

# Retired North Vancouver superintendent John Lewis re-hired, accused of double dipping

John Lewis says he's not doing anything wrong

## Editorial by Kerry Morris - (December 4, 2014)

It was December 1st, and I was standing in the Atrium at North Vancouver City Hall, sipping on red wine and eating great food, all paid for by North Vancouver City taxpayers. I stood there, surrounded by Mayor Mussatto's campaign team and a smattering of developers and developer helpers, and I could only wonder which of the communities most objectionable issues or concerns would rise up to bite us in the collective butt, first.

It was then that a Mussatto supporter approached me with a smile, gloating over my loss, and informing me that school lands at Ridgeway Annex would go before council for sale approval first, followed quickly by the Cloverley and Lucas Centre Lands. The conversation transitioned to the outcome of the School District #44 Trustee elections, and it was then I was told that Superintendent John Lewis would ensure this work was completed before his contract term ended. "What contract term" I enquired. I was then told that in the midst of the provincial school teachers strike, SD#44 Superintendent John Lewis had retired, and then been rehired under contract, and was now collecting not just a full pension, but a full contract wage as well. 'Double-Dipping' while school teachers walked the picket-line doing without any paycheque what-so-ever!



Retired and now re-hired on a contract, John Lewis says he's doing nothing wrong by collecting both a pension and a salary as the superintendent of North Vancouver's school district. (LinkedIn)

As I cruised about the Atrium, having conversation after conversation, it was repeatedly confirmed to me that indeed John Lewis had retired and returned to his same job the very next day, only he was now collecting both a full pension and a contract wage.

The retirement and rehire of John Lewis could not have been done without the full knowledge, support and approval of the provincial government. I am compelled to assume that when MLA Jane Thornthwaite stood in the Legislature and told City residents to support candidates for City council who would vote to sell public school lands, she knew full well that the governments contract minion in the person of Superintended John Lewis would, by hook or by crook, push those objectives through the new SD#44 Board of Trustees. It goes without saying that Chair Franci Stratton must also have known of this contract position, and must have supported this course of action, along with the province. No wonder we need to sell our public schools!

When a former senior City employee, former school board trustee, come developers helper acknowledged John Lewis' contract relationship, it was then I came to believe that rumour was indeed reality. It occurs to me that when we haven't the money to pay our valued provincial employees a wage sufficient to meet changes in the cost of living, but we have enough to pay the elite twice the price, things have gone terribly wrong in paradise North.

As Mayor Mussatto, CAO Ken Tollstam, Franci Stratton and Superintendent John Lewis all appeared to be glued at the hip throughout the election cycle, including the Mayors Pinnacle celebration party, I couldn't help but wonder if our retirement age CAO had lead or followed Mr. Lewis into retirement, and was himself pulling down a double income? As retirement benefits are not disclosable because disclosure would breach personal privacy laws, I'm not sure we will ever know the truth. But given the debt now owed for such a supportive role, I believe that if it isn't already the case, then it is a distinct possibility in the City's near term future.

So I ask all of you, do you think we the taxpayers should be paying our public management staff both a full pension, on top of a contract wage? I don't. I also don't think these deals should remain beyond public disclosure and done behind closed doors, do you? Welcome to the next four years !