

**Subject: Newly elected North Vancouver MP owes money to taxpayers for alleged car expenses.**

**Date:** Sat, 17 Jul 2004 08:39:57 -0700

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST:

According to a District of North Vancouver conducted audit, outgoing Mayor Don Bell and newly elected MP owes the District taxpayers \$8,400 for 2003 for unlogged transportation costs.

A recent District Council motion to conduct an audit for transportation reimbursement as per Council policy 1-0390-3 and "Corporate Policy 16-8310-1 has revealed that of the three members of Council claiming a car allowance, Councillor Crist was the only one who kept a detailed log and is subsequently the only one to qualify for payments in accordance with Council policy.

The kilometers logged by the members of Council are, as a rule, based on personal visits to municipal sites listed on the Council Agenda for first hand knowledge. Not all members of Council do so.

According to a District Staff report Don Bell failed to produce a log for 2003. At the same time his claim of \$8,400 for 2003 was by far the largest of any member of Council. In 2003 the municipality paid \$ 700 a month to Bell for his car allowance and \$ 226 to Crist and Muri.

Councillor Crist logged an average of 179 km per month for 2003 or \$ 2,152 for the year. Councillors are required to pay insurance rates for their cars based on business use.


However, according to the staff report, Don Bell claimed that, due to work pressure, he was unable to provide evidence for his claim. However, in the past he stated repeatedly that keeping a log is very simple.

Of all the Mayors on the North Shore, Don Bell also claimed the highest expenses. According to recently released District Financial information, his expenses for 2003 were \$ 23,096 but a recent survey by the North Shore NEWS listed his expenses as \$ 25,300 for 2003. By comparison Mayor Sharp from the City claimed \$ 11,230 for 2003, while Ron Wood of West Vancouver had the lowest at \$ 3,100.

It is my opinion that Bell should reimburse the municipality immediately. The amount he owes is \$8,400 for 2003. What we don't know is whether he kept a log for the first 7 months of 2004. If he did not, he should return the amount he received for that period as well. No audit was conducted for the year 2002. You can be certain, however, that if I had failed to produce proof of my kilometerage, Don Bell would have invoked the Council policy and demanded restitution rather quickly. Let him do the same and let him do so without procrastinating.

District staff have recommended changes to the existing Council policy including that retroactive to Jan. 1, 2004, the car allowance for those in the 150 km per month claim range be reduced from \$ 2,300 to \$ 882 per year. This, in my opinion, is unrealistic since the business insurance rate alone is more than this amount, not to mention the cost of gasoline plus the wear and tear on the car. The suggestion is also patently absurd for a policy lawfully enacted in the past may not be changed retroactively. Council may, of course, change the policy from any given day forward. However, the immediate issue as far as I am concerned is to ensure that the outgoing Bell, repays his debt to the taxpayers of the District.

---

 <a href="#">winmail.dat</a>	<b>Name:</b> winmail.dat <b>Type:</b> application/ms-tnef <b>Encoding:</b> base64
---	---