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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL" <CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca>
Date: 1/4/2017 7:39:10 AM
Subject: VFRS equipment - West End

Happy New Year Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing in response to a recent question regarding the pending replacement of VFRS' apparatus assigned to Fire Hall #6 at Nicola/Nelson Streets. To confirm, VFRS presently has the following units stationed on the downtown peninsula:

Hall #6 (Nelson / Nicola): one engine and one 75' ladder
Hall #7 (Haro/Smithe): one engine and one 105' ladder
Hall #8 (Hamilton/Smithe): one engine and one rescue unit

With the recent major equipment purchase to replace vehicles at the end of their service life, VFRS is replacing its 75' ladder units with 105' aerial units. Apart from the age of the current units, the 75' ladders are too short to provide adequate coverage to the new 5- and 6-storey wood-frame structures.

Specifically in regards to Hall #6, the facility is a heritage-designated building that is too small to accommodate the 105' aerial. Given that constraint, the Department is planning to station the new equipment as set out below. Although the location of the second 105' ladder will change, the coverage to the downtown area will remain the same.

Hall #6 (Nelson / Nicola): one engine and one rescue unit
Hall #7 (Haro/Smithe): one engine and one 105' ladder
Hall #8 (Hamilton/Smithe): one engine and one 105' ladder

The ladder crews at Halls #7 and #8 will also operate light-duty trucks to respond to medical calls. Also of note, the distribution of call volume for the downtown peninsula is much higher at Hall #8, which is the City's second busiest hall after #2 on the DTES. As such, the new deployment will better align with the actual demand, while maintaining a safe and appropriate response capability for the West End district.

The equipment change at Hall #6 is not expected to take place for another 4 to 6 months.

Additionally, the City and VFRS have recently undertaken a comprehensive study of fire hall locations and replacement needs over a 30-year planning horizon. We expect to receive a final report and update Council in the coming months but, pending that report, I can advise that the replacement of Hall #6 is one of many issues contemplated in the study.

Please let me or Chief McKearney know if you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter. Of course, we can make arrangements for a more detailed briefing if that would be useful.

Best,
Paul

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