

Dealing With personalities and chaos

Cariboo Observer Friday, August 17, 2012

Editor:

I need to speak up; it's time.

I'm a newly elected councillor and gradually learning my job.

The work can be very challenging and requires a lot of thought if you care about making good decisions, good for Quesnel that is.

Most of the time, I find the work satisfying and I know why I asked the people of Quesnel to elect me.

The part of this work that I find difficult to deal with are the personalities and agenda that is trying to derail the governance process and sew chaos.

I didn't know Mayor Sjostrom very well before the election, but my respect and regard for her and her integrity, not to mention her work ethic, has gone up exponentially in the eight months I have worked with her.

I vote with my conscience and I like to figure things out for myself; the mayor has never tried to influence me or lobby me on one issue.

She has been helpful with I had questions on process or correct procedures, as have the other veteran councillors.

The idea that the mayor controls council is silly – she only votes when council's vote is a three to three tie and I can't remember when that has happened.

We are all individuals and we make our decisions based on what is the right thing for Quesnel. *(Pat Morton editor's note: How was giving John Steyck over \$170,000 and Muriel Wild severance pay the right thing for Quesnel? How is allowing the mayor to request reimbursements for meals and other expenses which she is paid in advance for in the Tax Free Allowance the right thing to do for Quesnel?)*

The mayor's job is determined to be a half time position and the pay is \$42,300 annually. *(Pat Morton editor's note: I think you are missing something here John, what about the other income for the Mayor from the Regional District and the other boards she sits on?)*

She works 55+ hours a week. *(Pat Morton editor's notes: This is her choice not a requirement and I believe you calculate all the time she puts in sitting on other boards and travelling to other countries.)*

Her husband thinks she is married to the city, not him.

For this enormous sum of money and all the apparent prestige, the mayor has endured two years of character assassination and steady rain, so don't tell me she isn't dedicated to our community. *(Pat Morton editor's note: Perhaps if the mayor were to be more open and transparent with taxpayer's*

money there would be not cause for what you perceive to be “character assassination”. This situation could and should have been dealt with immediately when it came to her attention she was doing something wrong. Instead of apologizing she adamantly carries on without any concern for the financial situation she has created, refuses to apologize, and continues to in my view, abuse her position. All this will probably end up in court costing the taxpayers so much more in additional legal fees.)

In September, mayor Mary Sjostrom starts a term as the president of the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM). *(Pat Morton...editors note: As your comment shows, this position, as president of UBCM is not an elected position but one attained through succession. She was elected third vice chair years ago and this is the end result of the position. Although nominations can be made from the floor it rarely changes the chain of events.)*

This means she was selected and voted in by 164 mayors and their councillors, directors from regional districts and First Nations who are members of UBCM from all over British Columbia to represent them in Victoria. *(Pat Morton editors notes: Although this number of people were eligible to vote you are giving the impression they all voted for Mary Sjostrom which is quite unlikely)*

Why do they appreciate the mayor when some people in Quesnel are believing the negative publicity and allowing it to damage her credibility? *(Pat Morton editor’s note: I wonder if those voting for her in the past would feel the same way if they were informed of what is taking place in Quesnel today?)*

I enjoy working with the other members of council who are actually doing the work, they have shown me nothing but integrity and devotion to the tasks we have to do.

I don’t like the bullies and I’m all for whistle blowers but please have something to talk about that is real or valid or stop wasting our time and let us do the work we were elected to do. *(Pat Morton editor’s note: Are you implying financial issues are of no concern to you and when questioned about financial issues you consider it a waste of your time?)*

The professionalism, wisdom and skill they bring help us decide on most issues affecting Quesnel and I believe when we vote against a staff recommendation; we do so at our own peril. *(Pat Morton editor’s note: I wonder if this comment refers to staff recommendations regarding John Steyck’s severance pay and Muriel Wild to be fired without cause which again cost the city taxpayers a severance package...at your own peril?)*

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