

**Subject: RE: 2005 budget and property taxes**

**Date:** Tue, 31 May 2005 20:53:45 -0700

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

**To:** "Bill Shaw" <billshaw99@hotmail.com>

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

Dear Mr. Shaw;

Congratulations for recognizing that the tax increases in the District in 2005 were far higher than 3.75%. Indeed they were in the neighbourhood of 13%. What is true for 2005 is true for every year in last 12 years. During that time District taxes have gone from the second lowest in the region to the second highest.

What amazes me as an elected official is that despite all this the people with the exception of a few individuals have been silent. This, despite a hundred letters to the press, a thousand press statements, emails and news paper stories informing the public as to what is going on.

For one thing the District continues to subsidise the City of North Vancouver. They are building the high-rises and we are building the soccer fields free of charge for them and even though I have made every possible effort to rectify this I have been ignored not just by Council but also by the residents who don't seem to mind that they are being ripped off.

Another example is that the District is subsidising the City through the Recreation Commission. The City does not pay a single penny for the capital maintenance of any of the District facilities even though 3 out of 4 facilities in North Vancouver are in the District. Also, the District could save millions of dollars if we would reorganise the Commission along the tested Parkgate model and it could be done without cutting services. But any and all efforts on my part here too have been ignored. It is as if the people in the District are simply not interested in good government.

The recent budget deliberations open to the public in which these decisions were made produced nothing but a yawn. I think at one meeting open to the public there was no-one present and at another one there was one person present. What I am mentioning is but the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, I could tell you about Northlands, Canlan, KPMG, the District Heritage Fund and the District Infrastructure Reserve Fund fiascos but I doubt very much whether it would do any good since when it was published the person in charge in the District at the time instead of being punished for incompetence was promoted to parliament.

The lesson is clear - don't worry about tax increases, the people will not say anything. On the other hand when you point to the shortcomings you will stand alone and not a single soul will come to your defence.

The people in the District are like horses. Sometimes they make a noise as if they were thirsty but when led to the water they do not drink. Under those circumstances politicians have nothing to fear and will continue to mismanage your affairs and continue to raise taxes far more than is justified.

Everything I have said has been corroborated in the press a thousand times but nobody seems to care. It is interesting that the most common comment I get from people on the street for pointing to these shortcomings is "Hello Ernie are you still causing trouble". No, I will not cause any further trouble. Indeed, I will retire this fall and let the people carry on without me. People always have a choice, they can have good government and they can have bad government. In this country they seem to prefer bad government not only in Ottawa but also in the District - so be it.

Thank you and thank you for your email.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

Thank you,

Ernie Crist

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

From: Bill Shaw [<mailto:billshaw99@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2005 3:58 PM

To: Mayor and Council - DNV

Subject: 2005 budget and property taxes

Dear Mayor and Council

We have just received our 2005 Property Tax Notice along with all the assorted pamphlets and I was shocked to see the increase!

I have been following the council struggle with a 3.75% increase and the impending increase due to waterfront reassessment but our property taxes increased over last year by 13%!

As an old age pensioner, we can't afford these kinds of increases on a fixed income and I believe the time has come for this council to start taking some drastic steps with respect to the district budget and other organizations such as Translink.

As individuals we can't fight Translink but this council can on our behalf and I believe that you must fight with everything you have and I also believe that you would be supported by the majority of the residents of the district.

I also believe that you should start some zero base budgeting processes. As a resident driving around the district I am appalled at the wastage of time and effort in the area. For example, twice a year I have counted 20 workers looking after the beds on the median of Mount Seymour Parkway for a week in the spring and the fall. A rough calculation says that you have incurred approximately \$100,000 in wages alone. What is wrong with placing say bricks in this base and therefore you would not have to spend the labour that is being spent. This is just one example and there are many others.

Yes, there are many programs which may have to be cut back and donations to various organizations will have to be scaled back. As old age pension tax payers we can not afford increases of 3 to 5 % per year without some good return on investment. The district must be run as a business where outside income could be increased and capital expenditure is based on return.

I look at what the City of North Vancouver is doing with their tax money and I am surprised that there isn't a wholesale revolt. As an example, the Green Necklace project is a total waste of taxpayers funds.

Please be cognizant of the old age pensioners on fixed income as we can not go out and obtain a better paying job. Our only recourse is to move out of the district and go to some outlying area.

Your truly,

W.M. Shaw



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