

0860-01  
(15)

---

**From:** ( )  
**Sent:** August 9, 2009 3:58 PM  
**To:** MayorandCouncil  
**Subject:** Some budget considerations  
**Attachments:** West Vancouver Budget Comments.doc

Dear Mayor and Council,

I have attached a letter for your consideration regarding our current budget problems and want to stress that these are meant with the best of intentions as constructive comments. Thank you for your time and I look forward to any of your responses.

Yours truly,

( )

August 9, 2009.

West Vancouver Council  
West Vancouver, BC

Attention: Mayor Goldsmith-Jones and Council

Dear Mayor and Council,

As you are aware the World is in financial chaos and the resulting financial pressures on our country, province, and city are causing significant problems for all jurisdictions to maintain balanced budgets. In light of all this I thought that I would make a few suggestions that might be implemented to assist our West Vancouver situation.

With the large number of retired and partially retired citizens here there is very harsh financial pressure on these people to maintain their lifestyles due to lower interest income [basically zero] and devastated investment portfolios. No one wants, or would accept, increased taxes as a way of covering the current budget problems of our city. Many seniors have to mortgage their lifetime homes just to cover their current taxes and living costs. Raising taxes is not an acceptable alternative to balancing bloated budgets from untimely and perhaps imprudent decisions.

With this in mind perhaps city council should take a hard look at the current projects and future projects that are causing both short and long term excess costs for us. As an example we are seeing all these wonderful new structures being built, at huge cost, but the costs are nothing compared to the long term management and upkeep and staff required to maintain these edifices. Each of these new employees for maintenance is probably on union wages, union benefits, and generous indexed pension plans which will continue to drain our city resources for so many years to come. West Vancouver does not have a large expanding commercial tax base, yet we are seeing ever increasing long term costs being added to our budgets. Corporations and governments Worldwide are scaling back on all aspects of their expenses. West Vancouver must do the same, immediately, before you need to come back to the old "standby" of raising taxes. That is simply not a tolerable action.

The City is currently removing parts of our side streets to have gardens or roundabouts installed, which costs a fortune to both build, and worse, to maintain. Who is coming up with these ideas, and why are they being approved by council? So are we to cut back on fire services so we can build and maintain more gardens and pay more arborists and gardeners? Who concocted the brilliant plan to block a wonderful natural ocean view and install an ugly high

maintenance outdoor clock and at what cost? Reduce the number of hanging baskets which reduces the manpower to water them, which reduces the truck mileage and service and fuel, and reduces the initial construction of the baskets, and their related people in greenhouses, and management to oversee them. These are minor examples. Just because West Vancouver has the highest income per capita does not give the City the right to practice unlimited spending on so many superfluous projects, especially in difficult times. Please take a serious look at all these make work projects because it is not just the current construction costs that concerns me, it is the maintenance through repairs to existing buildings, new and annual plantings, indexed wages and pensions, and so on, that is pressuring our budgets on a never ending cost escalation. The civil service wants to build responsibilities by having more buildings under supervision, with the resulting staff expansion, so they can justify their increased incomes for increased responsibility. This is the cancer of all government.

The time has come to eliminate many of the extraneous and new jobs, and projects, created during so-called better times and get back to focusing on rudimentary services, such as education, fire, and police. Lay off 5 gardeners for each fireman you plan to sideline as an example. Cutbacks create an exponential lowering of costs once implemented. When 10 lower staff are eliminated we lose the need for 2 supervisors, and so on all the way up the chain in each department. You were all elected to protect our interests and guide [and curtail] our local civil service in a respectful, yet financially responsible manner. Please continue to fulfill that mandate and initiate some good old common sense into your decision making. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Yours truly,

( )

**This page intentionally left blank**

**This page intentionally left blank**