

**Subject: Agenda Item 11: Council & Staff Expenses**

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Dear Mayor & Council: March 4, 2001

Agenda Item: Expense Policy for Council Members & Staff

This controversy started over a relatively minor expense: a Councillor attended a social function & contrary to District policy, expected taxpayers to pay for the ticket. Closer examination of Council's expense accounts revealed more infractions including 3 airline tickets from the previous year, which were supposed to have been re-imbursed, but were not.

I was disappointed in the manner it was handled. I felt staff did not take the matter seriously. There was no effort to recoup expense money from past errors & omissions, even though consistent violations of our expense policy had been identified.

That's why exercising my right as a citizen, I ordered an external audit – not just of Council's expenses but also of senior staff. It came as no surprise to me when lo & behold the auditor uncovered violations of policy. In the assorted bundles of test samples, half contained errors of one kind or another.

It also came to light that for years managers had approved their own expenses – a practice clearly unacceptable when handling the public's money.

Two Questions I'd like answered:

- One third of a Councillors income is supposed to be used for expenses. How does this pertain to the additional thousands of dollars which the Mayor & Councillors bill to the District each year?
- Under what circumstances is Council or District staff allowed to fly 1<sup>st</sup>/Business Class?

Conclusion: if ever there should be an example of the public purse being handled in a squeaky clean manner – it would be Council & Staff's expense accounts.

Yours truly,

Dave Sadler