

North Shore municipal payrolls climbing

\$100K earners have tripled over the last four years on the North Shore

BY JANE SEYD, NORTH SHORE NEWS JULY 24, 2011

THE cost of the public payroll continued to climb on the North Shore last year, with the three local governments paying out just under \$130 million on direct municipal salaries.

That's up from \$128 million spent on salaries in 2009 and \$116 million in 2008.

The \$130 million doesn't include many other employees who work for agencies funded by local taxpayers - like libraries and recreation centres - that aren't paid directly by the municipalities.

Once salaries for museum staff, people who run the recycling program, the North Vancouver Recreation Commission, city and district libraries, emergency management office and cultural affairs office are factored in, the local government payroll clocks in at about \$166 million.

Those figures come from annual Financial Information Act reports that all municipalities are required to make public six months after the end of their fiscal year.

Even that figure, however, doesn't include more than \$18 million paid

by the two North Vancouver municipalities for the RCMP contract - much of which goes to pay police.

While the total municipal payroll has been heading upwards, the number of people occupying the highestpaid positions - public servants who earn more than \$100,000 - is actually down this year. In 2010, 175 people occupied that bracket in town halls across the North Shore, compared to 183 civil servants in 2009. That's mostly due to two factors - a retroactive pay hike for firefighters paid out in 2009 that temporarily bumped some of those salaries into a higher-earning category, plus an extra pay period in the 2009 calendar year.

But overall, the number of people earning top dollar in local government has risen dramatically in the past decade. They now include 62 people at the District of North Vancouver, 58 people at the City of North Vancouver and 55 people at the District of West Vancouver. Overall, on the North Shore, the number of people making more than \$100,000 has tripled in the past four years.

Those figures also don't include any police officers, whose salaries are specifically excluded from the list of municipal earners.

David Marley, a member of the Interested Taxpayers Action Committee in West Vancouver, said he thinks local government payrolls are out of control. "There are too many people employed - especially among the managerial and supervisory class," said Marley. The percentage of local government operating budgets devoted to salaries keeps going up, said Marley, and those being paid over \$100,000 are getting the biggest annual increases. "It's madness," said Marley.

He said local governments still haven't got the message that they need to cut back. "There's no cheque

that's easier to write than one that's drawn on someone else's account," he said.

The District of West Vancouver, which collected just under \$53 million in taxes last year and had an operating budget of \$117 million, spent the most directly on its employee payroll last year - \$55.9 million, including \$9.6 million for police.

That's because the municipality ran more of its services directly - including its police force and its recreation department.

Among West Vancouver bureaucrats, chief administrative officer Grant McRadu topped the payroll list with a salary of \$213,500. Other high earners included deputy municipal manager Brent Leigh, who earned \$171,000, and Richard Laing, director of finance, who earned \$157,000.

At the District of North Vancouver, where property taxes of nearly \$77 million supported an operating budget of \$136 million, the municipality spent \$43.3 million directly on salaries last year. That didn't include library salaries of almost \$4 million and almost \$12 million for the district's share of recreation commission salaries, or payroll for the museum and archives, recycling program, community policing office and utilities workers. If those were all included, salaries paid by the district would be more than \$60 million.

Top earners at district hall included David Stuart, chief administrative officer, who pulled in \$247,000, Gavin Joyce, director of corporate services, who earned \$180,000 and director of finance Nicole Deveaux who made \$175,000.

At the City of North Vancouver, the smallest municipality on the North Shore, \$42 million in property taxes went into an operating budget of around \$70 million last year. Of that, \$30.8 million went to payroll. However that didn't include the city's one-third share of the recreation commission's \$17.7 million payroll, library salaries of \$2 million, or the city's \$7.5 million contract with the RCMP.

Top earners at the city included the North Shore's highest paid bureaucrat, city manager Ken Tollstam, who made \$254,000. Other top earners included Fire Chief Barrie Penman who made \$171,000, and director of community development Richard White, who made \$166,000.

Among North Shore politicians, both District of North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton and City of North Vancouver Mayor Darryl Mussatto were members of the \$100,000 club, with Walton making the most - \$124,000 - including \$92,000 as mayor and \$32,000 for work as a director and vice-chairman of the board at Metro Vancouver. Mussatto was close behind with \$119,000, including \$91,000 as mayor and \$28,000 for work as a director with Metro Vancouver. Mussatto also received a \$9,500 annual car allowance from the city.

In West Vancouver, Mayor Pam Goldsmith-Jones earned \$80,000 including \$65,000 as mayor and \$15,000 from Metro Vancouver, along with a car allowance of \$3,800.

Pay for local councillors ranged from \$24,000 in West Vancouver to \$39,000 in the District of North Vancouver.

jseyd@nsnews.com

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