

Outlook-Rudy Joint Protective Services

CONTACT

Municipalities:

- Town of Outlook
- RM of Rudy No. 284

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Year awarded: 2023

Project timeline: January 2022 – Ongoing

Project video: <https://youtu.be/A2LMcyY6oLc?si=AOfCQIoTnrPksfX0>

THE PRACTICE

What was the issue?

The Town of Outlook had long provided a fire services agreement to the RM of Rudy No. 284 and the Villages of Glenside and Broderick. In 2019-2020 the relationship between the town and the partners became very challenging on many levels including Fire and Rescue services

At the same time, the volunteer fire department, while very well staffed, was operating outdated equipment and located in a very small fire hall that could now house all the apparatuses in one space. Many members of the community felt that the provision of sustainable and affordable local fire and rescue services were in jeopardy. In 2020, a plan to build a fire hall grew to be unaffordable for the town to do on its own and it caused more dissension and uneasiness amongst the volunteer members. There were concerns regarding the viability and affordability of remaining in a contractual relationship with the Town of Outlook.

During the civic election of 2020 there were many concerns raised over the long-term viability of fire and rescue services, and accusations were made toward various stakeholders contributing to the relationship further falling apart. With very little

communication amongst all stakeholders, they were seen as three separate entities: the members, the town, and municipalities being served.

In early 2021, the Rural Municipality of Rudy No. 284 began investigating providing their own services and ordered a much-needed wildland fire response vehicle. These actions were a call to action for the Town of Outlook and the Rural Municipality of Rudy No. 284 to do better.

What was the project?

The volunteer members continued to serve the community as they knew how with failing equipment and on a very minimal budget. In 2021, the Mayor and the Reeve began talking about how they could mend municipal relationships for the betterment of the community and the first and best place to start was in the immediate needs of the Fire and Rescue services. At the beginning, there was recognition that wholesale change was necessary in the approach to Fire and Rescue services in the community, but that the political lack of will was disconnected with the professional will of the volunteers involved in the delivery of services.

A working group was formed. The working group had the political will and moved a long way to forming Outlook-Rudy Joint Protective Services Committee, which would jointly own (50/50) and operate Outlook-Rudy Fire and Rescue. The organization keeps a separate set of books from either municipality however includes appointments of each municipality. This was formed with identical bylaws of both the Town of Outlook and the RM of Rudy No. 284.

THE PROCESS

Both councils appointed members to the working group and eventually supported the change by bylaw and appointing members to the newly formed organization. Municipal staff involved were both Administrators. The administrators provided support setting up meetings, researching and putting forth budgets and scenarios. The volunteer fire and rescue members were also involved in the planning process. They also continued to serve in delivering the fire and rescue services.

The municipalities used local financial resources and the capacity and experience of staff.

The organization has fire and rescue agreements with the Villages of Broderick and Glenside. In 2022, we ordered our first apparatus under the newly formed partnership, a Rescue Response vehicle. We expect delivery in late 2023. The existing fire hall was renovated to accommodate a larger size rescue van and the new committee formulated an aggressive capital plan that would see a new fire hall being built within 4 years that would house all apparatuses and equipment as well as replacement of most equipment over the next 10 years and finally the integration of replacement schedules.

Fast forward to fall 2023, the town and the RM are working together to raise funds for the fire hall, and we are expecting to make an announcement very soon regarding the success.

THE RESULTS

There is not a formal evaluation process, however, budgets are reviewed, updated plans are made, and continuous monitoring and reporting is done on a quarterly basis. The community is very well served by the new services, with support growing and volunteer members as well as their families are taking an active role in raising awareness and funds for new purchases.

Once the will of the municipal councils was gained and the past was effectively buried, the road to building trust and respect with each other became a lot easier. To this day, there are times that this sense of trust amongst some can appear a bit tenuous, but overall, this is not the consensus.

LESSONS LEARNED

The process went very well and without much problem and it took new voices and faces to see that this could work, it would have been great if the breakdown hadn't happened in the first place - but sometimes things must get worse or hit rock bottom before you are able to build it back up. This was the biggest lesson we learned - when you think it is all lost, the capacity and the will to make it work trumps nervousness and distrust.

