



By now we have all received our property tax notices in the mail as well as property tax newsletter. I would encourage everyone to look over these two documents carefully.

On your property tax notice, take special note of the dollar amounts and where they are going. Taxation in general is described by some definitions as a "Fair and Equitable Distribution of Wealth." Property taxation is no exception to this definition.

The duty of local government in the establishment of property tax rates, is to try to establish a fair rate that does not overburden what a community is able to pay, but in turn maintain a balance of service expectations within the community. There is no magic solution to this process, but several components need to work hand in hand to come up with the best way to maintain a balance of services versus an ability of a community to pay. I know that this Council brings a tremendous amount of respect for their fellow taxpayers to the table especially during budget discussions.

During my 11+ years as an elected official, I have not met any elected representative or staff member that takes the responsibility of creating a realistic budget lightly. This year your Lake Cowichan Council settled on a 2% property tax increase for the provision of services the Town provides within the budget we control. There are many other line items on your property tax notice that your Town Council has little or no control over, that may have increased individual property tax amounts.

All this being said, when I look at the list of items on my property tax notice, I reflect on the level of services that we all receive for the actual dollars spent. When we compare this to all the tax systems we all pay into daily, we would all have to somewhat agree on one aspect. Local Government dollars have the most affect in our day to day lives in our communities where we live.

I would like to strongly encourage everyone to thoroughly read the property tax newsletter that came with your property tax notice. There is valuable information on a lot of relevant topics and most notably that everyone claiming their 2021 Home Owner Grant, must do so online to avoid any penalty. Please reach out to family and friends if you need assistance with this process.

Two notable items, I would also like to report on is the acceptance by Council of the 2021-2026 Strategic plan. Council underwent a facilitated process to produce this document that will inform the present and future Council of priority projects and initiatives to be undertaken in the next 5 years. This strategic plan will greatly help facilitate the best use of time, energy and finances for the next 5 years making your local government more efficient and focussed. The next important piece of work is the collaboration with Ts'uubaa-asatx, CVRD Area Directors from areas F and I, and Town of Lake Cowichan Council as we work together to create a tripartite protocol agreement that will allow all parties to be more in sync and collaborative in local initiatives as we live work and play on the traditional unseeded territory of the Ts'uubaa-asatx.

By this time you are all aware there's is a large protest underway, against old growth logging in the Fairy Creek Watershed. Under a current provincial court injunction the RCMP have been tasked with keeping this protest peaceful which has not been without some challenging moments. We all have a right to peacefully protest on both sides of an issue, but must do so within the laws. There are many interests that need to be acknowledged in this issue and everyone needs to stay within the law while expressing their position. Failure to do so gives a large amount of discredit to the individuals or groups who refuse to act within the law while representing their respective points of view. I plan to reach out to the appropriate Provincial Ministries to ensure they remain aware of developing circumstances that are starting to occur in and around our community. I am hoping they will share with us some insight on their role now and into the future regarding this issue.

Today, "BC's Restart: A plan to bring us back together" was announced. I am excited to see that we have come so far in the battle against the COVID-19 Pandemic. It seems we are almost there. During this restart plan we must continue to follow all guidelines and most of all, for those eligible, we must continue to get our first and second dose of the vaccine, to stay on this positive trajectory.

In closing, I would like to encourage everyone to venture outdoors and enjoy the sights and sounds around the community and acknowledge how lucky we are to call this area our home. Smell the flowers, see the sights, enjoy the sounds of the season and above all, be proud that together we have and will continue to support one another through the more challenging and the best of times and be stronger for it.

I will quote the words of Dr. Bonnie Henry yet again, Be Kind, Be Calm and Be Safe.

Mayor Bob K. Day
Town of Lake Cowichan
Call/Text 250-710-0742

"Building Community Together"