

Subject: Notice of Motion - Councillor Crist.

Date: Thu, 11 Apr 2002 22:43:06 -0700

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Notice of Motion;

Report Councillor Crist:

Subject: 2002 public referendum on subsidizing the City of North Vancouver under the present "Shared Services Agreement" between the City and the District.

Motion:

That Staff be requested to prepare a public referendum question to be put to the taxpayers of the District of North Vancouver during the 2002 Municipal Election in Nov 2002 as to whether the District taxpayers are willing to continue to subsidize the City of North Vancouver through the existing "Shared Services Agreement" between the City and the District of North Vancouver for recreation facilities and playing fields currently administered by the North Vancouver Recreation Commission.

Rationale:

All Municipal Recreation Facilities in North Vancouver regardless as to whether they are located in the City or the District of North Vancouver are currently under the jurisdiction and are administered by the North Vancouver Recreation Commission. This also applies to the allocation of playing fields in both municipalities, which is also covered under this "Shared Services Agreement".

On the surface, it appears that the Shared Services Agreement is eminently reasonable, forward looking, fiscally sound and advantageous for both jurisdictions. In reality the agreement is seriously weighted against District taxpayers and constitutes a serious drain on District resources. It constitutes a large subsidy to the City.

When the "Joint Services Agreement" was implemented it was thought to be the first step towards the complete political amalgamation between the two jurisdictions. But every subsequent effort by the District to bring about amalgamation was rejected by the City.

Councillor Crist, in an attempt to advance this matter, made a motion for a step by step program culminating in a political union of the two municipalities. But the District failed to accept these recommendations while the City turned down even any initial joint dialogue towards that end. The City's political spokespersons advanced several reasons why they were not interested in amalgamation with the District. The main points they voiced included the following.

- 1) The City has maintained a fiscally frugal and responsible budget policy while the District has not.
- 2) The City has built up its Heritage Fund while the District has used its own Heritage Fund to cover expenses for what, in broad terms, can termed "operating" expenses.
- 3) Municipal taxes are considerably lower in the City than they are in the District, i.e. taxes for a \$ 400,000 assessed home including waste disposal fees and water rates are several hundred dollars less in the City than for a similar assessed home in the District.
- 4) Reserves for crucial infrastructure renewal as indicated by provincial statistics are \$ 1.600 per capita in the City (\$ 1.700 in West Vancouver) while in the District they are a mere \$ 300 more or less. Even before recent "adjustments" in calculating these reserves by District staff, the per capita reserves in the District were a mere \$1.200 falling considerably short of the per capita reserve level in the City.
- 5) Annual tax increases in the District, despite accessing both the District Heritage Fund and District Reserve Funds have been consistently higher than they are in the City of North Vancouver.

Notwithstanding the veracity of these statements, the District continues to subsidize the City via the current Shared Services Agreement. This is accomplished in the following manner. Though the District has far more recreation facilities than the City, and although the City has more than 50 % of the population of the District, the burden of capital maintenance for all facilities in the District rests with District residents. The City does not contribute a single penny towards the capital maintenance of District Recreation facilities.

While the City allocates up to one million dollars annually towards capital maintenance of facilities within the City's jurisdiction, the District, with far more facilities, allocates a mere \$600.000 towards the capital maintenance of its facilities. As a result, District facilities and capital assets are deteriorating at an alarming rate and will, in all likelihood, soon end up in private hands.

Councillor Crist, in an additional effort to effectively end subsidies to the City, recently made a motion that the Rec. Commission be re-organized along the lines of the "Parkgate" model which would at least have partially addressed this matter but this too was refused by District Council with the result that the subsidy to the City continues unabated.

What is true of recreational facilities is also true for playing fields. Indeed here the weighted arrangement against the District is even more pronounced.

While the City has more than half of the population of the District, it has less than a third the number of playing fields. There is a drastic shortage of playing fields in the City and, although there is no such shortage in the District, playing fields in both the City and the District are treated as

one, thus resulting in a combined shortage in both jurisdictions. Thus the District is not only paying the tab for this shortage in the City but the District is also obliged to add to its own field inventory to accommodate City residents. The shortage is exacerbated by a growing number of young adults of both sexes joining the ranks of users in both jurisdictions.

To sum up. At a time when District taxpayers are faced with yet more above average tax increases, when they are burdened with actual cuts in the level of services in such important areas as snow clearing, street sweeping, lack of sidewalks, huge increases in recreation fees of up to 51 % in a single year, at a time when the District is short of money to adequately maintain its own capital assets and infrastructure, not to mention many other important community services, it is subsidizing the City for reasons that cannot be construed as anything other than politically motivated at the expense of the District taxpayers.

In light of this, it behooves District Council as elected custodians and protectors of the public interests, to take this issue to the taxpayers of the District of North Vancouver to ask them directly whether, under these circumstances, they are willing to continue to subsidize the City of North Vancouver.

Ernie Crist,



[Part 1.2](#)

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