

COUNCIL CANDIDATES SHOULD BE ABLE TO ADD, YES?

By: Kerry Morris - March 10, 2015

Like many residents of the City, I rely on City council to make sound financial decisions with my public monies, paid to them in trust to do the public's business.

In this role, the Mayor and council should be capable of testing the abilities and work product of Staff to ensure the reports and decisions put before them are anchored in fact.

Accordingly, it is assumed that each person elected to council possess some basic mathematical and reading skills. However, recent submissions to Elections BC by 'Slate' candidates puts at issue the assumption of their basic reading and mathematical literacy skills for each of the four 'Slate' member of council. This results from the fact that, as set

out in the Local Election Campaign Finance Act ("LECFA") at s.24(4), wherein it states that where donations are greater than \$500 excess of expenses, the excess donations must be paid to the City. None have been.

Candidate	Candidates			
Disclosure Form	Darrell	Craig	Linda	Holly
Submission	Mussatto	Keating	Buchanan	Back
Campaign Donations	\$91394.79	\$26988.96	\$27831.16	\$11251.36
Campaign Expenses	\$74051.24	\$24197.96	\$24936.07	\$12246.46
Amount Payable to City in Trust	\$17343.55	\$2791.00	\$2895.09	-\$995.10
Team Mussatto 'Slate' Owes City	\$23029.64			

(4) If, after any payment under subsection (2), the total balance remaining in the campaign accounts of the candidate is \$500 or more, the financial agent must pay the balance as soon as practicable to the jurisdiction in relation to which the election was held.

As You can see from the brief analysis set out above, Mayor Darrell Mussatto has declared to Elections BC that he has excess funds equalling \$17,323.55. Similarly councillors Craig Keating and Linda Buchanan have both declared

excess funds, which equal \$2,791.00 and \$2,895.09 respectively. Councillor Back, the only member of the 'Slate' not in an excess funds position, has presumably failed to fully report her own contributions to her campaign, as she currently shows a deficit position of -\$995.10, suggesting that she either has unpaid bills in that amount, or has assumed we will figure out she has made-up the shortfall.

Behind the scenes Keating has intimated that the difference in Mussatto's submission is explained by 'In-Kind' donations. However, Mussatto listed only one in-kind donation, which could never explain the missing \$17.3k.

Further, if the accounting had been done correctly, the in-kind donations would have been recorded as donations, and the bills which those donations offset would have been included in the expense side of the ledger. This would allow the total cost of money's spent on the campaign to be cross-referenced to the monies taken in from all sources. A proper and complete accounting would have donations from all sources equalling total expenses, leaving nothing in the account. Where a positive balance is reflected on form 4222, in excess of \$500, then those monies would admit funds excess of expenses, and the difference would then be paid into Trust with the City.

I would have expected that any person who holds high office would be able to understand the simplicity of this requirement as set-out in the Act, and quickly determine if they should have paid excess funds into Trust with the City. If they're not capable of making this determination, then the appropriate question is; Should they be abstaining from making any significant financial decisions on behalf of the City? For they are obviously lacking the skills necessary to understand the implications of those decisions on their own, a truly damning inditement of our public education system. Wouldn't you agree?