment and consumables is vital for fire rescue services, especially in light of BCEHS's policy changes which have shifted the burden of procuring and maintaining these essential items to local governments. This includes Basic Life Support (BLS) supplies, oxygen masks, personal protective equipment, and other medical items crucial for emergency responses. The financial impact of these policy changes on local governments is significant, calling for a remuneration system to support these essential services and ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

#### **Increasing Demand:**

- The rise in homelessness and the drug epidemic significantly contribute to increased call volumes<sup>[4]</sup>.
- Weather-related emergencies are more frequent, impacting service demand<sup>[5]</sup>.
- Demographic factors, such as a high proportion of seniors, add to the medical emergency load<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### **Balancing Service and Capacity:**

- Departments face challenges in determining the extent of services they can provide. In Parksville, for instance, medical-related calls comprised 25.35% of the total call volume in 2023<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### **Precedents:**

- Resolutions from other local governments, such as Prince George, have articulated the need for a funding model to compensate local governments<sup>[8]</sup>. Most recently, see resolutions EB4, EB5, EB6, EB22 and EB24 from 2023.

Footnotes:

<sup>[1]</sup> **WorkSafeBC - Emergency Medical Assistant (EMA) First Responder Program Requirements:** For detailed requirements and guidelines, visit WorkSafeBC's official website at <https://www.worksafebc.com>.

<sup>[2]</sup> **BCEHS - EMA First Responder Program Participation Guidelines:** Guidelines can be found on the BCEHS official website at <https://www.bcehs.ca>.

<sup>[3]</sup> **Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs - Report on Fire Department Response Costs:** Fire Chiefs' Association of BC and BC Wildfire Service MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT for INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND REIMBURSEMENT RATES for the participation of structural firefighting crews in wildfire structure protection roles via [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/wildfire-response/inter-agency\\_agreement.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/wildfire-status/wildfire-response/inter-agency_agreement.pdf).

[4] **HealthLink BC - Impact of Homelessness and Drug Epidemics on Emergency Services:** Detailed information can be accessed at HealthLink BC's website at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca>.

[5] **Environment Canada - Increasing Frequency of Weather-Related Emergencies:** Statistics and reports are available at Environment Canada's official site at <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change.html>.

[6] **Statistics Canada - Demographic Factors in Emergency Medical Services:** For comprehensive demographic data, visit Statistics Canada's website at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca>.

[7] **City of Parksville - 2023 Emergency Response Data:** Specific data for Parksville can be found on the City of Parksville's official website at <https://www.parksville.ca>.

[8] **UBCM - Precedents from Municipal Resolutions on Emergency Services Funding:** For more information on municipal resolutions, visit the UBCM's resolutions database at <https://www.ubcm.ca>.

Please note that some of these URLs lead to general websites where specific reports or policy documents might be found, as direct links to certain documents may not always be available or are subject to change.