

**Subject: [Fwd: FW: Public Input to Budget process Need for Change]**

**Date:** Thu, 04 Oct 2001 14:18:53 -0700

**From:** Brian Platts <brian\_platts@telus.net>

**To:** Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

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**Subject: FW: Public Input to Budget process Need for Change**

**Date:** Thu, 4 Oct 2001 11:29:38 -0700

**From:** "John Hunter" <johnhunter@idmail.com>

**To:** "'Agnes Hilsen DNV Clerk's Office'" <ahilsen@district.north-van.bc.ca>

**CC:** "FONVCA" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

I would appreciate a response on my several questions in the -mail of Sep. 19 below, and whether council is going to allow public input during the sessions, or even public attendance, and whether public input at an effective time will be allowed.

I would also appreciate a copy of the minutes from the June 2001 budget workshop and confirmation of what changes to the badly flawed budget process last year will be made this year - e.g. zero base budget one department, manpower numbers and trends, looking at only 3% of the budget, revenue generation, and so on.

thanks

John Hunter

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

**From:** [John Hunter](#)

**To:** ['Councilor Lisa Muri DNV'](#) ; ['Councilor Bill Denault'](#) ; ['Councilor Ernie Crist DNV'](#) ; ['Councilor Heather Dunsford DNV'](#) ; ['Councilor Doug MacKay-Dunn DNV'](#) ; ['Councilor Janice Harris DNV'](#) ; ['c Mayor Don Bell DNV'](#)

**Cc:** ['FONVCA'](#) ; [Jim Cuthbert DNV](#) ; [Peter Thompson](#) ; [Elizabeth James \(CAGE\)](#) ; [Brian Platts](#) ; [Allan Orr DNV](#) ; [Bill Tracey DNV](#) ; [Corrie Kost DNV](#) ; [Dave Sadler](#) ; [Eric Andersen DNV \(Eric Andersen DNV\)](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 19, 2001 2:21 PM

**Subject:** Public Input to Budget process Need for Change

I thought a bit about the lack of public input to the budget process last Saturday - only two members of the public were there.

I conclude that, despite best intentions, the process appears flawed.

You can't just say "come to our meeting and give input". There needs to be some structure - something to provide input on. For the Sept. 15 public input meeting, one had to call and find out that there was a July package that one could download. There is practically no meat there. What was input to be provided on?

You need something like : "we are going to look at making the following changes to the process for the 2001 budget as discussed in our public meeting on the budget process in June 2001: x,y,z,a,b,c. What do you think of these proposed changes? (PS where is the report from that meeting on actions to be taken?)

And: "it is apparent that we have to review the following areas re revenue generation, and look at policies d,e,and f. What do you think? How else can we cut costs or generate revenue?"

Businesses start a budget process for a year by confirming or revising the process and procedures, and laying out the draft policies. Then you get input. Council, to my knowledge, gave the citizens no questions for Sept. 15. Guess what the result is - almost no input (just Corrie and I).

I was handed a schedule of future meetings "Financial Plan Workshop Schedule" at that public input session. Are these open to the public? Does not say. Open to public input? Ditto.

Your next public input session appears to be December 1. In view of the Mayor's (quite correct) statement that the budget needs to be put to bed in December for various reasons, you have set the second public input session after the budget is essentially "baked". Suggested changes then are difficult, and will naturally be resisted, and in view of the rework required of staff, may even be impossible. I am told an earlier schedule showed a public input schedule in late November but that has disappeared.

In summary, the proposed process does not allow effective public input. Bluntly speaking, many of us in the gallery have more experience in budgets and budgeting than some members of the council. Make use of it. It's free. We sometimes see things you do not.

I urge you to set a public session after your policies are set and flesh out areas where input is desired. We can help with that list. Make the meetings open to the public even if public input is not allowed at that stage - we can always e-mail or write or call with input from what we see in these sessions. Or allow input from one FONVCA rep. at each meeting on the contents of the previous meeting or the existing meeting.

John Hunter

