

Subject: [Fwd: Please forward to Neil Reynolds]

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2001 17:19:10 -0700

From: Brian Platts <brian_platts@telus.net>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Please forward to Neil Reynolds

Date: Mon, 24 Sep 2001 15:58:09 -0700

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

To: "Pacific Press" <pmcm@pacpress.southam.ca>

CC: "FONVCA" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, "Province Frank Luba" <fluba@pacpress.southam.ca>

Dear Neil Reynolds:

Where's the Coverage?

I'm disappointed the Vancouver Sun has not reported on the following story which appeared in Sunday's North Shore News. This type of questionable behaviour by staff strikes a chord with the electorate. Let's face it: if staff & Council can't manage their expense accounts, how can they manage the municipalities \$100 million budget? If you remember, it was the identical type of 'scandal' which brought Delta's Mayor Lois Jackson to power in 1999.

Another issue in the District of North Vancouver that wasn't reported was the draft Maplewood Local Plan and the chlorine plant. To promote density & circumvent the MIACC guidelines which dictates low density around the plant, staff changed the parameters of density. What is regarded as medium density in the rest of the District is called low density in Maplewood, similarly high density is called medium density. Again a BIG STORY which illustrates questionable behaviour by the Mayor & his Team of Directors but no reporting.

Overall, I'm extremely disappointed in the lack of coverage of local Municipal affairs in the paper. It seems to diminish by the week. How about smaller photographs & greater content?

Yours truly, Dave Sadler

NVD expenses audit provides no names - Sunday Sept.23/01 - North Shore News

Annette Martin newsroom@nsnews.com

A councillor claims that a staff letter sent to North Vancouver District mayor and council states that expense irregularities uncovered in an external audit resulted from "a lack of knowledge of or confusions over the policy."

Whether this statement relates to staff, council or management is not clear from the Grant Thornton report posted on the district's Web site.

In March of this year, Roche Point Drive resident and district council watcher Dave Sadler laid a formal complaint to council under Section 330 of the Local Government Act.

He requested that an external auditor look into how expenses for the district were handled.

Sadler's complaint was based on certain interpretations of Bylaw 6995 when the cost of tickets for social functions at which the municipality was not being officially represented were reimbursed.

His complaint also stated:

- the mayor, the municipal manager, the clerk's department and financial services should never have approved inappropriate expenses;
- a lack of checks and balances by financial services may be systematic of unprofessional practices;
- the district's multi-million dollar accounting system should be unable to generate any payments over and above the annual allotted maximum amount of a councillor's expense account;
- the district allows members of council to draw on future expenses;
- expenses are paid without proper documentation being submitted at the time of the claim.

At that time, Sadler described Mayor Don Bell as being guilty of "negligence" and having a "callous disregard for the public purse."

Bell had been reimbursed for personal out-of-pocket expenses while representing the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) but had not applied to these agencies for reimbursement for district money, which had been advanced for his airfare.

The airline tickets were for March 1, July 21, Sept. 6 and Dec. 5, 2000.

Bell's explanation of "oversight" in neglecting to claim these expenses led Sadler to conclude, "that district taxpayers would never have been reimbursed (by the GVRD and FCM) if the current issue had not come to light."

Coun. Ernie Crist had also brought a motion to council recommending that an external auditing firm be hired to conduct a forensic audit into council expenses.

But there was no seconder for his motion and it died on the table.

However, council cannot disregard a request for an external audit from a private citizen.

The results of that audit, compiled by R. Bruce Milley FCA, partner at Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants, reveals that of 30 random samples taken by Milley, several were at variance with district policy.

Five of the selected samples relating to attendance at conferences and conventions did not have appropriate pre-approval for the expenditures.

Three other samples relating to conferences and conventions were missing receipts for various sundry items like ferry fares and cab rides.

One of the samples was for charges that were claimed over and above the \$60 per diem already taken while attending a conference or convention.

And three samples did not have evidence of the appropriate level of approval for payment.

In addition, two of the directors/municipal manager approved their own expenses. The auditor was informed that there is an unwritten policy permitting directors and the manager to approve their own expenses within pre-established limits for director/manager approval.

But one item was over the \$2,950 pre-approval limit and had not been pre-authorized by the manager.

Individuals in violation of the policy are not named in the official report.

Crist claims that his request to divulge the names of district council and staff in violation of existing expense guidelines has been denied in a letter from Stephen Fleming, district administrative and information and privacy coordinator.

But Fleming says that the Grant Thornton report available on the Web site is the only report received by the district and that the auditor did not name names.