

Mayor's Message May 2015

In some ways, last summer seems so long ago, as we enjoy the balmy weather that presages summer 2015; yet for many of us, the intervening months have been so busy that last July seems like yesterday. I am writing to report on the final phase of resolving a concern we all shared last summer with the supply of water to our Town: return to unchlorinated water.

As you know, we worked closely with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) throughout the incident. I am pleased to advise you that we have now completed all of the actions required by VCH under our permit with them, and as I write this report staff are preparing to cease chlorination of our system, although it may take a few weeks for the last of the chlorine to work its way through the system. Watch our website and Facebook page for updates as this transpires.

Our aquifer has always been a pure and safe source of water; the issue was in the distribution systems, and in fact, the Gibsons water system is now more robust than before the incident. The Town had identified a number of improvements we intended to make to the system as time and budget permitted, but the water issue precipitated these improvements. This has required us to include a one-time increase to the Water Parcel Tax of \$154 in this year's municipal taxes to cover the cost of those improvements, which include not only our more robust supply system, but also protective measures such as fencing upgrades at both reservoirs; standardized emergency signage; unique water system padlocks; improved monitoring software (SCADA) of alarms and safety controls; motion sensors; and access ladder improvements to reduce the chance of unauthorized access to the facilities.

We will all need to be vigilant in our practices to maintain the healthy water system that is so important. On the part of the Town, this vigilance will include more frequent testing, and maintaining a backup system available in the event of contamination; for our residents, it will call for the judicious use of water, one of our most precious resources.

Once again, I thank you for your patience and cooperation last summer as we went through this event together.