

Directors Report Dec 2024

As the year winds down the last Board Meetings were held Dec 11 2024 and the Electoral Area Directors had their first meetings Dec 12th 2024 to have a first look at budgets for the 2025 tax season.

Key points from the full day of Meetings on Dec 11th are:

1. The **Strathcona Gardens Commission** approved the **\$58 million dollar project** for the **Ice Arena**. More details will be released on this very important project soon. This project has been waiting for the last several years and with interest rates slowly dropping it was time to move forward. How this will affect **Area D** for taxes in **2025** is still being determined and I will know better when the next budget meetings are held in the New Year.
2. **Operational Budgets** and expected **Capitol Costs** along with the **actual financial reporting** for **2023** for the **Campbell River Fire Service** are now part of the public record as they should be. As the costs to this service continue to rise which can be attributed to such factors as a legacy agreement that is in need of a renegotiation and the fact that Campbell Rivers Fire Department needs continue to grow to better serve Campbell River it is important to ensure that there is **transparency** and **accountability**. For those interested please see the minutes of the Electoral Board meeting for those details and reports or you can email me at jrice@srd.ca and I will send that information to you.
3. **As the Wood Chipping Bylaw** was approved last month by the Board this new Bylaw will be going through the **AAP process** in the **New Year**. To refresh memories, this will allow a wood chipping program to happen yearly in Area D instead of solely relying on grants which had many restrictions and did not have the funding to provide this service to all the Electoral Areas every year. Wood chipping is also a viable alternative to **Open Burning** and allows the community to be come more **Fire Smart**. The cost per home for this service will be determined in the 2026 tax cycle and based on current reports those costs should be very modest.
4. The **Regional Housing Service** is looking towards 2025 as there is the potential to put this service to work. The Regional Board did **approve** a very **modest tax requisition** to ensure the service does have budget to jump on opportunities as they present themselves. For Area D our contribution to the service is \$12.00 per household for 2025 and 2026.

Key Points from the Area D Budget Meeting on Dec 12th are

1. Maintaining last years requisition for **Feasibility Studies** at \$25,000 which will provide an appropriate reserve of **\$110,000** for 2025. This will ensure that there is appropriate funds available to continue with studies such as **Storm Water Management** and looking into the future **restarting** the **investigation** for **Sewers**. The cost of this service is approx \$1.29 per 100k of property assessment. I would like to stress that this service is critical for planning into the future.
2. **Modest increase** for **Campbell River Fire Protection**. As we all know the cost of this service rose sharply in 2024 costing those homes that participate in this service \$74.01 per 100k of property assessment. For 2025 the cost is anticipated to be \$77.79 per 100k of property assessment.
3. The tax requisition for **Grants and Aids** continues to **decline** for 2025. With a healthy reserve this service is expected to cost approx \$.35 per 100k of property assessment.

4. The tax requisition for **Animal Control** continues to **increase** for 2025. This is a shared service with the City of Campbell River. The costs for this service are projected to be \$3.15 per 100k of property assessment. The Strathcona Regional District will be providing a further report in 2025. This report will look at what options are available as this service has increased rather sharply over the past few years and it is time to explore alternatives.
5. The tax requisition for **Area D water** with the City of Campbell River has **increased slightly** from 2024. In 2024 the cost per 100k of property assessment was \$52.73 and for 2025 the cost will be \$54.31. **On a good note the costs for Bulk Water will remain basically as is until the end of 2026.** This means the user rates will remain as they are for the next two years while the SRD rolls out the Water Meters to the first 852 homes in Phase One of this project.
6. **Community Parks** will see a slight increase in requisition for 2025. The anticipated costs for 2025 are \$28.47 per 100 k of property assessment. For comparison the costs in 2024 was \$26.53 per 100 k of property assessment. At the beginning of 2023 sitting in my early budget meetings it was very clear that the Community Parks budget needed to be increased. Our Parks are very important for the community and they attract countless visitors daily from neighbouring communities. Just over the last two years a number of outstanding projects have been completed and for 2025 there is suitable budget to continue moving forward on a number of very important projects. Some of those projects include Salmon Point Trailhead Development, Storie Creek Trail, Hagel Greenway Development, Hagel Park Washroom improvement.

As for 2025 things are already shaping up for the community.

- I will have my first meetings with our new MLA Anna Kindy in Jan 2025.
- I will be meeting with residents of Cedar Creek and Upper Campbell Lake early in the New Year to discuss BC Hydro and more.
- SRD staff are already investigating potential grants to offset the next round of upgrade costs that I would like to see for the bus stops at Engels Rd and Shelter Point Resort.
- Considerable work will take place in 2025 on Glenmore Rd and Discovery Foods mall that will see enhancements including the Transit Bus Stop.
- There are a number of staff reports that will be coming forward in 2025. Key reports are Campbell River Fire Service Review and costs for our own Fire Service and Hall, Stormwater Management Report, Development Cost Charges Report.
- Early in **2025 SRD staff** will be providing a report for **Phase 2** of the **Universal Water meter** project. Area D does have appropriate reserves to complete this project.
- Continued work engaging those residents who are in the Campbell River Fire Protection Area with my petition aimed at encouraging The City of Campbell River to negotiate a new service agreement.

One last item to share is with the heavy rains that we are seeing already this year I do have some reserves set aside to help homeowners with **emergency culvert repairs**. Please call me direct if you need assistance with a culvert repair.

As 2024 is winding down I hope everyone in the community has a safe and happy holiday.

I am always available even over the holidays. Best way to contact me “ is not via facebook” but an actual phone call or text message to 250.203.1598. I will also be monitoring email but expect a delayed response with email.