

# Hunter blasted over CRD vote.

**Laura Lavin**

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At its last meeting, the Capital Regional District passed a motion that requested Dr. Richard Stanwick, Medical Health Officer of the Capital Health Region, to review all reports on the Senanus water quality issue, and provide a decision as to what the extent of the health hazard is.

Central Saanich Mayor Wayne Hunter remarked, "this was not brought forward by me. This was brought to the CRD by John Alexander, a lawyer representing the Central Saanich West Voters Association and put on the agenda by the [CRD board] chair."

According to Bill 14, the Local Government Statutes Amendment Act which was passed in August of 2000, under general authority for services, section 796:

(1) Subject to the specific limitations and conditions established by or under this or another Act, a regional district may operate any service that the board considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the regional district.

(2) The authority under subsection (1) includes the authority to operate a service in an area outside the regional district as well as in the regional district itself.

(3) A regional district service may be operated directly by the regional district or through another public authority, person or organization.

It was under this amendment, which gives the CRD powers over the municipality, that Alexander brought

the Senanus dispute to the CRD.

Hunter, who previously attempted to get Central Saanich council to pass a similar motion, voted with the majority of the CRD board to send the information to Stanwick.

"I won't cop out on that decision I knew it would pass, so I could have voted against it. But there are times when you have to vote your conscience."

"I had to rise above the issue of whether or not I think a pipeline is a good idea or not," Hunter continued, "and this doesn't mean that there will be one. If this is a health issue, I can't sit with my head in the ground."

During Monday night's meeting of the Water and Waste Management Committee in Central Saanich, Hunter took it on the chin for his vote at the CRD table.

Peter Kitteredge of the Water Advisory Task Force was the first to blast Hunter. "You are an inappropriate person to have on the CRD board. I think you should resign immediately," Kitteredge stated.

Councillor Allison Habkirk had several questions for Hunter on CRD process, and told Hunter, "the voice of council, other than you, was silenced at the [CRD] meeting . . . as an elected member of council I'd like to see some carry through [regarding items on the CRD agenda], some action, so that letters from the public do get put on the agenda . . . sorry is not good enough for me!"

Councillor Diane Moen, who attended the CRD board meeting lambasted Hunter. "I was extremely outraged . . . the staff report was totally inaccurate. I fully expected you would have gone to bat for our municipality. The CRD doesn't have the background — our staff reports. I was stunned to see you support the motion."

Councillor Michelle Haddon was last in the councillor's line of attack.

She said, "I am gravely disappointed with how this issue was handled. You're the mayor, you should not be representing how you feel. You did not vote how this community wanted to vote.

If the mayor at the CRD table can vote any way he chooses to vote, why are we sitting here? We had a three-three vote [on the same motion in council]. You were given clear instruction. I believe in the voice we represent here, and you voted the way you chose to vote. It was very disturbing."

Councillor Jack Mar stood up for Hunter's decision.

"We had a three-three vote. It was a 'no' vote, the motion died there. The mayor has a right to make his own decision as a CRD director. He has that right when it's three-three."

Hunter replied: "It was a three-three vote — as mayor I have to make a decision. I have to consider is it a health issue? Is there a liability if someone gets ill? Whether the people vote for me or not. I'll vote fairly."