



# NEWS RELEASE

January 15, 2026

## Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department Welcomes New Fire Chief and New Fire Engine in January

### New Fire Chief

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to welcome new Coombs-Hilliers Fire Chief Enzo Calla who filled the position following the retirement of Ron Schildroth. Fire Chief Calla brings over 30 years of experience in fire services and emergency management, as well as numerous certifications and accreditations. His background in planning, operations, public education, policies and fire codes in British Columbia will serve the department and community well.

### New Fire Engine

A new fire engine for the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department (CHVFD) will be in service in late January. The Fort Garry 2025 fire engine is a single-drive axle frontline fire truck that replaces the 2004 fire engine which is at the end of its lifecycle. The approximate cost of \$1.24 million is funded by \$146,000 from reserves, \$689,423 from short-term borrowing and \$404,373 from Community Works Funds (grant funds from the Government of British Columbia). The fire truck is custom-built to meet the unique challenges of rural firefighting in the community. The truck provides the firefighters with a purpose-designed layout, enabling them to better respond to a variety of emergency and non-emergency incidents in the community.

The new fire engine will serve the Coombs-Hilliers area and the neighbouring mutual-aid communities for the next 20 to 25 years. With input from the CHVFD and RDN Fire Services, Fort Garry Fire Trucks designed and built the fire engine with these specifications:

- 450 horsepower Cummins L9 Engine
- A 1,000-gallon water tank
- A 1,500-gallon-per-minute pump
- A 25-gallon automatic foam system
- Seating for 6 firefighters
- Storage for 14 ft, 24 ft, 35 ft ladders

For information on the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department, visit [rdn.bc.ca/coombs-hilliers-fire-department](http://rdn.bc.ca/coombs-hilliers-fire-department). For information on all fire services in the RDN, visit [rdn.bc.ca/fire-services](http://rdn.bc.ca/fire-services).

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## Quotes

"We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Fire Chief Ron Schildroth for his dedicated service and unwavering commitment. Through his exemplary leadership, Chief Schildroth has made a significant and lasting impact on the safety and well-being of local residents. As he enters retirement, we wish him all the best."

In ensuring a smooth transition in leadership, we are pleased to welcome new Fire Chief Enzo Calla. Chief Calla's experience and commitment position him well to lead the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department into the future, continuing the important work of protecting the community and upholding the high standards set by his predecessor."

Douglas Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

"As the Fire Chief of the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department, I am honored to have the opportunity to serve and contribute to the community I now call home. Starting my new role alongside the arrival of our new fire truck makes this particularly meaningful. The introduction of this truck represents a major advancement for our department. It provides our firefighters with state-of-the-art equipment, enabling us to respond to fires and other emergencies with greater efficiency and effectiveness. With these enhanced resources, we are well-prepared to protect our community swiftly and reliably for many years to come."

Enzo Calla, Fire Chief, Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department

"On behalf of the Regional District of Nanaimo Board, we thank retired Fire Chief Ron Schildroth for his dedicated service. His commitment and leadership have greatly contributed to the safety and well-being of the community. We also welcome Fire Chief Enzo Calla as he steps into this role, coinciding with the arrival of the new fire truck. This investment will improve emergency response capabilities in our community and neighbouring areas through mutual-aid agreements, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to public safety."

Leanne Salter, Director, Electoral Area F (Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Whiskey Creek, Meadowood)

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Left to right: Fire Chief Enzo Calla, Retired Fire Chief Ron Schildroth



New fire engine

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