



WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Lasqueti Island Asset Management Survey

The Lasqueti Island Fire Protection Service provides emergency response services for fire, medical first response, rescue, and hazardous materials incidents across all of Lasqueti Island. The 2022 State of Assets Report indicated that the service is currently underfunded and the present funding levels will not be able to support the replacement of the service's current capital assets.

The qathet Regional District Board of Directors directed staff to undertake a public engagement process in 2022 for the Lasqueti Island Fire Protection Service in order to gather public input toward developing a capital asset management plan for the service.

Staff developed the survey with the intent of obtaining an understanding of the public's expectations for fire department service levels, the willingness and ability to pay for the service, and interest in following the insurance grading guidelines. The survey was open for public responses from March 15 to April 15, 2022.

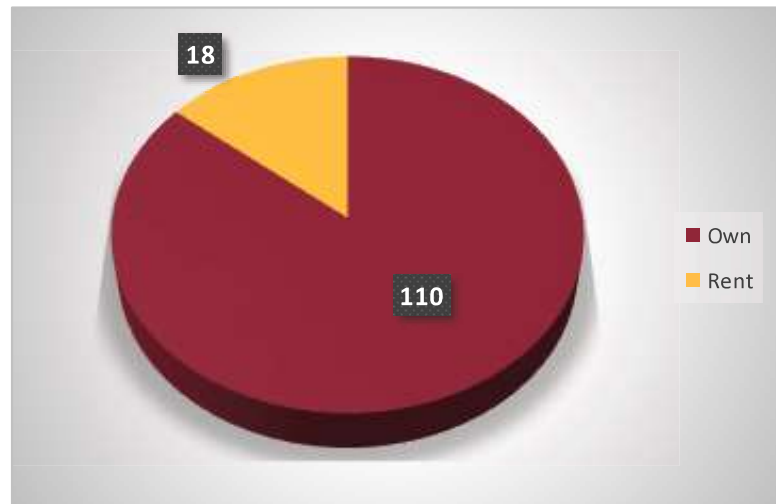
128 responses were received.

Below you will find the survey results and a summary of submitted comments.

Survey Results

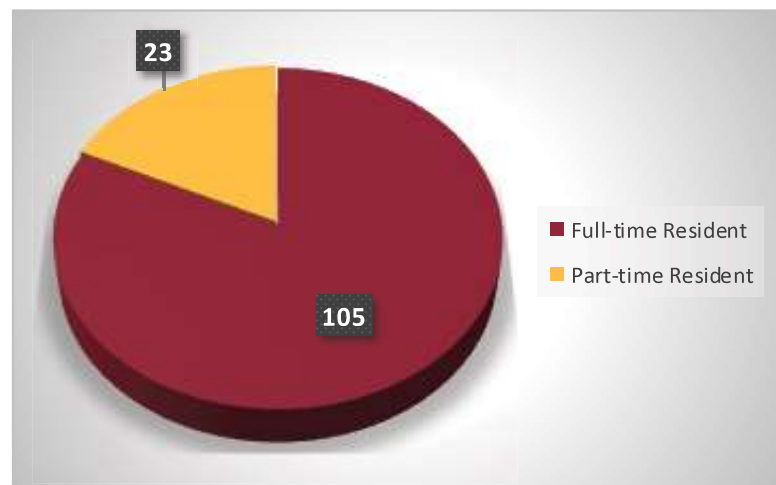
Do you own or rent your home on Lasqueti Island?

Own Property 110
Rent Property 18
Total Responses 128



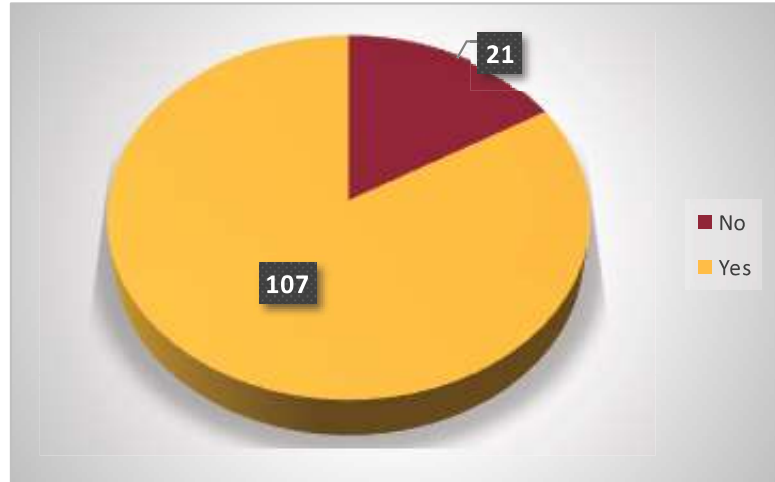
Are you a full-time or part-time resident of Lasqueti Island?

Full-time Resident 105
Part-time Resident 23
Total Responses 128



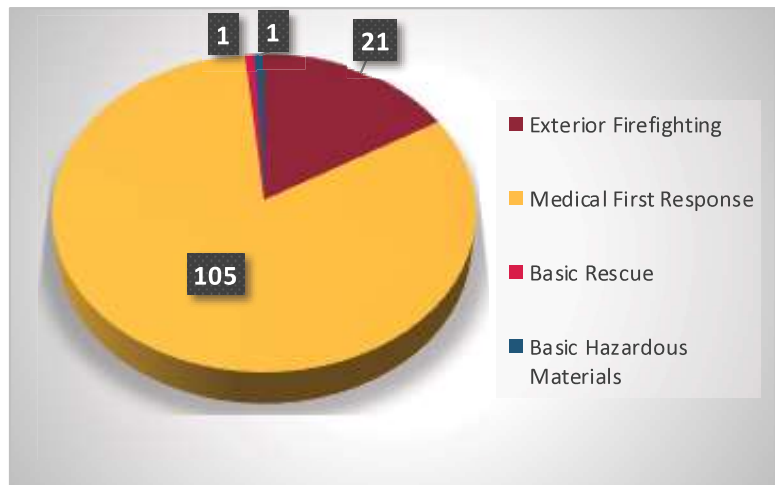
Is your property on Lasqueti Island your primary residence?

No	21
Yes	107
Total Responses	128



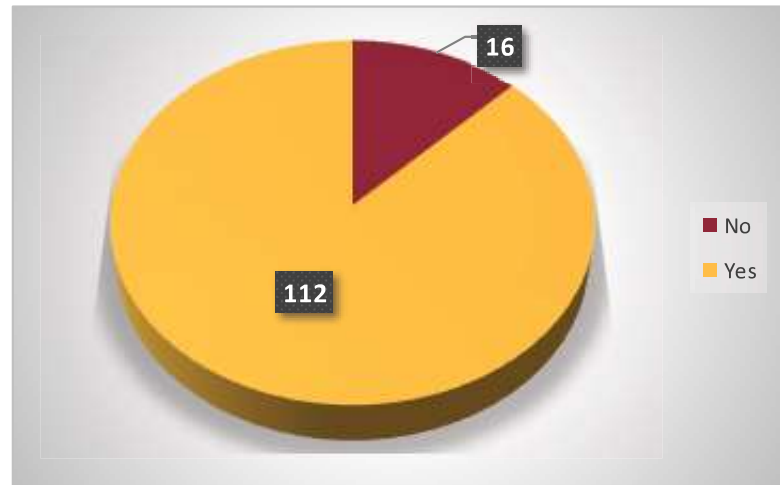
The survey asked respondents to prioritize the current LIVFD services: Exterior Firefighting, Medical First Responders, Basic Rescue, and Hazardous Materials Response.

Exterior Firefighting	21
Medical First Response	105
Basic Rescue	1
Basic Hazardous Materials	1
Total Responses	128



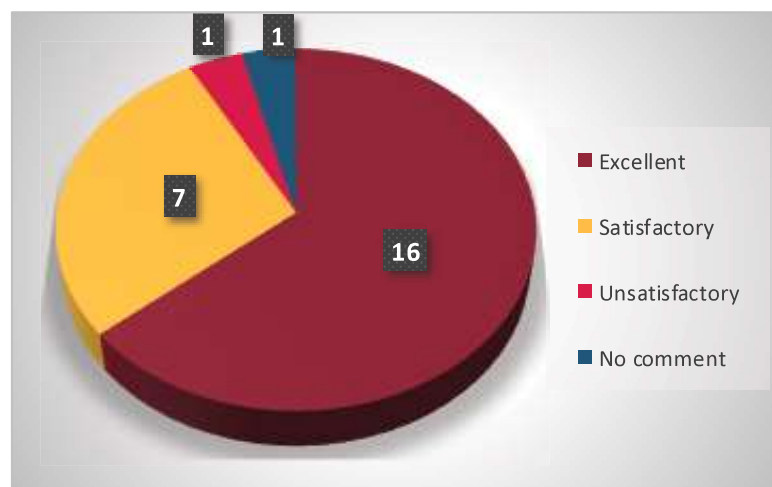
Are you satisfied with the level of emergency response services that you are currently receiving from the LIVFD?

Satisfied	112
Not Satisfied	16
Total	128



25 of the 128 survey respondents indicated that they had received an emergency response from LIVFD in the past two years. These 25 respondents indicated the following levels of satisfaction:

Excellent	16
Satisfactory	7
Unsatisfactory	1
Did not rate	1
Total	25





A total of 60 comments were received regarding levels of satisfaction with the current fire services. To protect privacy a summary of the comments is provided here:

The 25 respondents who had received an emergency response in the past two years provided the following explanatory comments:

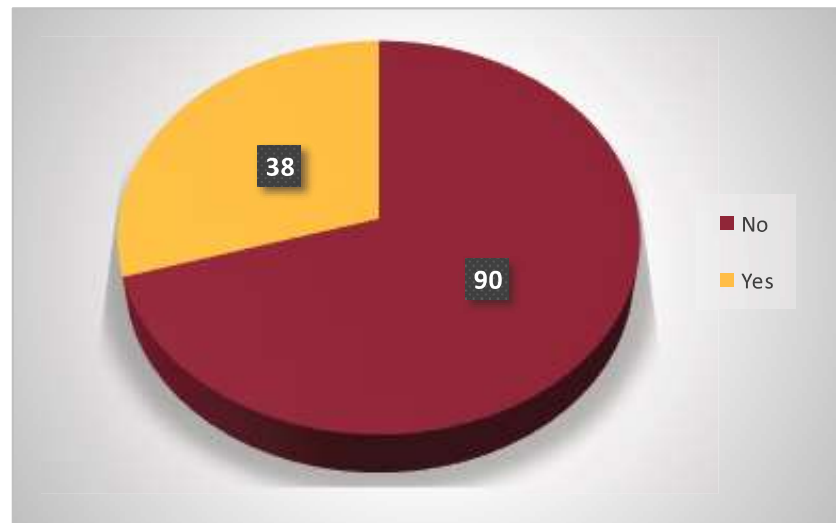
- 16 comments indicating appreciation for the First Responders describing responses as prompt and professional
- 4 comments with concerns that the First Responders should receive more training and/or support
- 2 comments expressing concern with the dispatch system

35 respondents who had not received emergency response services in the past two years also chose to provide comments supporting their service level satisfaction:

- 10 comments about receiving emergency services from LIVFD more than 2 years ago. All comments indicated positive experiences.
- 8 comments expressing need to support first responders
- 5 comments about hearing of positive experiences from friends or neighbours who received services or who witnessed LIVFD responses
- 5 responses citing the reality of remote living and importance of island residents being prepared to look after themselves
- 2 comments expressing concern with dispatch system
- 1 comment saying no service changes required
- 1 comment expressing preference for lower emergency response level

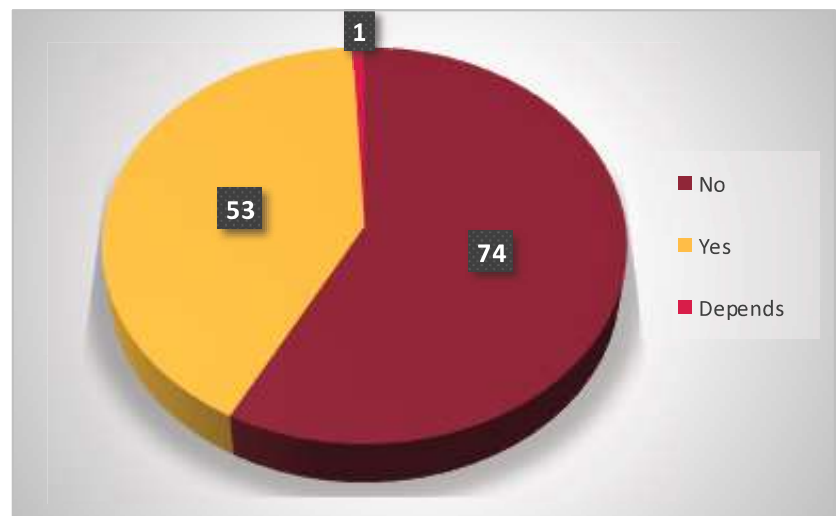
Do you insure your home or its contents?

No Insurance	90
Yes Insurance	38
Total	128



Would you support making improvements to the Lasqueti Island Volunteer Fire Department (LIVFD) consistent with following the Fire Underwriters Survey insurance grading requirements?

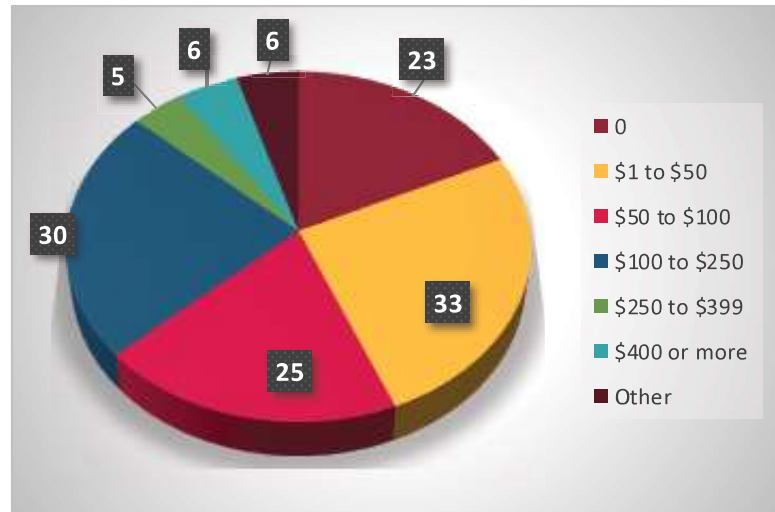
No	74
Yes	53
Unsure	1
Total	128





How much of an increase in taxes would you be willing to pay per year to support developing savings for fire department asset replacements such as new fire halls and/or fire trucks?

\$0	23
\$1 to \$50	33
\$50 to \$100	25
\$100 to \$250	30
\$250 to \$399	5
\$400 or more	6
Other*	6
Total Responses	128



*Six respondents chose "Other" and provided the following comments:

- 4 would like to see a decrease in the LIVFD budget and/or decreased taxes
- 1 unsure
- 1 willing to pay more but not for unneeded fire halls



Final Comments

All final comments have been included here with some redactions where necessary to protect personal information:

“Underwriter's unreal expectations do not accord with the reality of Lasqueti life!!”

“Insurance is practically unavailable for full-time residences. I recommend a very large increase in funding for wild fire response and planning. Without this the entire island is at high risk of catastrophe from fire in summer. ”

“I believe the fire department currently spends more than needed on equipment and supplies and could be run more efficiently. The current fire halls function just fine. If we were going to spend more money on something I would rather see it spent on training and benefits for volunteers.”

“Make being a first responder more attractive. Currently we are considering spending thousands of dollars on a fire truck. Yet first responder's get a useless tax break for most people. Some employee support thing and a Christmas party with cheap gifts.”

“No 911 or their towers.
One of the main purposes of the firefighters is to prevent forest fires spreading from building fires or other fires.
Medical first response is very important.
Provide good honorariums for LIVFD volunteers.”

“As much funding as you can into wildfire prevention and planning as insurance companies have stopped insuring remote areas”

“I think LIVFD funding should also cover more extensive training opportunities and personalized equipment kits for designated personnel (example: First Responders should have their own stethoscope).”

“Happy with current system, including call and dispatch. Support funding for equipment maintenance and replacement as necessary.



Do not support changes suggested or imposed by insurance underwriters. Insurance is increasingly difficult to get on the island, I am aware of many policies that insurers refused to renew. If insurers are increasingly not insuring Island homes, there is zero reason to regard Underwriters standards or requests for upgrades to LIVFD equipment or capacity. All such upgrades should ONLY be predicated on what islanders want, in a clear, transparent, and accountable process of consultation under IAP2 guidelines."

"I would have to see what the Fire Underwriters Insurance entailed before saying I could support it. I like to know what I am supporting."

"In addition to the asset management plan there should be better training, better communications/mapping support for the existing volunteers."

"Keep the costs reasonable and don't try to create a modern, up-to-standards fire department here. There is a lot that can be done without spending millions of dollars for top-grade facilities and equipment.

qRD is doing good work, effectively and inexpensively, with home-site fire safety advice. More could be done around prevention and preparation for wildfire without huge costs to taxpayers and residents. Thanks. [REDACTED]"

"My home is difficult to impossible the get to for the fire truck but not hard by a boat as I'm beside the water. I hope that our fire department has the ability to pump sea water from some form of boat onto land by the sea and possibly even be able to reach structures that are on fire."

"I think our fire departments response with respect to fire is, and should be limited. I don't think the expectation of the department should include "saving" our houses.

1st priority: preventing any surrounding area from burning up.

2nd priority: saving any, or part of any buildings possible."

"What are the Fire Underwriters Survey insurance grading requirements? I said no because I did not know what they were."

"The qRD emphasizes structure fire. What we really need is forest fire training and equipment to contain/manage forest fires because forest fires will lead to other structure fires. The LIVFD cannot get to a structure fire in any timely way, meanwhile, a lot of resources are being thrown at structure fire



management. For a lot less money, we can have many small water pumps primed and ready, all over the island, to fight the eventual forest fire. Some of our trucks are so big, they cannot even get to a fire. We need ATV's with pumps and hose and the training on how to control forest fires."

"Does Lasqueti qualify for grants etc.? This is a low income community. Not sure how the community can afford costs?"

"I believe it is a necessary need & I appreciate having input through this survey. Since this is predominantly a low income and senior citizen community on fixed incomes with some summer residents who are very high income earners, perhaps some sort of subsidy could be provided for seniors on fixed incomes not able to keep up with Inflation along with low income individuals & others who have incomes over \$160,000 & above who own more expensive homes could be taxed higher?"

"[REDACTED], and I want to say that 911 and a rational addressing system [REDACTED] is needed more than ever, we have many new residents and more and more visitors, no one knows who is who or where they live. That's been my opinion [REDACTED], but no progress re dispatch in 4 years. Dialing an 11 digit # is not a solution, in my opinion."

"No"

"Part of the reason people go to Lasqueti is for the freedom. Adding all these services will only increase the presence of outside departments and more inspections etc."

"Livid needs to amalgamate the fire department stations so they are recognized by the insurance services. The increase in insurance, because there isn't enough manpower on island to qualify both fire station was 3 fold. I would much rather pay that money in taxes than to insurance agencies"

"I am against predicting our services on the guidelines or demands of Underwriters. Services should be wholly based on the needs and wants of full time residents and have nothing to do with insurance."

"Good idea, thank you."



I would like the fire fighters to be able to enter buildings/residences if deemed necessary to save a life.”

“Lasqueti has too small a population to even consider FUS requirements. In the absence of a fire department there can be a stand alone First Responder Group, which is the current main response task of the LIVFD. The topic of cancelling the LIVFD has come up before.

I am completely against replacing our current halls with some multi-million dollar boondoggles. A simple shed roof to the south of Hall #1 and to the west of Hall #2 will protect the current rolling stock.

Just to let you know that if the overhead doors failed to open during a callout here they would be removed with the bumper and grill of the departing truck...”

“Absolutely opposed to a new Firehall.....support expenditures for new to us used equipment.....”

“While I’m willing to pay more for the first responders and fire rescue services our property is inaccessible to land based response being water access only. So marine response is important around False Bay. I’m not willing to bring our fire equipment up to underwriters standards. We are unable to insure our home for the past two years anyway.”

“Because so many of us have had our homeowner’s insurance cancelled in the past couple of years, not just because of the fire department, but because insurers don’t seem to want to cover “non-standard” property any more, I am very hesitant to support upgrading the fire department to underwriter’s requirements. We could spend a lot of money doing this and still we would be unable to get insurance.”

“No amount of money is going to increase the number of boots on the ground. When, if ever we have the resident population to have 75 - 100 volunteer Fire / Rescue personal ,more trucks and bigger Fire Halls are irrelevant.”

“I would like assets purchased which recognized the number of residential buildings that cannot be accessed by large trucks. Equipment that could provide quick response such as quads should be looked at.”



"More rapid response equipment such as quads with pumps. Distributed resources - small equipment sheds around the island - that have basic fire fighting tools. Financial support for home fire safety equipment. Especially fire extinguishers."

"LIVFD is an essential and valued service that needs continued support from quathet RD. LIVFD should meet all provincial standards and I am willing to pay taxes for this. This survey is difficult to complete because adequate information is lacking to guide my choices."

"Our fire department is doing a great job. I would like to see it continue under qRD with the appropriate taxation support to meet Provincial standards."

"I believe that our island pop is too small to sustain such an expensive FD. I do not recall the FD ever saving a house from a fire. House fires generally happen in winter when surrounding woods are wet and safe and so external suppression is not worth 49% of our taxes. Thank you for your time. (: "

"If we had a community insurance system where even a fraction of the moneys spent on rapidly obsolescing equipment was used to support our residents after unintended consequences, and given that burning homes are almost never saved, we would keep our hard earned dollars to further spend locally, instead of shipping them elsewhere. Thanks for considering this opinion."

"Decisions made locally are better."

"You don't explain what following the Underwriter's Survey means or how much it would cost."

"I do not want to pay more taxes, I do value the services of the LIFD and the members who contribute to the Fire Department and the First Responders. There needs to be more communication with the community about strategies "to make the service cost effective. The projected expansion of service to replace the firehalls and equipment needs more community input, we already pay most of our taxes to support the fire department....enough already."



"The underwriter's demands should have no bearing or importance on Lasqueti's emergency response. Demanding new equipment to meet unrealistic expectations is a tax disaster and a guarantee that islanders will withdraw support..."

"Replacement trucks should be second-hand. I'm against borrowing, and prefer saving.

Replacing trucks are higher priority than replacing the fire halls. The replacement trucks should be vehicles that local mechanics can maintain and repair on Lasqueti. We need a basic service, without bells and whistles. Our population cannot afford big tax increases."

"Lasqueti has a very limited tax base, so tax increases must be kept low. In the long run, it is less expensive to save before buying than to borrow and buy sooner. In the short term, it seems more feasible to buy second hand trucks (e.g. ones sold by other fire departments at 20-25 years old). A strategy for longer-term truck replacement needs to be developed. Planning for fire hall replacement is fine, but the current structure should be used as long as practicable."

"It's Essential

We've twice used first responders, but years ago. Excellent service, but they need our financial support, especially to address huge fire threat with climate change and heat dome"

"Sadly insurance underwriters are forcing rural areas to adhere to urban standards. Yet without homeowners insurance we cannot easily or rent or sell our properties without significant personally liability exposure. Most full time Lasqueti residents have high risk of total financial loss if there is a fire or personal injury."

"stop taking our money for theses services pertaining to upgraded fire station tools and technologies !! no matter how much you spend, you can't stop a fire
"any better than before...money won't help. This is all about lowering insurance costs for the rich, and i'm strongly opposed !!!"



"I think the fire services are primarily to protect the Island from fires spreading. If they manage to save a building or two that is a bonus, and a beautiful gift. We are primarily responsible for our own fire protection. Installation of the required, necessary infrastructure to do this, is the cheapest insurance."

"qRD needs to listen to the regional director regarding asset purchase . Our roads and driveways do not support large cumbersome vehicles. We cannot support city style fire equipment and buildings."

"our road conditions would be the first place to start for if u can't make it to the emergency than what's the point in all these questions. At the moment Mainroad has no way to maintain our roads they have never been so bad some are not even passable !"

"The years of running a fire department with volunteers is over. In order to ensure training, skills and availability people have to be paid for their time, which also gives the ability to hold staff responsible to meeting predetermined requirements"

"I would like us to be able to use 911 service to access emergency services"

"Must consider the island and the people available and local conditions. We will never get enough trained fire fighters to meet underwriter levels and our roads cannot support heavy fire truck operations"

"Our house is insured only because [REDACTED] demands coverage. My personal choice is so self insure due to the extreme rates for our area and heating options"

"-It is difficult to remember the emergency number.

-There is a good possibility the first responders or fire fighters can not arrive on time to a call. ***Please offer free certified training to the whole community regardless of persons intentions of being a first responder. Please provide first aid kits to community regardless of being a first responder.***

-Do not run lights or sirens on ambulance or first responding vehicals when not needed for the emergency. This creates un needed anxiety amongst the community.



-Please clean up fire halls so access to materials is quick and easy for all first responders, and make sure the buildings are usable for the equipment needed."

"keeping LIVFD management to a bare minimum is in keeping with the islands low levels of development, and encourages a continuum of low development."

"I almost chose to not submit as the questionnaire did not offer an option for "not sure". So, my response for the question "Would you support making improvements to the Lasqueti Island Volunteer Fire Department (LIVFD) consistent with following the Fire Underwriters Survey insurance grading requirements" is not accurate as I do not know what this is/ would look like, but I had to provide an answer in order to submit.

I am very concerned about wildfires due to climate change and I would like to see LIVFD better prepared to fight them."

"Use recycled fire trucks if needed. this question doesn't have info so too hard to answer:

Would you support making improvements to the Lasqueti Island Volunteer Fire Department (LIVFD) consistent with following the Fire Underwriters Survey insurance grading requirements?

We lost our home insurance 3 years ago. The company said we wouldn't be insured if wood heat was primary source of fuel, plus that the Fire Dept isn't ""Trained"" for home safety. So to me that's the priority - get them trained to go into homes, so that we can get insurance! thanks!"

"Please give us paramedics in community to have the same services as 9 11."

"We do not need new fire trucks or anew fire hall. Keep the existing vehicles in good repair, and investigate alternate building models(ex. steel framed plastic covered buildings. low cost, practical. Give high priority to maintaining and sustaining First Responders activitys, our most essential and effective service."

"The question above refers to the FUS insurance grading requirements but doesn't here explain what those are. Seems impossible to answer the question without a clear explanation provided."



"Fire insurance is a scam. I don't support any additional expenditures to satisfy insurance requirements."

"homes located in the woods are generally engulfed before they are noticed , and urban model of fire fighting doesn't work here . Start a fund (through local taxation and administered by the qRD , enough for 2 or 3 homes , then stop collecting taxes and let the funds accumulate interest , top up the funds as required) , to purchase simple and small prefab homes (available in ie: Lanzville) , that can be onsite 7 - 10 days after the blaze . Families can get moved back in and get their lives back quickly instead of waiting for a half year to get settled again . They can always add on an addition at a later time if they wish to . I'm not suggesting poorly insulated mobile homes , pre-manufactured homes are now constructed with 2" X 6" walls , have the appliances installed and are ready to move into . Please consider a model outside the box , this is looking into the future instead of the past for answers . thanks"

"Stop misleading us. Why are no costs included in this survey/discussion? The budget was just finalized and the LIVFD's budget went up another \$25,000 but you hide this, as you have year after year. Redo this discussion by asking the fundamental question: do we even want a LIVFD and if so, do we want the qRD to administer it. Lowering insurance rates for rich people is not something that will fly on this island, sorry."

"Keep it simple, keep it small. Fire trucks never save homes here. We can help each other instead of spending our money on taxes and insurance."

"I do not want any tax increase.
Our property tax will be increased by an average of 30%."

"This survey assumed people knew what the Underwriters requirements are, which I don't. Yes or no was the only option, when "not sure" would have been more accurate."

"We would like to see more local fundraisers and or possibilities for individuals that have higher incomes to contribute more to support the fire department as opposed to more taxes. Not everyone can afford higher taxes and there is no need for a significantly larger department here given that buildings are simply extinguished. We would also like to see more energy and funds given to the volunteer First Responders and Firefighters that participate in individual



emergencies as opposed to the actual infrastructure of the department. Saving lives should always be the first priority, not houses. Having said that, a more complex plan to react to island wide fires would be wise given the increasingly dry climate. ”

“Yes I do. Lasqueti residents and the LIVFD are more than competent to develop and manage a plan alongside the qRD. We do not need a million dollar fire fall, if anything we need more incentives for volunteer fire fighters to join. Listen to the people who live here. We don't fit inside the box of larger on grid towns or municipalities.
Thank you. ”

“M family and several others live on small islands in False Bay and around Lasqueti. As far as we have been told we do not get any help from the LIVFD in case of a fire, but we do pay for it like everybody else on Lasqueti. Is that correct?? ”

“I would like to see an enhanced firefighting system in place to access shoreline by water pumping over water from a fire boat.”

“We need to be able to adequately protect our properties and ensure that insurance is attainable for those who wish to obtain it.”

“Building a new fire hall, buying new trucks, having high tech equipment does not fit the Lasqueti community where access to most homes is limited for large vehicles.”

“The Asset management plan should have been in place earlier. It seems that a catch-up now is required when inflation, higher taxes and insurance rates are already taking a huge bite out of residents pockets.”

“If LVFD assets are called upon relatively infrequently as they are, I don't understand why they need to be replaced if they can be kept in good running order. Simple age doesn't seem to me to be necessarily a criterion for replacement.”



"The stipend for first responders and especially for the Fire Chief should reflect the level of responsibility and commitment they make. They should be compensated for fuel and vehicle expenses as well as their time on every single call. Volunteers are the heart of this organization and far more critical to its success than any of the equipment or infrastructure. I support improvements to the assets in so far as they improve the safety and working conditions for volunteers and their ability to prevent home fires from spreading to forests. I do not support extravagant investments in assets in a misguided attempt to make life on Lasqueti "safer" - life here is not safe, if you want safety, stay in Parksville. Nor do I support upgrades intended to meet the every increasing demanding of Insurance Underwriters. The prospect of doing so is a pipe dream. If home insurance is the goal, we can find more creative and self-sufficient means of providing that service."

"Well I tried not to answer it! Lol underwriters question I'm referring to. The question I didn't answer I didn't know enough info and I felt was a leading question.... In general I don't think lasqueti has to conform to ""other side"" standards, it's part of living here.... "

"I fully support putting appropriate protections in place on Lasqueti, including asset management. Lasqueti is long past the "shack in the woods" days and islanders need to act accordingly - responsibly and without paranoia. Everything costs money, and if islanders expect services, they should also be expected to pay for them."

"Residents who live more than a 15-minute response time from the firehall should have pumps, hoses and water storage tanks full and ready to go. Any available qRD money would be used for a grant so any resident can afford the setup. This expenditure is preferable to buying a new truck which we don't really need."

"Please do what is needed to comply with insurance grading requirements, so that people can continue to have their houses insured."

"please re-evaluate how you are conducting your business and start actually giving service, not feathering your own nest and increasing your power"



"I am disappointed to be spending tax dollars on this poorly designed survey. 1. Did not divide questions about different types of 'assets' (see #10 comment), 2. Assumed everyone has internet access, which is not correct on Lasqueti, 3. With 59 calls outs in 2 years you cannot expect people to divulge personal experience in an anonymous survey."

"This is another attempt of misleading the public info increasing taxes and government. Stop now. 3.5 calls per year is no justification for these costs. I was a first responder for 15 years. I continue to see the emergency service volunteers do a very commendable job in challenging situations. "

"What is the matter with our old fire trucks?"