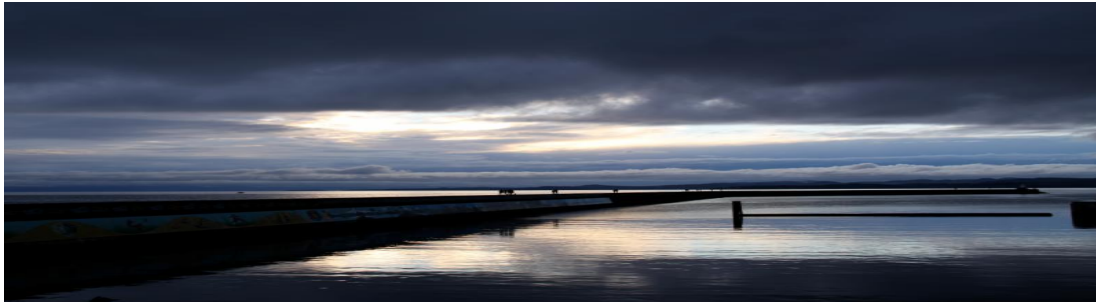


WORTH QUOTING - "I think we need to look at the core costs. Ask the public what services do you really want, and then eliminate the ones they don't give a s... about. When tax increases start to get into the double digits, I think we need to start to pay attention." - Mayor Stew Young and non-sitting CRD board member, on learning CRD budget hike for Langford could jump 14.83 per cent.

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria

'Almost' The Best Place on Earth | grumpytaxpayers.com | Jan. 2017



High Ho, it's off to w-o-r-k we go Regional operating budgets approach \$1-billion

It's the start of a new year so the debate about higher tax rates begins in what amounts to an 'annual \$1-billion mega project' in the Victoria region.

As taxpayers head off to work, it's time to sharpen the pencils: Consider the most recent figures available compiled by Grumpy Taxpayer\$ reveal the annual operating budget for the region's 13 municipalities, Capital Regional Housing Corp., Capital Regional Hospital District and the Capital Regional District (CRD) at the end of 2015 was more than \$900-million.

As expected, the CRD and Capital Regional Housing Corporation (\$209,069,652) plus the Capital Regional Hospital District (\$33,749,523), the City of Victoria (\$216,301,775), and the District of Saanich (\$179,840,789), make up about two-thirds of all operating expenditures.

To view the entire list of all operating budget amounts in the Capital region, click [READ MORE >>](#)

An operating budget is a combination of known expenses, expected future costs, and forecasted income from all sources including taxation over the course of a year that's dealt with by a municipal council. Any excess revenue becomes a surplus and is added to year after year becoming the accumulated surplus. Debt is often assumed for roads, sewer pipes, buildings and so on, and money is borrowed at a low interest rate from the Municipal Finance Authority.

Figures were derived from annual reports and financial statements to the end of 2015, so did not include any anticipated increases in the 2016 budget cycle or budget requests for 2017. If that was done, it's closer to an annual \$1-billion mega project, so as you can see we have a lot of work to do.

Also consider, an early study by Grumpy Taxpayer\$ found that **the cumulative debt of the region's 13 municipalities, Capital Regional Housing Corp., Capital Regional Hospital District and the CRD at the end of 2015 was also almost \$1-billion by end of 2015.** See the [Victoria Region Debt Clock](#) for more explanation.

Are you getting good value for your taxes ?

Did your assessment go up? Available online Jan. 3. [BC Assessment and Greater Victoria.](#)

[Residential and Business Tax Rates, 2016](#), 13 Municipalities of Victoria Region by Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce

Zilch. Nada. Nothing. Zero. Unresolved issues of wasteful spending, excessive wages, and duplication of services in Victoria regional municipalities, Grumpy Taxpayer\$ <http://grumpytaxpayers.com/2016/10/06/zilch-nada-nothing-zero>

Urban Taxpayer Pays the Bills by Jim Anderson, <http://www.amalgamationyes.ca/blog-urban-taxpayers-pay-the-bills.html>

Budget woes in Saanich: How much can the taxpayer take? by Karen Harper, <http://grumpytaxpayers.com/2016/12/02/budget-woes-in-saanich-how-much-can-the-taxpayer-take/>

High ho, it's off to work we go, Second Star to the Right (Salute to Walt Disney) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whnn9ReUV04>

Brief to the City of Victoria 2017 Preliminary Budget by Grumpy Taxpayer\$
<http://grumpytaxpayers.com/2016/11/29/whoa-nelly-whoa-brief-on-city-of-victoria-preliminary-budget-2017>

Is it time to dip into healthy 'rainy day' funds ?

Every jurisdiction in the Victoria region is asking for more money from the taxpayer, so maybe it's time to use some accumulated surplus to eliminate or moderate those increases?

Unspent money is set aside every budget year and assets like buildings and land are bought as municipalities conduct business on behalf of the taxpayer.

Here are a few examples of the local accumulated surpluses, including investments, to the end of 2015: CRD (\$917.7-million), Saanich (\$899-million), Victoria (\$528-million), Langford (\$341-million), Colwood (\$134.7-million), Esquimalt (\$88.5-million) and Highlands (\$40.1-million).

Taxpayers need to ask if these accumulated surpluses are justified or excessive?

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ has a theme song >>



MUNICIPAL MATTERS

BC Assessment reports assessments are set to **increase 10 to 40 per cent** for a typical single family dwelling in Victoria, Saanich, Sidney and Oak Bay as of July 1 valuation. A typical strata property has increased **5 to 25 per cent**....A sign of the times? A couple of major Ontario cities have found the tax burden unsustainable and trimmed its city halls: **In October, after a radical restructuring, 75 managers and 102 senior administrators, were shown the door at the**

City of Ottawa. The restructuring occurred after a damning report on 'lax spending controls and deteriorating finances.' In September **25 senior managers were dismissed at the City of Brampton** to make administration more efficient **CRD spent \$46,000** on production and printing costs on 3,000 glossy, table-top books as part of its 50th anniversary celebration (2016) which works out to about \$15.50 a book. It will be distributed to institutions, educational facilities, local governments, public libraries, and residents can obtain copies through making a donation to the United Way in our region....

CREATIVE SOLUTION NEEDED FOR CRYSTAL POOL

The fate of the taxpayer is also at risk with news the **replacement cost of the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre may be as high as \$68.4-million.** Something needs to be done about the aging Crystal Pool, that issue is not in question. The timing is problematic so can the taxpayer handle another big hit or can the project scope be moderated? Why not strike a deal where the pool can be donated, owned and operated by the a group such as the YMCA-YWCA? Will out-of-City users pay a premium for admission? Can the CRD help pay for the project through a regional assessment? Is there a more modest version of this project to consider? Is there a multi-use, private-public formula that might work?

WHAT'S COMING UP

OPEN BOARD MEETING

It's another year and we need your support to keep the wheels turning. Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$450. 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, Jan. 10 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 ...**

Help us inspire better local government, renew your donation.

Sincerely,
The Grumpy Taxpayer\$ Team



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



Interested in learning about local government in Victoria?

Check out the FACT SHEETS developed as part of the Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative by the province. - 34 pages of fascinating reading.

[CLICK HERE >>](#)