



2025 Budget: Good news - tax decrease:The qRD Board finalized the 2025 budget at its March meeting. I am happy to announce that Lasqueti will see an overall tax decrease of about 6.8% compared to last year (accounting for inflation - the effective decrease in real terms is larger by several percent).

The Board and staff went over four drafts of the budget (starting last Dec), and there were many debates about different services. It's always a balance between taxes and service levels. The decrease in the tax requisition is primarily due to allocating the 2024 LIVFD surplus as revenue in 2025, which more than offsets increases in some other regional services. The 2025 LIVFD budget includes saving \$60,000 into reserves this year as part of the proposal related to fire trucks and fire halls, on which I have previously written.

Overall assessments for Lasqueti from BC Assessment Authority increased by about 1.5%. So, if your property value changed by more or less than this amount, your property taxes will change by more or less than the overall average.

Capital funding for the Last Resort Society battery project: The qathet Regional Hospital District (distinct from the qRD, but the same directors) agreed to contribute \$9,457.15 toward the LLRS battery replacement project. It was good to receive support from the Regional Hospital District board for funding to a rural health centre (the Regional Hospital District generally only funds items related to central hospitals). Since the Regional Hospital District is only allowed to support capital projects for health facilities, the contribution was limited to the proportion of the power system attributed to the JFC (plus a share of the utility building), hence the specific number.

The cost of the new battery bank is significantly higher than the Regional Hospital District is able to fund, and the Last Resort Society will likely continue fundraising efforts to cover the costs. The qRD Board increased the Electoral Area E (Lasqueti) grant-in-aid budget by a matching amount; an application for this project might be considered by the qRD Board. Hopefully, in combination with public contributions, sufficient funds can be raised.

I am honoured to be your regional representative. - Director Andrew Fall, 250-333-8595

From Tim Peterson: Greetings all.

Bylaw No. 104, to permit the landing of the fibre optic cable, was adopted by Resolution Without Meeting on March 14. This permits the landing of the cable; any work to take it anywhere else will require further rezoning(s). There was some good discussion about options to consider, but until a proposal comes forward, the Local Trust Committee has completed its work on this file.

At our March Trust Council meeting in Nanaimo, trustees elected Salt Spring trustee Laura Patrick as our new Chair. Laura is a hard-working and committed supporter of the Islands Trust, and I know she will provide great leadership for the remainder of our term. Trust council adopted the 2025-26 budget, with a total planned spending of \$11.2M, which amounts to a 5.8% increase to the existing local trust area tax. This year, the Province was able to provide some hard numbers, and so we are able to show what that increase means in real terms. The average value of a property in the Islands Trust Area is currently \$825,784, and the tax increase on that property would amount to \$32.00, bringing the yearly taxes for Islands Trust up to \$424.68. Of course, due to BC Assessment's somewhat arcane system, these averages will work out somewhat differently on individual properties.

The Allocated Financial Statements from 2024 are also now available. These show that Lasqueti contributed \$107,865 in taxes to Islands Trust last year, and benefited from the federation by \$78,022 (that being the amount over taxes which was allocated to Lasqueti for all expenses, including things like office leases, etc). If you are interested in these documents, I can email them on request.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for May 12. Please consider attending if you are able. In the meantime, feel free to contact your trustees with your questions, comments, or concerns. tpeterson@islandstrust.bc.ca 250-607-7094. To contact the whole committee and staff: laltc@islandstrust.bc.ca