

Office of the Chair

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File: 0115-01

June 29, 2018

Sent via email: jmartens@comoxvalleyrd.ca

Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Services Committee
600 Comox Road
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P6

Dear Chair Grieve:

Re: Non-Binding Community Opinion Question – Governance Restructure Study

The Comox Valley Regional District Board adopted the following resolution at its June 26, 2018 meeting:

THAT the councils for the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland and the Electoral Areas Services Committee be requested to consider including the following non-binding question on their ballots on October 20, 2018:

"Are you in favour of conducting a study, in partnership with the Province of BC, to review the governance structures and policies of <insert local government name here> and other local governments within the Comox Valley to consider the feasibility and implications of restructure?"

YES or NO

AND FINALLY THAT up to \$10,000 from the CVRD's member municipalities and electoral areas administration services be used to support the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce in promoting awareness and a clear understanding about this referendum.

As way of background information, please find attached a copy of the correspondence from Director Jangula regarding this matter that was submitted to the Comox Valley Regional District Board at its June 26, 2018 meeting.

Please consider including the above noted non-binding community opinion question on your local government's ballot for the 2018 general local elections. In order to assist with the planned public awareness campaign, I respectfully request written confirmation of your council's decision at your soonest convenience.

Sincerely,

B. Jolliffe

Bruce Jolliffe
Chair

Enclosure

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File:

June 19, 2018

Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

I would respectfully request your consideration of the following:

THAT the councils for the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland and the Electoral Areas Services Committee be requested to consider including the following non-binding question on their ballots on October 20, 2018:

“Are you in favour of conducting a study, in partnership with the Province of BC, to review the governance structures and policies of <insert your local government name here> and other local governments within the Comox Valley to consider the feasibility and implications of restructure?”

YES or NO

AND FINALLY THAT up to \$10,000.00 from the Comox Valley Regional District’s member municipalities and electoral areas administration services be used to support the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce in promoting awareness and a clear understanding about this referendum.”

Background

The reason I put this question to you, as the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Committee of the Whole, is that I feel we should be polling the entire Comox Valley as to the general opinion for conducting a restructure study on the City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, Town of Comox and the CVRD. By using October 20, 2018, which is the general voting day for local governments in BC, we would be seeking voter interest in this important topic while not also costing taxpayers more to hold a referendum on a different date. Also, the CVRD is best positioned to consider this matter and then refer it to its member municipalities to consider adding the same question to their own ballots. That referral could be done over July and August, with a firm commitment by each council and the CVRD electoral area directors occurring by the end of August, in time for including the question on each ballot. It would make the most sense to have one common question to ask all of the members of the public in the Comox Valley, and that is why I’ve proposed the referendum question noted above. I also feel the choice of words in the referendum question above is important because it promotes an independent and comprehensive review of the Comox Valley local governments and seeks to find a better system that is effective and responsible to the taxpayer. Lastly, it should be clear that any changes to local governments would only come after the comprehensive review delivers its findings and all parties can consider the matter further.

You'll also note the recommendation includes some funding from the CVRD's general administration service to support an awareness campaign so that the public at large can understand the referendum question and the implications for a 'YES' or 'NO' vote are clear. Because of the extensive work that the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce has undertaken over the past couple of years on the governance review, the dedicated funds would be used to support the Chamber to meet with the Committee of the Whole and/or member municipality councils, as needed, to ensure direction and purpose from the elected officials is clear and also develop materials to:

- Explain the importance of the question
- Identify the impact of voting yes or no
- Describe the next steps associated with a study if the resulting vote is a yes
- Describe how a study would be conducted if one or more jurisdictions does not participate or vote yes.

I would anticipate that each local government would link from their individual websites to the Chamber's website to promote awareness about this topic.

Respectfully,

L. Jangula

Larry Jangula
Director