

During the **Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) meeting on 15 July 2026**, Directors **Mark Vonesch** and **Robyn Mawhinney** questioned the **\$7,500 grant-in-aid** for the **Oyster River Fire Department** primarily because the request lacked a formal application and supporting paperwork.

Their concerns, and the broader governance context surrounding them, can be summarized as follows:

1. Procedural Scrutiny and "New Business"

The grant for a new thermal imaging camera was introduced under **"New Business"** toward the end of the meeting.. Vonesch and Mawhinney expressed concern that bringing such items forward without standard vetting procedures allows them to bypass the **"structured committee-level scrutiny"** typically required for taxpayer-funded allocations.

2. Lack of Standard Documentation

The directors specifically questioned why the Board was being asked to approve funds without:

- **A Formal Application:** No standard application form was on file for the request.
- **Mandatory Disclosures:** They noted the absence of the budgets and financial statements that are expected for regional grants.

3. The "Accountability Paradox"

The sources highlight a significant contradiction in the rural directors' stance on this issue:

- **Defense of "Legacy" Informality:** Historically, both Vonesch and Mawhinney have fought to maintain **"legacy" grant procedures** where providing financial statements and budgets was **optional** rather than mandatory.
- **Opposition to Reform:** They explicitly moved to **not pursue Policy CP-027**, a reform designed to make financial documentation **mandatory** for every group seeking public funds.
- **Strategic Inconsistency:** Proponents of the "Forward" platform use this record to point out that while the rural directors demanded paperwork for this Area D grant, they have defended an informal system for their own island-based grants to allow for greater **"directorial discretion"**.

4. Part of a Pattern of "Targeted Friction"

From the perspective of the Board majority, these comments are viewed as part of a **multi-year pattern of targeted administrative friction**. The sources suggest that the rural block utilizes procedural objections—such as questioning paperwork or demanding further study—specifically to stall Area D initiatives and community grants. This is often contrasted with their own grant successes, such as the **Cortes Island School PAC grant**, which proceeded despite staff warnings that it might violate regional policies.