

Directors Report Dec 2023

As 2023 winds down and tax season is quickly coming lots of talk in the community regarding services, potential services, AAP processes and the list goes on.

2024 Taxes

It is still very early in this process to really get a sense of what taxes will look like for 2024.

Yes there are increases in many area's that are well beyond my control, however for Area D's single participant services that I can control the plan is to just maintain those services without any increases for 2024.

Area D parks are in a very good place and there will be a continuation of completing all outstanding parks projects that were budgeted for in 2023.

As the SRD is looking to hire an additional Parks Technician for 2024 this will greatly improve the SRD's ability to complete these projects in a timely manner. Currently there is one Parks Technician that divides his time between Area B, C, and D.

On another note but certainly relevant to taxes I am hoping that the City of Campbell River will sit down in the New Year to discuss the rising costs for the City Services, and the costs of water.

AAP Process

The AAP process is a method that many local governments use to gauge disapproval to a service, or bylaw.

By nature it is an economical method given that everything is paid for by tax dollars.

Holding a referendum vote is a considerable financial burden and the costs are somewhat similar to holding an election.

The AAP process is determined by the "Local Government Act" which has been set by "Legislation" from the "Province".

I know there are lots of negative comments regarding the process and why is there no means to submit a digital response vs the required written response sent in via Postal Mail.

In a nutshell the current process has been determined as the most secure method. Online voting is not permitted anywhere in Canada because it cannot be secured. Digital responses have never been permitted because again they cannot be secured and they cannot confirm the identity of who sent in the response.

Regional Housing Services

With this potential service now in the AAP process there are many folks who do not understand what this service is.

The Regional Housing Service will bring benefits to the entire Region and its costs will be spread out with the entire region contributing to this service.

The service has 2 parts.

One part is to receive Grants from Provincial and Federal Programs for new housing applications that fit a select criteria and are contributing to addressing the housing shortage.

Area D is well positioned to receive grants and has applied grants under the Accelerated Housing Fund. If the grants are successful this is money that will go back into Area D planning, and to further address infrastructure upgrades.

The second portion to the Regional Housing Service which requires voters approval is the ability to borrow up to Ten Million to be used for “Work Force Housing” or perhaps Senior Housing” and it will provide the required flexibility to work with outside agencies and possibly help those same agencies receive grants that they could not normally achieve on their own.

The discussion so far with the SRD Board has been that this service could be potentially used to create a second floor on the building that is soon to start construction on hospital property.

This second floor will be used to create affordable rental suites to be used for medical students.

In recent Hospital Board Meetings one of the biggest challenges that is facing Island Health in their recruitment and education efforts is housing or shall I say the lack of affordable housing.

I seriously doubt that this service will find the need to access a Ten Million Debt however it also needs to be stressed that this service does aim to be cost neutral and not a burden to tax payers. If any housing is to be created it will not be free and it does expect to recover costs.

Townhall Meetings

I am looking to schedule town hall meetings with the community.

The first date that I am contemplating is Jan 27th 2024.

I selected this date as I will know where Area D stands on taxes and I still have time to make changes before they have to be adopted.

This is your opportunity to ask questions, and hear whats coming in 2024 for Area D.

I am still in the early planning on this and in order to effectively plan it will need to be by RSVP. More details will be coming

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