

In Depth — CRD deserves less, not more

By [Contributed Opinion - Gulf Islands Driftwood](#)

Published: **May 09, 2012 11:00 AM**

Updated: **May 09, 2012 11:08 AM**

By TONY MAUDE

I am writing to all Salt Spring residents regarding the Capital Regional District and the services that this organization is supposed to deliver to the people that live here.

I am a commissioner with the [Fulford Harbour Water District](#) and find myself in an increasingly difficult relationship with the CRD that I believe is typical of all aspects of the organization. In the recent years the apparent inability of the organization to manage our business or total disregard for the financial accountability to the users has cost the 100 participants approximately \$250,000 in unnecessary expenses and approximately \$30,000 in lost revenue along with exposing 20 families to poor/unsafe quality water while charging them full water rates.

As has been written here before, they have mismanaged water infrastructure projects by installing undersized waterlines, despite contract documents requiring correctly sized lines, installed fire-protection hydrants backwards, delayed equipment installations until warranties expired, etc.

They have overrun budgets, causing significant additional expenses and

created a situation where we had 20 families who paid full rates faced with an unsafe water supply and hauling drinking water from a tap at the end of the street.

They have not responded to a number of opportunities or issues in a timely manner, causing friction within the community and in one case cost the users approximately \$30,000 in lost revenue. We received correspondence last week, requiring an urgent decision next week that has sat in their hands since November 2010.

Their administrative costs have increased by over 100 per cent in the past two years and despite numerous requests still have not provided any explanation or rationale for this.

We have identified numerous potential cost-saving measures to control ballooning operational costs and they have not actioned any of those measures, yet our costs continue to exceed our budget and their only response is that we need to increase the budget so they can spend more.

Virtually every time we try to control costs and seek ways to reduce costs the information that we rely on from them to make those decisions is not correct, therefore making our decisions ineffective.

When we try to force cost savings by controlling budgets they overrule our decisions and approve expenditures without our concurrence or an opportunity to address the issues.

When we appeal to the premier of the province, she shuffles us off to the ministry responsible, which refuses to even review our concerns or examine the issues. The CRD has no organization within government that has the mandate or desire to make this organization accountable to the people of this province. Believe me in that we have been to virtually every organization within government that could possibly exercise the smallest amount of jurisdiction over the CRD and been told that they won't or can't assist us.

Our issues surround the delivery of water services to Fulford, but I see the same disregard and mismanagement happening in the other services delivered by the CRD. Remember the fiasco regarding the indoor tennis facility in 2005-06, among others.

All of this is a significant financial burden to the taxpayers that are forced to use CRD services as the organization has numerous examples of their inability to deliver professional services in a cost-effective manner. These are only the ones that we are aware of and my experience within government would suggest that you only hear or know about a small fraction of what really goes on within the organization.

Therefore we are being told that the CRD is giving us a 3.5 per cent increase to our taxes this year and I would like to suggest that collectively we should tell them that this is unacceptable and they need to find those funds within the existing budget and that our expectation is that they will deliver a budget that has a five per cent reduction in taxes next year.

I also think that we should seriously consider self-government so we can have an organization that is concerned about the welfare of the local area and accountable to the people of the island. It is my belief that the CRD is broken and there is no desire within the CRD or the current provincial government to fix the problem and if we want to ensure that we are getting value for the taxes that we pay them that we need get out of the current situation as soon as we can.

All islanders should be aware that your taxes and service fees that the CRD collect are being spent to benefit them, not us.

The writer is a commission member of the Fulford Water Service Commission.

```
a.adLink_a:hover {background-color: ; text-decoration: underline; }
a.adTitle_a:hover {background-color: ; text-decoration: underline; }
a.adLink_a {text-decoration: none; color: gray; } .single_center {text-align:
center} a.adTitle_a {text-decoration: none } .adText {text-decoration:none;
font-family: Arial; font-size: 12px; font-weight: normal; font-style: normal;}
.adLink {overflow: hidden; color:gray;text-decoration:none; font-family: Arial;
font-size: 17px; font-weight: normal; font-style: normal;} .abg {color: gray;text-
decoration:none; font-family: Arial; font-size: 11px; font-weight: bold;
font-style: normal;} .adTitle {color:2e95d9;text-decoration:none; font-family:
Arial; font-size:14px; font-weight: normal; font-style: normal;} .ad_box1
{border-style:solid;border-width:1px; border-color:#FFF; background-color:
#ebf4fb;width:500px;margin-left:0px; opacity: 1; background-image: url();
background: nottransparent; margin: 0 auto; clear: both; }
<
```

Find this article at:

<http://www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com/opinion/150808885.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.