

The YouTube video provided corresponds to the official recording of the **Strathcona Regional District (SRD) Board Meeting held on 29 April 2026** 1, 2. This session was a pivotal moment in the 2023–2026 term, marked by high-stakes decisions on regional recreation, significant progress on healthcare infrastructure, and a major governance scandal known as the **"hot mic" incident** 3-5.

The Strathcona Gardens Conflict and "Hot Mic" Incident

The most contentious item on the agenda was the debate over **Bylaw No. 643**, which proposed adding **Quadra Island (Electoral Area C)** as a financial contributor to the Strathcona Gardens recreation facility 5, 6.

- **Quorum-Busting Attempt:** During a recess called to manage a disruptive gallery packed with protesters, Directors **Gerald Whalley (Area A)** and then-Board Vice-Chair **Mark Vonesch (Area B)** were caught on a live-streamed microphone strategising to break quorum by walking out of the meeting to prevent the vote 3, 4, 7.
- **Gallery Clearing:** Board Chair Mark Baker eventually ordered the public gallery cleared following repeated outbursts and jeers directed at directors 5, 6, 8.
- **The Vote:** Despite the attempt to stall the proceedings, the Board passed the first three readings of the bylaw by a narrow **7–6 margin**, selecting **Option C** for the funding formula (Campbell River at 100%, Area D at 90%, and Quadra Island at 80%) 5, 6, 9, 10.
- **Referendum:** The Board resolved that final elector approval for this tax shift will be determined via a **referendum** held concurrently with the **17 October 2026 local elections** 5, 6, 10.

Conflict Over Local Grants: The Oyster River Salmon Hatchery

The meeting also highlighted the deepening rift between the Board's "pro-stability" majority and the "rural block" regarding community funding 1, 11.

- **The Request:** Terry Lawrence, President of the **Oyster River Enhancement Society (ORES)**, presented a request for emergency assistance to replace the hatchery's leaking 40-year-old roof 1, 2.
- **The Funding:** Following a motion moved by **Director John Rice**, the Board approved a **\\$25,000 grant** (\\$5,000 from Area D and \\$20,000 from regional funds) 1, 2, 12.
- **Silent Opposition:** In a move frequently cited in your election platform, five directors (**Whalley, Vonesch, Mawhinney, Lott, and Deck**) voted against the grant without providing any public or administrative justification 12, 13.

Healthcare Infrastructure and Workforce Housing

The session provided a major status update on the **"Just Like Home" Lodge and Health Professionals Housing** project 14, 15.

- **Construction Milestones:** Drone footage confirmed rapid progress on the dual-purpose facility near the hospital, which features **10 accessible units** for patients and families and **20 units** dedicated to health professional housing 14, 15.
- **Financial Reallocation:** The Board approved reallocating **\\$91,000 in interest and unspent capital** from the Growing Communities Fund to pay for interior amenities

and durable furnishings 14-16.

- **Locum Support:** Directors expressed strong support for **Option A** of the Primary Care Study, which will use the new housing units to offer subsidized short-term accommodations for **travelling locum doctors** to alleviate local physician burnout 17, 18.

Financial Stewardship: 2025 Audited Statements

Auditors from MNP presented the **2025 Annual Financial Report**, issuing an unmodified ("clean") audit opinion 2, 15, 19.

- **Fiscal Strength:** The District ended 2025 in a strong position, holding **\\$46.7 million in cash and investments** against **\\$31.8 million in debt** 15, 19.
- **Asset Growth:** Tangible capital assets grew from **\\$43 million** to **\\$79 million** over the year, primarily reflecting the intense investment in the Strathcona Gardens and healthcare housing projects 15, 19.

Other Policy and Governance Decisions

- **First Nations Relations:** The Board updated its **Territorial Acknowledgement Policy (CP031)** to standardize respectful signatures across SRD communications and introduced a requirement for grant applicants to demonstrate **First Nations consultation** for projects impacting territorial lands 20.
- **Tiny Homes on Wheels:** Staff were directed to review the regulatory frameworks of neighbouring jurisdictions to help craft a local policy for **tiny homes**, ensuring it is included in the ongoing **Area C OCP community dialogue** 18, 21.
- **Nuchatlaht Title Appeal:** The Board authorized a government-to-government letter to the **Nuchatlaht First Nation** affirming a collaborative framework following a milestone court verdict 20.