



Comox News

May 2010

The Town of Comox Community Newsletter

Council adopts 2010-2014 Financial Plan

Council has adopted a new five-year Financial Plan, founded on its three strategic priorities: sustainable infrastructure, sustainability and livability, and good governance.

With sustainable infrastructure a Council priority, our capital expenditures remain our largest spending group (\$7.4 million of our \$21.4 million budget in 2010). 2010 projects include replacing the Centennial wing of the recreation centre, resurfacing Stewart Street from Cedar to Noel, buying parkland on Orchard Park Drive, building a new sewer main on Knight Road (in front of the airport terminal), relocating a storm drain outfall in the marina, replacing siding on the d'Esterre Seniors Centre, and installing water meters (see article over).

- Council adopts 2010-2014 Financial Plan
- Home Owner Grants, deadlines, penalties and prepayment
- Two lines for taxation for the Regional District now appear on the tax notice instead of one
- New Provincial tax deferment program for families with children
- Water Conservation and Metering Update

Expenditure Budget 2010 Financial Plan Total Budget \$21,406,000



Helping us pay for these capital expenditures are grants from Federal Recreation Infrastructure (RInC), Canada / BC Infrastructure, Federal Gas Tax Funds, and the C.V. Regional District.

Council did not increase parcel taxes or utility fees (garbage, water or sewer) this year, but did approve a general property tax increase of 3.2% on business and 3.7% for all other classes of property.

The increase in Town taxes on an average single family home was \$27.60. The total tax increase on that home was \$44.91 including Prov. School tax, Regional District, Hospital District, Vancouver Island Regional Library, BC Assessment and MFA BC.

For more information please visit our website: <http://comox.ca>

There you can find a page on the **2010 Financial Plan**.

Home owner grants, deadlines, penalties and prepayments

Every year we have taxpayers who are charged a 10% penalty because they fail to claim their Provincial Home Owner Grant on time. **Please don't let this happen to you!**

Failing to claim your Home Owner Grant by July 2nd is the same as not paying your taxes on time, and it

incurs a mandatory 10% penalty on the claim.

So send or drop off your Home Owner Grant application today. We welcome cheques post-dated for July 2nd if you don't actually want to pay the tax balance until then.

If you pay your taxes at a financial institution, make

sure that they will forward your claim (on the back of the payment stub) to us at Town Hall, in order to avoid the penalty.

Did you know that you can enroll in our convenient prepayment plan to pay next year's property taxes in ten automatic monthly installments? Please contact us at Town Hall for details.

Town of Comox

1809 Beaufort Avenue
Comox, BC V9M 1R9

PHONE:
(250) 339-2202

FAX:
(250) 339-7110

E-MAIL:
town@comox.ca

Staff Contacts

Richard Kanigan
Administrator

Jim Stevenson
Recreation Director

Al Fraser
Parks Superintendent

Donald Jacquest
Director of Finance

Marvin Kamenz
Planner

Shelly Russwurm
Deputy Corporate Administrator

Gord Schreiner
Fire Chief

Glenn Westendorp
Public Works Superintendent

Council

Paul Ives
Mayor

Russ Arnott
Councillor

Ray Crossley
Councillor

Patti Fletcher
Councillor

Ken Grant
Councillor

Tom Grant
Councillor

Marcia Turner
Councillor

We're on the Web!

Find us at:

<http://comox.ca>

Two lines for Regional District taxes

The Town collects taxes for the Regional District for a number of services (please see their insert for details).

In the past, we have levied all this tax on the basis of

assessed value for municipal general tax purposes. Based on two BC court rulings in 2009, we now have to levy property tax for some of these services on the basis of assessed value for Hospital

District tax purposes. So starting this year there will be two lines for Regional District Taxes on your property tax notice, instead of just one.

Provincial assistance for taxpayers in financial hardship

This year the Province has three programs allowing taxpayers to defer property taxes (but not their utility fees). Their first program, mostly for those aged 55 & up, allows owners to defer payment of property taxes until they sell their homes in the future.

Last year the Province added a second program (in 2009 & 2010 only) for taxpayers suffering financial hardship.

This year the Province is introducing another new program, for families with children.

Each of these programs has different rules & conditions. If you think that you might be interested, please visit the Province's website well before the tax deadline for the details.

This will help get you there:
<http://tinyurl.com/34rlmap>

Water Conservation & Metering Update

Comox buys its water from the Regional District water system. This costs us over \$1.4 million / year. The Regional District has adopted a water efficiency plan to help keep total water use under its water licence limit (of just over 9 billion litres annually). That Plan includes many water saving initiatives, and the largest savings of water use are expected to come from installing water meters.

Our Council has decided to install water meters on all meter-ready homes, on all residential strata developments and for any other residential customers who ask for a meter.

Most importantly, Council also decided that these customers can keep paying their flat residential water fees (\$303 last year and this year), **unless they volunteer** to be billed by the meter.

Starting this summer we will begin to install these meters, to read them and share the readings with the property owners. Then they will be given the opportunity to switch to billing by the meter for 2011 **if they want**.

Who would want to be billed by their meter? Many property owners would pay less with a meter than we charge by the flat rate, because typical water use is less than the average use. This is because some homes use much more water than others.

The metering project (\$1.35 million cost) is funded \$471,000 from the Regional District, \$450,000 from Federal Gas Taxes, \$250,000 from our Water Fund capital reserves and \$179,000 from 2010 Water Fund user fees.

In addition to water metering, we will be looking for (and fixing) leaks, enforcing sprinkling rules, replacing water fixtures in Town buildings, demonstrating low water use landscaping (xeriscaping), and promoting conservation. For more information on Comox water use, rates, rules and metering, go to:

<http://comox.ca/water/>



WATER:
we pay
for every
drop that
we use,



so please
help
us to

CONSERVE!



This newsletter is a result of Council's initiative to increase communication with residents. If you have any comments or suggestions, or would like to see anything in particular in upcoming editions, please contact us.