

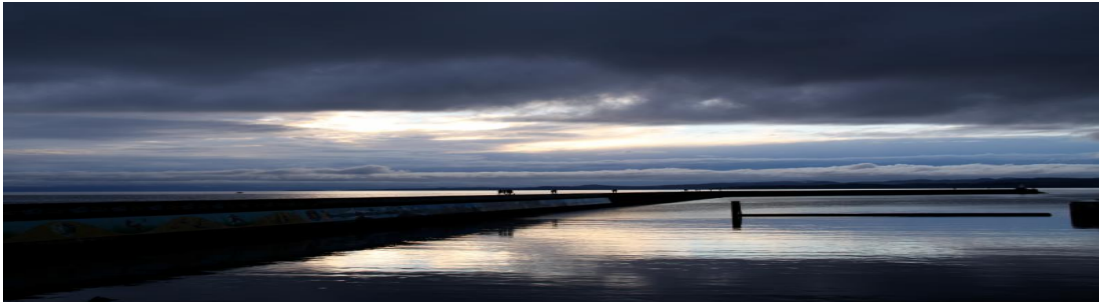
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## ***Integrity in Local Government, a Two-way Street !***

Please join us for the **Annual General Meeting & Guest Speaker Dermod Travis of Integrity BC on 'Integrity in Local Government, a Two-way Street.'** Date: **Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 7 pm**, Community Room, Greater Victoria Central Library, Downtown on Broughton, [\*\*Members and Public Invited >>\*\*](#)

## **Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria**

'Almost' The Best Place on Earth | [grumpytaxpayers.com](http://grumpytaxpayers.com) | Nov. 2016



### **Holding their breath**

#### **Ratepayers anxious about impact of sewer treatment costs**

There continues to be more questions than answers on how the costs of the sewer treatment mega-project will impact business and homeowners.

In mid-September the Capital Regional District 'estimated' the cost of the sewage treatment mega-project at \$765-million with \$311-million coming from the core seven communities.

"Let's face it, that number is more of a 'guesstimate' rather than anything to take to the bank," says Stan Bartlett, chairperson of Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria.

"Expect the project to come in at more than a billion dollars and the cost overruns to be shouldered by local taxpayers."

The chairperson of the CRD, Barb Desjardins, also wonders about the lack of explanation and detail around the initial cost estimates.

"I have the same concern about incomplete information. I am aware they are working overtime to get things done though," Desjardins told Grumpy

Taxpayer\$.

We do know each municipality will receive a lump sum requisition from the CRD for their share of the total annual debit, operating and maintenance costs which will be passed onto their ratepayers. Most municipalities are still thinking about the issue and waiting for more definitive costs.

It is the individual municipality's choice on how it will apportion the cost to the different types of ratepayers (ie. condo, townhouse, house, commercial business, industrial business, institutional facilities etc.) in the municipality. Businesses in the region typically pay a multiple of three or four times the amount a residential property owner does in taxes, and depending on the type of enterprise, maybe more. In one local municipality for example, light industry pays a factor of 7.7.

Possible approaches may be based on property assessment, water usage, occupancy levels or perhaps a blend of these options, according to the CRD.

The District of Saanich with 111,000 residents - the bulk of the regional population - hasn't decided how they are going to raise the money to pay the added annual sewage treatment bill.

The other large jurisdiction, Victoria with 84,800 residents and a sizable business presence, will be collecting the funding for the sewage treatment on behalf of the CRD through a user fee not through taxes. The amount paid by a property owner or business is entirely based on the amount of water used.

"Since a decision on the location of the treatment plant was just recently made, the City has yet to calculate the impact (we have reached out to the CRD to get updated numbers)," says Suzanne Thompson, director of finance.

The average single family dwelling and a typical small business use about 80 units of water each year and would therefore pay the same amount - the rate charged is the same for residential and commercial. The City has not calculated an "average" for the types of buildings listed below since they will vary based on the water usage, says Thompson.

The earlier model for McLoughlin Point resulted in an annual cost for City of Victoria ratepayers in the range of \$350-400 based on 80 units of water consumption. The CRD started invoicing for the treatment plan in 2013, so a portion of this has already been phased in.

### **Vital Signs needs improvements**

The question, 'Does the 11th consecutive community checkup Vital Signs by the Victoria Foundation reflect the reality of Greater Victoria?', must be asked.

The survey takes 12 main issues from Arts and Culture to standard of living -

the 'economy' section is cursory - and assigns a grade from A to F. This year the economy, housing and transportation received the lowest grades with an average performance. Overall the quality of life was viewed a very good B+.

But readers of this survey should be aware of major weaknesses in this benchmark and much-heralded report - lack of randomness, plus gender, employment, residence, income bias and skewed results. Source data is often undated and not necessarily current. [FULL STORY >>](#)

**Grumpy Taxpayer\$ has a theme song >>**



### **MUNICIPAL MATTERS**

**Director Colin Plant** didn't get too far with a proposal for CRD directors and the chair to do a self-evaluation and performance review. The idea was nixed by the governance committee at its Sept. 7 meeting... Sooke **Mayor Maja Tait** has been elected the third vice-president for the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) at their recent annual

convention.... **Mayors David Screech of View Royal and Barb Desjardins of Esquimalt** are reported to want to take up Minister Peter Fassbender's offer to help **control municipal costs and in particular police and fire wages**....Grumpy\$ aren't the only group that can't figure out why the sewer treatment costs presented by the CRD don't add up. **The RITE Plan** advocacy group wonders why the per household annual costs for Colwood, for example, are 53 per cent less under the approved plan. <http://theriteplan.blogspot.ca/> ....The annual **Vital Signs survey**, conducted by the Victoria Foundation, shows a high level of satisfaction in Victoria. It does however flag the economy, housing and transportation as needing major improvements. **Grumpy\$ has urged the group to beef up economic indicators to better reflect that sector in the report and hopefully those recommendations will show up in the 2017 survey.** <http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/victoria/2016/2016-victorias-vital-signs>

### **356 INTER-MUNICIPAL AGREEMENTS !**

After filing a freedom of information request, **Jim Anderson of Amalgamation Yes** discovered there are an incredible 356 complicated inter-municipal agreements to govern the regional district. These integrated service delivery agreements cover everything from parks and policing to stormwater runoff, cemeteries and the emergency radio system. There are 155 administered by the regional district plus another 201 between various groupings of our 13 municipalities. Anderson told the Times-Colonist the multiplicity of deals is evidence of a 'dysfunctional, unaccountable and out of control CRD. [IMPROVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE >>](#)

### **WHAT'S COMING UP**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & GUEST SPEAKER WEDNESDAY, Nov. 9**

**Dermod Travis, executive director of Integrity BC and a well-known Times-Colonist columnist, will highlight the first annual general meeting as guest speaker during the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 9 @ 6.30 Social, 7.00 Guest Speaker, 7.30 AGM.**

Formed in 2011, Victoria-based Integrity BC is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated

to help restore a bond built on trust and confidence between citizens and their elected officials. It has revealed White House salaries dwarfed by BC city managers, exposed junkets charged to the taxpayers' tab, helped protect British Columbians from election gag laws, launched the 'Take back BC' campaign, and uncovered prohibited political donations.

#### OPEN BOARD MEETING

Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$450. With your help Grumpy\$ has now **reached the 75% 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. Also join us **Tuesday, Dec. 6 from 12 to 2 pm** for lunch and meeting at location TBA. Partners and interested supporters are welcome to sit in, RSVP to [grumpytaxpayers@telus.net](mailto:grumpytaxpayers@telus.net) ...

**Help us inspire better local government.**

Sincerely,  
The Grumpy Taxpayer\$ Team



**Copyright@2016-2020 - Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria**  
**A non-profit, unaffiliated, non-partisan, citizen's advocacy group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste and more accountable municipal government.**



**JOIN Us Wednesday evening!**

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