

CRD directors miss crucial budget vote

Province urged to address conflict of interest issue

When the time came to vote Apr. 14 on a \$263-million consolidated CRD 2016 budget, only 14 of 24 directors were able to vote because of conflict of interest and their appointments to not-for-profit societies or boards. The vote attendance for the 2016-20 Financial Plan, arguably the most important annual vote that takes place, was impacted by a 2013 BC Court of Appeal decision.

On Mar. 17, **Barb Desjardins**, chair of the CRD, wrote Community Minister **Peter Fassbender** asking him to address the issue of conflict of interest and participation of elected officials on non-profit boards.

The CRD also urged the province to deal with the issue that arose from the BC Court of Appeal decision in 2013 and 2015 to no avail. While the province is drafting a regulation to mitigate the impact of the court decision but it's not finalized.

"This (issue) remains a serious concern for the CRD," Desjardins wrote Fassbender in a letter (below). "I would like to request an urgent meeting with you to discuss this matter further and explore options to expedite its resolution."

CRD directors are prevented from exercising their fiduciary duty by the court decision, says **John Treleven**, 1st vice-chair of Grumpy Taxpayer\$.

"Failure to promptly enact corrective legislation suggests the CRD board will have to be reconstituted in a manner consistent with the ruling, further weakening governance. The current situation is uncomfortable for board members and damaging to the interests of all taxpayers in the region.," says Treleven.

Directors Marianne Alto and Chris Plant chose not to attend the Mar. 30 meeting, while the directors listed below also declared a conflict of interest:

\$ Desjardins and Mayor Lisa Helps did not attend and were unable to participate in the board meeting due to their participation on the board of the Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association (GVLRA) which receives funding from the CRD. Both appointed alternates to vote in their place.

\$ Directors Steve Price, John Ranns, and Nils Jensen declared a conflict of interest as they sit on the GVLRA and left the meeting. Oak Bay alternate Kevin Murdoch was in conflict as he sits on the Greater Victoria Public Library.

\$ Director Lanny Seaton declared a conflict because of his work with the West Shore Parks and Recreation Society Board.

\$ Director Wayne McIntyre resigned his position from the Board of Greater Victoria Homelessness Coalition in order to be present to approve the 2016 budget. \$

BACKGROUND:

Conflict of interest and participation of elected officials on boards of not for profit organizations, click to see, [Letter to Minister Fassbender from CRD Chair Barb Desjardins, Mar. 17, 2016.](#)

BC Court of Appeal Decision: 2013 BCCA 9 Schlenker v. Torgrimson
<http://www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdb-txt/CA/13/00/2013BCCA0009.htm>

ESQUIMALT COUNCIL DISMISSES MAJORITY 'YES' VOTES

With just 5 days short notice, Esquimalt Council called a hasty Town Hall meeting on April 5, 2016 to discuss amalgamation. Approximately 40 - 50 people attended, with about a dozen speaking against amalgamation. Afterwards, Coun. Tim Morrison offered that a "few people who wanted nothing to do with amalgamation" as justification for why Council will not support amalgamation. This, despite the municipal election results where 67% (2,905) voted YES in favor of amalgamating into few municipalities.

Many Esquimalt residents are angered by the short meeting notice that prevented many from attending, and by Council's dismissal of the democratic ballot results. The municipal website provided only anti-amalgamation information and correspondence.

Mayor Barb Desjardins and Couns. Burton-Krahn and Low, when running as candidates in the November 2014 election, pledged to respect the election results, but their actions indicate otherwise. - **Source: Amalgamation Yes, April Newsletter**

[I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it any more >>](#)

Bogged down with sewage treatment issue.

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

Sooke Mayor Maja Tait was reinstated April 1 on the CRD board after returning from maternity leave. During her absence **Coun. Rick Kasper** was given the role by as CRD director and when there was no indication he was going to give it up the issue landed on the province's doorstep. **Tait will return in September... 9.3 DAYS, Average number of days a full-time Canadian worker is absent a year, \$16.9 billion cost to the economy.** That's 13.2 days missed by the average unionized worker and 7.5 days missed by a non-unionized worker, according to the Globe and Mail, Report on Business, April, 2016.....The Canada Revenue Agency is struggling to collect taxes it's owed, **the total debt soaring 110 per cent to in the last decade to \$38-billion.** Doubtful accounts not likely to be recovered have more than doubled to \$13-billion, The Ottawa Citizen reports....

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING?

It's a enough to make a taxpayer jump for joy! The province has put out a contract tender for a consultant **to examine the integration of services in Greater Victoria**. The study will examine ways of more efficiently delivering services that citizens need and maybe save some hard-earned tax dollars while they are it. It will also lay "the groundwork for more specific solutions local governments may wish to pursue towards greater integration of services and governance." A more efficient way of delivering services to the region may reveal significant cost-savings for the taxpayer. A final report for the so-called **Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative (CISGI)**, from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development is expected by Oct. 26.

Oak Bay City Council will go live with webcasting of meetings May 9. A 2012 task force recommended Oak Bay go with webcasting, acknowledging that the public was more demanding of transparency and accountability and greater access to information than ever before. Plans are also underway to plug in to the world of social media including Twitter and Facebook. Oak Bay joins Victoria, Esquimalt, Sooke, North Saanich and the CRD in webcasting their meetings.

WHAT'S COMING UP

OPEN BOARD MEETING - JOIN US MAY 17 - Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$450. With your help Grumpy\$ has now **reached the 60% mark** of our start-up goal of \$5,000. To make it easier for our supporters we've added a PayPal button at the bottom of this page that accepts all major credit cards. Thank you for your generous support. Join us **Tuesday, May 17 from 12 to 2 pm** for lunch and meeting at location TBA. Partners and interested supporters are welcome to sit in, but please RSVP to grumpytaxpayers@telus.net ...

GRUMPY\$ WEBSITE LIVE !

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria is pleased to launch our regional web presence, along with a provincial voice and beyond, through the magic of the Internet. Our non-profit, non partisan, advocacy group began in Sept. 2015, in the age of social media with a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

It is our hope www.grumpytaxpayers.com will inform and inspire our partners and supporters, the media, and the general public about our activities. Please visit it frequently to see the latest postings of our monthly newsletters, articles, letters to the editor, public forums, opinion columns and press releases.

[Join us and be part of the solution .](http://www.grumpytaxpayers.com)

Sincerely,

The Grumpy Taxpayer\$ Team

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A non-profit, unaffiliated, non-partisan, citizen's advocacy group dedicated to more accountable municipal government, lower taxes and less waste.

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