



Cowichan Bay Waterworks
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES
730 pm, NOVEMBER 29, 2023.
The Gym, 1501 Bench Road, Cowichan Bay BC

Present: Calvin Slade, Trustee
Judi Baker, Trustee
Jula Balanabowicz, Meeting Chairperson
Pete Edgar, Trustee
Wendy Gregg, Trustee

Staff: Cheryl Wirsz, District Administrator
Pam Bendes, Finance Officer
Annie Nippard, Finance Officer

Public: 15 members of the public attended

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairperson Julia Balabanowicz called the meeting to Order at 730 pm.

2. Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

It is recognized that the meeting is occurring on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people.

3. Agenda

Trustee Balabanowicz explained the process for the meeting regarding the various agenda topics and advised there would be ample time for discussion and questions and answers.

4. Correspondence

Trustee Balabanowicz explained the tax repeal bylaw process and the District Administrator presented two pieces of correspondence

- An email from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs regarding approval of the tax repeal bylaw
- An email from a Telegraph Rd resident expressing concern about the proposed tax and toll rates

5. Action Plan Update

The 2022-2024 Action Plan progress was discussed. The Plan will be reviewed in 2024 once McElhanney Engineering has updated the engineering model and provided updated recommendations.

- It was noted that [5] the Pavenham project has evolved given the length of time anticipated for the new drinking water source project [13].

6. Five Year Capital Plan

The Five Year Capital Plan was discussed. Project estimates are lower than proposed in the Master Plan given the cost of quotes received to date, the level of confidence the Board has with the Master Plan and proposed partnerships. It was noted that source of income for some projects can be seen as somewhat unclear given the outcome of upcoming grant funding stream applications and unknown costs at this time. The Trustees assured attendees that priorities would be re-assessed and that all avenues would be exhausted prior to borrowing or doing a special levy.

7. 2024 Proposed Budget

The proposed budget was discussed, notably whether income reflects the decrease in proposed water toll rates and the increase in parcel numbers for tax revenue.

8. 2024 Proposed Water Tolls

The proposed water toll rates were discussed. The proposed rates include a reduction in the base rate and modifications to decrease the tier 4 and 5 rates. A commercial ratepayer expressed concern about the impact upon his business. It was noted that the tiers are positively impacting conservation and overall water use has decreased.

9. 2024 Proposed Tax Rate

The proposed tax rate was discussed. It was understood/accepted that the purpose of the increase is to fund the recommended capital improvements for adequate fire protection and safe drinking water meeting federal standards.

10. Proposed Commercial Water Users Conservation Program

The proposed commercial water users conservation program was discussed. There appeared to be little support for the proposal from the two commercial ratepayers in attendance. It should be noted that the District has had a commercial user volunteer step forward who is willing to participate in the program.

11. Question and Answer Session

- A question arose as to whether Cowichan Bay Waterworks District has a water leak adjustment process – the policy is on the website
- A question arose as to leak monitoring – the non-revenue water use is approximately 12-15%, with some of this water accounted for in the annual flushing maintenance program and for fire fighting purposes.
- A question was asked as to enforcement of water restrictions - a bylaw and policy is in the process of being developed for use next summer.
- A question was asked as to the impact of our wells and water use on the Koksilah River – the Koksilah River appears to be in a different aquifer. More research on the interconnectedness of the local aquifers is necessary. The resident was referred to the District Source Water Protection Plan, which is available on the website.
- A question was asked regarding smart water meters – the District is awaiting technology improvements prior to proceeding further. This will be part of the new Engineering Specifications.
- A question was asked about safety spending – for water operations safety purposes, including a District Safety Plan
- A question was asked about the statistical reports and the apparent increase in water users who use less than 10m³ – new meters were installed for new developments, some of which had little or no water use in the Quarter. This number is anticipated to remain higher than normal in the current quarter given ongoing construction. The number of vacant homes is unknown, some folks may have been away for the summer and others tend to regularly use very little water.

12. Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 910 pm.

Chairperson	District Administrator
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