

2025 Budget: Good (tentative) news regarding avoiding tax increases

The Board has been trying their best to keep the budget and taxes in check, especially in light of the economic storm clouds on the southern horizon.

At the Feb Finance committee, I got Board support to allocate \$160,000 of the 2024 LIVFD surplus as revenue in 2025 – that is to offset taxes. The other option would have been to put it in reserves (and incur some tax increases), but the Board had already agreed to put \$60,000 into reserves this year as part of the proposal related to fire trucks and fire halls that have been under discussion since Dec. The Board made similar motions to use surplus for the Savary Island and Northside fire departments to offset taxes.

The Board decided to do a 4th round of budget discussions in March (it must be completed by the end of March by law), so the exact tax changes will not be known until it has been given a bow and tie.

But based on draft 3, and unless there is a big change in the final draft, it looks like there will be no tax increases for 2025. We'll know for sure in a few weeks.

2025 Assessed Values

According to BC Assessment Authority, the sum of all assessed values on Lasqueti is a bit over \$246 million, an average increase of 1.4% over last year. If your assessment changed by less (or more) than 1.4%, then expect a bit less (or more) change on your taxes compared to the average (because it's nearly all based on assessed values).

FireSmart Funding

The qRD will try to get another grant from the Union of BC Municipalities to continue the FireSmart program. It is always a good idea to take steps to reduce risks of fire spreading to your home and buildings. Coastal-adapted FireSmart info is available on the qRD web site.

Please feel free to contact me. I am honoured to be your regional representative.
Director Andrew Fall, qathet Regional District.
Tel: 250-333-8595

From Mikaila Lironi: Hi Everyone, You may have noticed the lack of my usual column in the February edition. As I was coming to the island in person, I figured it would be best to give my information when I saw you all. Unfortunately, the snow, and cancelling the Grub and Groove really cut into the visiting I was hoping to do.

The day of the February LTC meeting, despite the snow and the roads being incredibly icy, upwards of 40 community members came out to let us know how they felt about the fibre optics cable. The JFC was absolutely packed; it would be great if the Community Hall had Internet capabilities so that we could host popular meetings at a larger venue.

Members of the community respectfully shared their opinions about having a fibre optics cable land at the barge ramp on Lasqueti. Contributors' questions were well thought out and well expressed. I know we have a tendency on Lasqueti to be worried about any changes to our way of life, but there were practical and very real concerns and ideas brought up by attendees. It was absolutely fantastic to hear everyone's opinions and ideas. Thank you to everyone who participated in person and who sent letters and emails. Great community engagement!! Thanks. mlironi@islandstrust.bc.ca 250-812-2560

From Tim Peterson: Greetings all, I want to echo Mikaila's appreciation of those who braved the terrible road conditions to come out to the Public Hearing on February 10th to share your views on the fibre optic proposal. It is an important part of the process for members of the public to let us know what you think so that our decision-making can be better-informed by the community.

Due to the timing of this month's deadline, I won't be able to report until next issue on the outcome of the Local Trust Committee's deliberations on Bylaw 104 (the Connected Coast fibre optic proposal) at the February 27th Special Meeting.

Islands Trust Council convenes March 11-13 for our quarterly meeting in Nanaimo. The meeting will begin with an election, as our Chair,

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Peter Luckham, is resigning the position after 10 years of service. A new Chair (and potentially a new Vice-chair) will be elected by members of Trust Council before we proceed to other business. March is budget time, and we will be deliberating on the various items proposed to be included in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, including the Lasqueti OCP/LUB project. We will be requested to encourage voluntary adoption of the principles of Dark Sky International in our local communities. We are scheduled to have a presentation and Q & A session with BC Ferries on shaping future public engagement due to the dissolution of the Ferry Advisory Committee system. It is worth noting that Lasqueti was not formally part of that system, and that the LCA Ferry Committee continues its work as before.

Locally, our next regular meeting is scheduled for May 12 at the JFC. As always, please feel free to contact your trustees with your questions, comments, or concerns.



Our original open-air outhouse, built c.2006 with scrap wood and nails Earl left behind, cut with a small rusty handsaw and then hammered in with the back of a maul (we didn't have any tools yet...) This is located close to our original camping spot. Still functional but a bit of a walk. Oh, and there's a bucket hidden in there, self contained ;) – Alex MacKenzie

Memorable Childhood Meals



This is not an awful dish but may not be the healthiest fare.

CHIP BUTTY (pronounced with a strong Lancashire accent):Homemade French fries (my Grandma made the best) sandwiched between two pieces of white bread, with a good slathering of butter. Add generous amounts of salt and malt vinegar. -Sue Ashcroft

Wisdom from Xwe'etay Gardeners



How to Get Early Zucchini

I love having zucchinis to grow, to admire the beauty of the plants, and to eat, and I like to have them as early as possible from my garden. Here's a way to do that, shared with me years ago by a local fine gardener:

On February 15*, soak a couple of zucchini seeds between pieces of damp cloth or paper towels until they sprout. As soon as they sprout, plant them in pots of soil, 4" pots or bigger.

Keep the pots watered and in a warm spot in the house until there is green above the soil and true leaves are starting to develop. Move the pot to the brightest place you've got, by a window or under grow lights if you have them.

On April 1st, transplant the plants outside into garden soil under sealed protection-- a little plastic tent with the corners and sides held down or a closed cold frame. On a sunny day, open the cover a little to prevent overheating. Remember to close it at dusk! (Do try to be careful about this, though I have found that the baby plants will tolerate a little forgetting.) If you want only one plant, sowing two is some insurance, and it's never a problem giving one away.

As soon as the female flowers show (there will be a tiny zucchini at the base of the flower), take the cover off to allow pollination. Voila! Zucchini harvest around the first of June. You can plant another one around that date, by your usual warm weather planting method, to extend the zucchini harvest season into the fall. – Sue Wheeler

* You are reading this on or after March 3rd. Not too late to start your early zucchini! Proceed as above and plant the young plant in the garden maybe around April 10-15. You will still get zucchinis much earlier than usual.

