

South of Town Events

March, 2025

From the Area C Director....

I would like to start by clarifying something in my last newsletter. In February I wrote about how the residents of Area C would see an increase in the tax requisition associated with the Malaspina Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD). Some residents were upset with this as they interpreted my comments to mean that the costs associated with the fire hall operations were the primary reason for the increase. I went on to write that the plan was to contribute additional money to reserves for future purchases of fire trucks and a new fire hall and that this is what the increase could largely be attributed to, but something may have been lost in the translation. If my comments caused confusion or frustration I apologize – I am only trying to inform. I appreciate all the hard-working members of the MVFD, and I thank them for the service that they provide for our community. We have since voted to increase the contribution to reserves by a smaller amount, and I am planning on bringing another motion to the March Finance Committee meeting that will ask to use most of the 2024 MVFD surplus for operations in 2025 instead of having it go to reserves. These changes will be reflected in the tax requisition.

Since I'm on the budget, I thought I would address two significant reasons for the increase in the General Administration budget. The Board has set aside a total of \$335,000 for consultants to help the staff with Human Resources (HR) issues and FOIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) requests. Regarding HR, finding employees is becoming more and more challenging every year and local governments are fighting over the good prospects. While you and I love living in qathet and appreciate the remoteness of it, many individuals see our isolation as a negative and cross qathet off their lists, so finding those who appreciate what we have to offer is sometimes difficult and takes significant staff time. This is part of the reason why both the qathet Regional District (qRD) and the City have staffing vacancies that they are trying to fill, sometimes for months. The FOIPPA requests are a different matter. The purpose of FOIPPA was to promote public sector accountability and to protect personal privacy. While these are great reasons to have the Act, unfortunately FOIPPA requests have been and continue to be used in a vexatious manner. In 2024, our staff compiled tens of thousands of pages to satisfy multiple FOIPPA requests. Every minute that is spent on these requests is a minute spent away from Board-directed initiatives and day-to-day qRD business, which means that everything takes longer. It's our hope that these requests slow down or stop altogether, but we need to include money for a consultant to help in these situations so that our staff can continue to serve the community.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that your qRD representatives and staff members are part of the community and are trying to do what's best for everyone. When the tax bill shows up and it's higher than you would like, it's human nature to look for someone to blame, but we're all in this boat together. Whatever increases you feel, I feel as well, and I'm no happier about them than you are. We work diligently to try and keep things from spiraling out of control while delivering the level of service that the public has grown to expect. It's not an easy task.

Clay Brander, qathet Regional District

Lang Bay Hall:

*** Check us out at langbaycommunityhall.ca***

Tuesdays, 10:30 am-noon: Lang Bay Friends – Informal discussions, projects and potluck lunches - everyone welcome. Contact Laural at lghascats@gmail.com for more info.

Tuesdays, 6:45-7:45 pm: Yoga with Danielle - \$10.00 drop-in fee. For more information call or text Danielle at 604-223-9493.

Wednesdays, Feb. 19th – March 26th, 10:00-11:00 am: Mindful Moves - Yoga & More - Six-week session for \$84, prorated rates available, minimum six participants required. Drop-in rate \$15. Text or call Robin at 604-483-6759 to register.

Wednesdays, March 5th & 19th and April 2nd, 6:30-7:45 pm: Women's Connection Circle - Guided meditation, journaling & open sharing with Des. \$10.00 drop in, call 306-881-0900 for info.

Thursdays, 11:00 am: Gardening at the Hall – Join the volunteers tending to the hall flower gardens. Bring your favourite small gardening tools and a bucket. Contact 604-487-1259 for more details. Weather permitting.

Thursdays, 7:00 pm sharp: Cribbage 46th Season! – Everyone welcome, \$2.00/player. Contact Rob at 604-578-8465 for more info.

Saturday March 1st, 12:00-2:00: Lang Bay Community Club Monthly Market. This market focuses on Health & Wellness. Call Kathy for details 604-483-1440.

****NEW** Sunday, March 2nd, 1:00-3:00: Song Circle at Lang Bay Hall** – Everyone welcome. Join Pat Buckna for an afternoon of singing, playing or just listening. Suggested \$5 donation. For more info contact Pat at 604-485-5198.

Saturday, March 15th, 9:30 am: Spring Crib Tournament – Registration and pre-payment req'd by March 11th. Lunch included - \$25 p/p. Contact Kathy at 604-483-1440 to enter. Six winners!

Sunday, March 23rd, 2:00 pm: Lang Bay Community Club AGM. Everyone welcome. Contact 604-483-1440 for more information.

Kelly Creek Community Church:

Sundays, 9:00 am: In-person Sunday services at 2380 Zilinsky Road. Also available on Facebook or YouTube. Contact 604-208-0446 or office.kellyck@gmail.com for more information.

Thursdays, 1:00-3:00: Knitters' Café - All fibre arts welcome.

Youth and Family:

Tuesdays, March 11th, 10:00-11:30 am: The ORCA Bus will be at Palm Beach! Families are welcome on board the heated bus to enjoy toys and resources.