

Subject: [Fwd: Budget 2001: An Exercise in Futility]

Date: Sun, 11 Mar 2001 13:43:07 -0800

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: kost@triumf.ca

Subject: Re: Budget 2001: An Exercise in Futility

Date: Sun, 4 Mar 2001 16:47:37 -0800

From: "Dave Sadler" <davesadler@telus.net>

To: "Dave Sadler" <davesadler@telus.net>, "Mayor DON BELL" <BellD@dnv.org>, "Councilor Lisa Muri DNV" <lisa_muri@dnv.org>, "Councilor Heather Dunsford" <heather_dunsford@dnv.org>, "Councilor Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, "Councillor Janice Harris" <jharris@dnv.org>, "Councillor Doug MacKay-Dunn" <macdunn@dnv.org>, "Councillor Bill Denault" <bdenault@dnv.org>

CC: "John McPherson" <McphersJ@district.north-van.bc.ca>, "Timothy Renshaw" <trenshaw@direct.ca>, "Outlook" <newsroom@northshoreoutlook.com>, "northshore news" <editor@nsnews.com>, "Liz James" <cagebc@yahoo.com>, <johnhunter@idmail.com>, "Tom Young" <hangers@canadawired.com>, "Ray Burns" <rburns@direct.ca>, "Margaret Fraser" <weemalkies@telus.net>, "Kitty Castle" <mcastle@istar.ca>, "John Miller" <john_miller@ultranet.ca>, "Jean Thompson" <hodgson.jean&bruce@telus.net>, "Ian Abercrombie" <aber@telus.net>, "Hugh Murray" <Hugh_murray@telus.net>, "Geoff Thorpe" <mtgg@telus.net>, "Francois Du Preez" <richprop@home.com>, "FONVCA" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Eric Andersen" <eandersen@searadeshipping.bc.ca>, "David Knee" <dknee@bcgas.com>, "Dan Ellis" <dellis@bcgas.com>, "Corrie Kost" <kost@triumf.ca>, "Cathy Adams" <rmadams@wimsey.com>, "Brian Platts" <brian_platts@telus.net>, "Brent Mayall" <bmayall@direct.ca>, "Bill Tracey" <bill_tracey@telus.net>, "Angela Trudeau" <angela@techtrain.bc.ca>, "Al Price" <alprice@quik.com>, "Sherwood Johnson" <JohnsonS@dnv.org>, "gord howie" <howieg@district.north-van.bc.ca>

Sorry: the meeting to which I refer was held on March 1 & not February 27 as originally stated. DS

----- Original Message -----

From: [Dave Sadler](#)

To: [Mayor DON BELL](#) ; [Councilor Lisa Muri DNV](#) ; [Councilor Heather Dunsford](#) ; [Councilor Ernie Crist](#) ; [Councillor Janice Harris](#) ; [Councillor Doug MacKay-Dunn](#) ; [Councillor Bill Denault](#)

Cc: [John McPherson](#) ; [Timothy Renshaw](#) ; [Outlook](#) ; [northshore news](#) ; [Liz James](#) ; [johnhunter@idmail.com](#) ; [Tom Young](#) ; [Ray Burns](#) ; [Margaret Fraser](#) ; [Kitty Castle](#) ; [John Miller](#) ; [Jean Thompson](#) ; [Ian Abercrombie](#) ; [Hugh Murray](#) ; [Geoff Thorpe](#) ; [Francois Du Preez](#) ; [FONVCA](#) ; [Eric Andersen](#) ; [David Knee](#) ; [Dave Sadler](#) ; [Dan Ellis](#) ; [Corrie Kost](#) ; [Cathy Adams](#) ; [Brian Platts](#) ; [Brent Mayall](#) ; [Bill Tracey](#) ; [Angela Trudeau](#) ; [Al Price](#) ; [Sherwood Johnson](#) ; [gord howie](#)

Sent: Sunday, March 04, 2001 3:55 PM

Subject: Budget 2001: An Exercise in Futility

Open Letter to Mayor & Council: March 4, 2001

[Budget 2001: An Exercise in Futility](#)

Considering that the District is proposing to spend more than 20% over current taxes & other revenues, I regard Council's budget discussions to date as superfluous.

In a repetition of last years confusing & confounding process, Mayor Bell has again not begun the budget deliberations until the 11th hour. Despite the abbreviated time line, at the February 27th budget meeting, Council spent ½ hour of the 4-hour meeting discussing a \$10,000 grant to promote the film industry. Yet the grant represented an infinitesimal 1/100th of 1 per cent of the total budget (0.01%).

It would seem that Council is unable to grapple with the magnitude of the proposed increase in spending. The initiatives to date involve spending our savings/reserve accounts, spending more land sale money from our Heritage fund, & transferring the cost of 'drainage' from taxes to utilities where I suppose the District hopes the increase won't be noticed. The Houdini approach will solve nothing over the long term and the District seems moribund in its determination to become bankrupt once again.

What we need are increased revenues (not taxes), decreased expenses, coupled with smarter spending!

Example Increased Revenues A major drain on police resources is the time wasted answering burglar alarms, of which 95% turn out to be false. The City of Vancouver charges a yearly license fee of \$100 commercial/\$15 residential. They will refuse to answer more than 3 false alarms annually, unless written confirmation is received from an authorized alarm company stating the problem has been fixed. Surrey police automatically issue a \$75 ticket for any false alarm which they are forced to attend. Considering more than 40% of residences on the North Shore are now alarmed, a similar get-tough initiative should be implemented here immediately.

Example Decreased Expenses Our biggest expense is labor. Up to now, as in all previous budget meetings I have attended over the years, Council pussy foots around this issue. This despite the fact that it was revealed that staff receives benefits to the astonishing tune of 39%.

I contacted Mr. Sherwood Johnson of Human Resources to find out what comprised the 39% benefit package. He later replied that an identical request had been received from a Councillor and that a report would be provided at the next budget meeting. My congratulations to the one Councillor who answered the alarm signal to which every member of Council should have responded.

In regards to the cost of labor I felt the cost of an auxiliary park ranger (B14 Item 105) epitomized the District's fiscal attitude towards wages & expenses. Of the \$14,019 for the 4month 4-hours/day position, \$400 was to be spent on a uniform, \$200 on equipment, \$200 on miscellaneous. Is \$800 in expenses justified or more to the point, can we afford it? Does the ranger need more than an ID tag & crested hat? The balance translates to \$18.57/hour + \$7.24/hour (39% fringe benefit) = \$25.81/hour. The municipality thinks this is all right, and I say unequivocally that it is not.

The fact that the District must pay such an exorbitant amount for someone to patrol the trails in Lynn Canyon Park can only be regarded as ludicrous. Think of the 1000's of

District taxpayers who have no choice but to work for considerably less money. Moreover, the vast majority of students (who would be ideally suited for such a position) work for minimum wage or slightly above, but nowhere near the \$25/hour mark.

I understand from Mr. Johnson that the District is forced to pay this wage because of union contracts. When I asked if the District had considered 'contracting out', the negative response indicated that such an idea was alien & unconceivable. I was perplexed by Mr. Johnson's attitude, who I gather is unaware that there is nothing in the District's CUPE agreement to prevent contracting out.

Example Smarter Spending Council was told the District pays 75 cents per bulb for planting in our park gardens. Imagine the savings if the City & District tendered a larger joint purchase order. Better yet, imagine the savings if the GVRD tendered the purchase on behalf of all its member municipalities. The larger the order, the bigger the savings.

Conclusion I hope Council will start addressing the 'big picture' & start talking about millions instead of thousands of dollars. To quote a favorite expression of Councillor Harris, "let's get a grip Council."

Yours truly,

Dave Sadler