

Subject: Re:**Date:** Wed, 25 Aug 2004 19:59:53 +0100 (BST)**From:** Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>**To:** Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>, "FONVCA \ (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>**CC:** Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>

25 August 2004

Dear Clr. Crist:

Subject to the conformation by the most recently available information, it is still the case that municipalities may not run a deficit. If that **is** the case, then it would be perhaps the worst possible scenario if the District of North Vancouver, having depleted its reserves, to be able to dip its fingers into borrowed money. Isn't it past time the municipality learned to live within its means?

During the past 2-3 terms of Council, you have made much of the fact that, in your opinion, the Heritage Fund has been used - against policy - to bolster Operating Fund capability. Are taxpayers now to accept that, like the current Provincial Government, the District of North Vancouver plans to balance its books by running up the debt? It's my guess that any such attempt will be met with overwhelming defeat at the polls - and so it should.

With respect to the Lynn Valley Town Centre, it is my firm belief that citizens have a right - legal or otherwise - to demand a definitive voice, via a referendum, in such a major change to their social and neighbourhood environment.

Contrary to points made by Monday evening's speakers, such a referendum held in November, would not delay the project. Nor would it be an expensive exercise because it would be conducted alongside the - unexpected and unbudgeted - expense which the ambitions of former Mayor Bell has imposed upon taxpayers.

In closing, it remains my firm belief that it is fiscally irresponsible for the District to bull-headedly push forward with the "main" library project, in the face of North Vancouver City's more recent plans for a library, which were not 'in the works' for consideration during the 1996 referendum. It is wasteful in the extreme to build two, multi-million-dollar "main" libraries for a population of only +/- 150,000 [perhaps 200,000 by 2014].

Using your own philosophy - viz. that "the City builds the high-rises and we subsidize them by building the playing fields," why cannot Council accept that the City can build a Main Library which we all can use, while the District cooperates by building a much smaller 'satellite' facility in the general LV area. The dollars saved could then be used for other, much needed District facilities and infrastructure.

In my opinion, if this does not happen, then taxpayers of both communities should be up in arms and insist upon provincial intervention to further, if not outright amalgamation then, at the very least, more consistent integration and cooperation in dollar expenditures. Taxpayers just don't have the money necessary to support two communities working isolation from one another, often at serious odds from the effects of their planning.

In some ways, this also might answer the "fear" that Lynn Valley high-rises must needs follow a rejected referendum. In the first place, if the project is sound, I don't think a District-wide vote would reject it but, if it did and the people don't want high-rises, then it's up to them to rise up and say so. That decision is not for Council to make and it certainly is not up to BOSA to impose. It is a decision for Council to ratify after the people have spoken.

I am aware that some will disagree strenuously with my opinions on the LV Library project. It is not easy to stand firm because I understand their concerns. However, with respect, the time for everyone to dig in their heels and loudly voice their justifiable concerns, was in 1999-2000-2001-2002, when it was plain that Councils of the day were making little, if any, attempt to use the money OK'd by the 1996 referendum for the purpose for which it was intended. Lynn Valley should have been made a major election issue in both 1999 and 2002 but not much was heard.

By leaving it until now, when the whole project is entirely different than that which was the subject of the referendum, not only has deprived people of the library in the intervening years, I believe to proceed with today's project would be illegal under the LGA/CC.

I place much of the blame for what I consider to be the poor management of this project, not at the feet of Staff, but squarely at the feet of the former mayor. It was within his mandate and responsibility to ensure that the project moved forward following the referendum but it seems he was too distracted by other considerations to give rejuvenation of Lynn Valley the priority it deserved. It is his lack of leadership skills that has led us to the difficulties of today.

It is to be hoped that voters will select as their new mayor someone who can come fresh to the table; someone with an energetic vision

for the entire District - someone who has experience enough to encourage a team spirit at District Hall, so that the vision can build into the future and stand proud in the annals of community history.

Sincerely,

Liz James
[604] 988-2066

Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org> wrote:

URGENT - A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Under the new Municipal Charter which came into effect on January 1,2004 a Municipality may borrow money without obtaining elector assent. The District's financial services staff accordingly have concluded that the District could borrow up to \$ 27.45 million.

The Municipal Liabilities Regulations established by Order of Council No 550 does not require approval of the electors to borrow funds that fall within an "approval free liability zone".

In a recent report to Council District staff stated that, subsequent to a thorough review of the regulations, Financial Services staff has computed that

- 1) The District's Liability Servicing Limit is \$ 25,467,380. Assuming that all unissued borrowing will be for a 20 year term at a rate of 6% per annum, the District's total borrowing capacity is approximately \$282 million.
- 2) The District currently has an unused Liability Servicing Capacity of \$ 22,851,181 which would service approximately \$ 253 million of borrowing over a 20 year term at 6% per annum
- 3) The District's "Assent Free Servicing Capacity" is \$ 2,477,277. This represents the debt servicing payments to service debt that does not require the assent of the electors. This amount would service approximately \$ 27.45 million of debt repayable over a 20- year term at an interest rate of 6% per annum.

The District's calculations of "Liability Service Limits", " Liability Servicing Capacity" and "Liability Servicing Capacity Available" have been confirmed by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.

The bottom line is that the District could borrow approximately \$ 27 million over 20 years at a rate of 6 % per annum without receiving the assent of the electors.

The implications for local taxpayers are considerable. If public apathy in local government affairs, as symbolized in the District of North Vancouver by the misuse of the District Heritage Fund, has always been expensive, the enhanced powers extended to local government through the new Community Charter as exemplified by the New Municipal Liabilities Regulations, which allow municipalities to borrow money without seeking the assent of local electors, make it even more advisable to pay attention to local government affairs. The election of a Mayor and Council understanding sound business practices is more important than ever.

On the plus side it opens entirely new avenues for long term community livability enhancement programs. In the District it could widen the options for the financing of community facility programs such as the Lynn Valley Community Center and Library complex, the upgrading of deteriorating recreation facilities or the construction of a badly needed community facility in the Capilano and Norgate area.

Does your mail provider give you a FREE online calendar? Yahoo! does.

[Get Yahoo! Mail](#)