

Subject: Notice of Motion Councillor Crist re legal expenses;

Date: Sat, 23 Mar 2002 15:46:33 -0800

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Notice of Motion- Report Councillor Crist

Recommendation:


That, in light of the recently revealed high cost of legal expenses accruing to the District, Council hire an 'in house' lawyer.

Rationale

A recent request by Councillor Crist for a breakdown of legal costs accruing to the District has revealed a trend of mounting legal expenses for District taxpayers. The increase is particularly evident over the last 10 years. The expenses indicated by staff are not all inclusive. In light of the increasing complexities of local government and changes to the Local Government Act already implemented, plus the implications resulting from a newly proposed Municipal Charter, extending municipal powers, this trend will continue.

Most municipalities with legal costs as high as that of the District of North Vancouver have 'in house' lawyers. The argument that the current Law Firm which advises the District in legal matters has an advantage since it can draw on multi-faceted expertise, which is only possible in a firm with multiple and specialized expertise, is not borne out by facts.

Indeed, judging by the comments made by Municipal Managers throughout the region, employing an 'in house' lawyer has many advantages since such a person is in touch with the issues on a daily and even hourly basis and can devote far more time to legal issues and at less cost. There is a significant difference in the cost of "overhead". In light of this, Council should proceed with the hiring of such a staff person.

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