

Chief to Chief

Aaron Hanen / Bowen Island Fire Chief
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Brian Biddlecombe committed 44 years of dedicated service to the Bowen Island Fire Department, 11 years as fire chief. When he retired as chief, his vision for its future had not yet been realized.

In 2001, after a seismic study determined that the fire hall on Grafton Road would “likely fail during a low to moderate earthquake,” Brian began researching the idea of a new hall. He was part of the FHFSC (Fire Hall Facilities Steering Committee) and for the next 20 years, he continued to fight for the much-needed new facility, even travelling through the province in search of design ideas.

He also understood the necessity of a second fire hall on the west side of the island and oversaw the construction of this facility which is a training site and houses the large water tender, one of three trucks he acquired for the department, along with a rescue truck and a new engine.

A dedicated fire chief and leader in every sense of the word, Brian was also a mentor. Fourteen years ago, I was surprised when Brian showed up at my construction site to offer me a promotion to captain. As a younger and less experienced firefighter, I hesitated, uncertain as to whether or not I was right for the position. I told Brian that I wasn’t sure I was ready. Always encouraging and committed to what he believed was best for the fire department, he said, “Of course you are.”

It’s been 20 long years of planning, but Brian’s vision is finally becoming a reality. Without a doubt, it is his foresight and vision that has gotten our fire department to where it is today. His legacy is the new fire hall on Miller Road that he fought so long and hard for.

To commemorate Brian’s many years of dedication and vision, a tree will be planted at the new fire hall and a plaque erected in his honour.

- Aaron Hanen, Bowen Island Fire Chief

Comments (0)