

While Director Whalley along Directors Mawhinney and Vonesch initially attempted to derail the water meter rebates as a form of **retaliatory gridlock towards the Regional District (SRD) Board supported the motion to have a report prepared regarding the expansion of the [Strathcona Gardens recreation service](#)** participants at its meeting on June 28, 2023.

The resolution (Rice/Sinnott: SRD 572/23) directed staff to prepare a report exploring options for additional participation in the service by Electoral Areas A, B, and C, as well as the Village of Sayward. This study was initiated to evaluate whether it was reasonable for these communities to support the facility's operations based on patterns of usage, community benefit, and functional access.

Here is the breakdown of how that conflict played out and its eventual resolution:

1. The Initial Obstruction (August 16, 2023)

During the EASC meeting, you moved to investigate reimbursement options for Area D residents who had paid **\$1,500 out-of-pocket** to install water meters before a **\$2.8 million provincial grant** made them free for everyone else.

- **Whalley's Stance:** As captured in the meeting records, **Director Gerald Whalley** philosophically opposed the rebates, arguing that early adopters had already "reaped the financial reward" of lower utility rates since 2018.
- **Procedural Friction:** The sources characterize the rural block's (Whalley, Mawhinney, and Vonesch) initial refusal to support or even second the motion as **"hostage-taking" politics**.
- **The Motivation:** This gridlock was a direct response to your successful motion earlier on June 28th 2023 to explore expanding the **Strathcona Gardens** recreation service participants to include Quadra Island and Sayward.

2. Escalation into "Targeted Administrative Friction"

The sources note that by trying to block these routine utility refunds, those Directors were willing to **withhold direct financial relief from 119 working families** in Area D to gain leverage in the unrelated regional dispute over recreation debt. This tactic was identified as a failure of good governance and a violation of the **Bylaw No. 513 Code of Conduct** principles of "Accountability" and "Integrity".

3. Final Resolution: The Adoption of Bylaw 464

Despite the initial obstruction and Whalley's vocal opposition on the meeting video, the "pro-stability" majority eventually successfully advanced the file.

- **Legislative Outcome:** The Board ultimately passed **Bylaw No. 464** (Water Meter Reimbursement program), which formalized the fairness mechanism for these "early adopters".
- **The "Clean" Outcome:** To protect public funds, staff implemented strict filtering criteria. Of the 182 existing meters, **119 properties were approved** as eligible for a non-cash account credit, while 63 were excluded due to ownership transfers or commercial status.

In summary, while Director Whalley's comments on August 16, 2023, attempted to shut down the discussion, your focus on **corporate stability** and professional planning allowed the bylaw to proceed, ensuring Area D residents received the **\$1,500 credits** they were promised in historical district documents.