

The YouTube video link provided corresponds to the official recording of the **Strathcona Regional District (SRD) Board Meeting** held on **June 24, 2026** 1. This meeting was a significant session that addressed complex regional financial policies, community safety mandates, and contentious new services for Cortes Island 2-4.

The following is an insightful summary of the key deliberations and outcomes from that meeting:

1. Cortes Island Youth and Senior Support Services (Bylaws 651 & 652)

The most significant debate of the meeting centered on establishing permanent, tax-funded regional services for **Senior and Youth Support on Cortes Island** 4, 5.

- **The Pro-Stability Argument:** Director Mark Vonesch (Area B) argued that moving these from ad-hoc "Grant in Aid" requests to a formalized service provides much-needed **fiscal stability** for local organizations 6. Supporters noted this would reduce "directorial bias" and ensure groups are evaluated by professional staff rather than political preference 6.
- **The Outcome:** Despite receiving letters from residents concerned about increased taxation, the Board voted to advance the bylaws to a **referendum** 4, 5. This ensures that the final decision rests with the community during the **October 17, 2026 local elections** 5.

2. Director Communication Protocols and Media Engagement

A major governance motion was introduced by you (**Director John Rice**) regarding the boundaries of individual directors engaging with the media or provincial government on active Board business 7.

- **The Conflict:** The motion was triggered by concerns that "factually incorrect" information—specifically regarding rumored cost overruns for the **Strathcona Gardens REC-REATE project**—was being shared with the press and provincial ministers 7, 8.
- **Arguments for Integrity:** Supporters, including Director Susan Sinnott, argued that directors should not use the media to launch "collateral attacks" on democratically decided Board votes 8.
- **Outcome:** The motion **carried**, directing staff to prepare a report on appropriate communication boundaries and protocols for elected officials 9.

3. Sayward Natural Gas Feasibility

The Board voted **not to pursue** an expensive feasibility study to extend natural gas to the Village of Sayward 3, 9.

- **The Energy Reality:** Deliberations revealed a looming **natural gas supply constraint** on Vancouver Island due to the new Woodfibre LNG export terminal in Squamish 10.
- **Grid Stability:** The Board Chair highlighted that BC Hydro is currently struggling with a power deficit and needs to prioritize gas for the **Capital Power generating station** in Campbell River to prevent "browning out" the island during peak events 10.
- **Conclusion:** The Board determined it would be illogical to spend money exploring a new gas line when the province is already navigating a regional deficiency 10.

4. Financial Controls and Corporate Governance

- **Check Signing Efficiency:** Staff proposed updates to signing authorities for checks and EFTs between \ \$1,000 and \ \$9,000 2. The goal is to allow the **Corporate Officer** to act as a secondary authority, preventing administrative delays when the Board leadership rotates 2.
- **Donations Policy:** The Board discussed creating a unified policy for accepting cash or in-kind donations (like logs or equipment) for community projects 3. This aims to streamline volunteer-led initiatives while ensuring compliance with building codes and liability standards 3.
- **Roundtable Discussions:** A proposal to formally add informal "roundtable" segments to committee agendas was **defeated** 3, 11. Most directors felt this could bypass structured procedures or be used unpredictably 3.

5. Public Health and Safety

- **Firefighters Health Act:** While the Board expressed full support for provincial first responder safety, they voted to send a letter highlighting the **shortage of family physicians** in rural areas required to perform the act's mandatory medical screenings 3.
- **Quadra Island Amenities:** The Board directed staff to prepare a report on the costs and steps for installing **rustic composting toilets** at high-use outdoor recreation sites on Quadra Island 4.

In summary, the June 24, 2026 meeting demonstrates a Board attempting to balance **corporate continuity** and professional planning against the localized demands and political friction that have defined this term 1, 5, 8.