

Regional District of North Okanagan directors reveal expenses

By Vernon Morning Star

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Regional District of North Okanagan directors insist their salaries reflect a lot of hard work on behalf of constituents.

In 2012, 28 individuals received \$313,622 in remuneration and expenses for board and committee activities. In 2011, it was \$273,47 (the increase in per meeting pay was 1.7 per cent cost of living).

"They are very legitimate. We have a very dedicated group of directors," said Patrick Nicol, board chairperson.

Topping the list was rural Lumby director Rick Fairbairn, with \$34,431 in remuneration and expenses.

"It seems like a fair chunk of change to swallow, but there are obligations on behalf of the constituents," said Fairbairn.

Besides being a director, Fairbairn is RDNO vice-chairperson, White Valley parks chairperson and former Electoral Area Advisory Committee chairperson. He also attends Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Most of his \$6,914 in expenses relate to travel.

"For every hour I put into a paid meeting, there's an hour of work unpaid," Fairbairn said of reading and research that must be done to stay informed.

Next on the list is BX-Silver Star director Mike Macnabb with wages and expenses of \$33,349. He is chairperson of the Greater Vernon Advisory Committee.

For other board directors, remuneration and expenses for 2012 were:

Bob Fleming, BX-Swan Lake, \$33,297

Patrick Nicol, Vernon, \$32,849

Jackie Pearase, rural Enderby, \$29,786

Eugene Foisy, Cherryville, \$29,054

Rob Sawatzky, Vernon, \$15,565

Howie Cyr, Enderby, \$14,743

Doug Dirk, Coldstream, \$14,619

Janice Brown, Spallumcheen, \$14,498

Kevin Acton, Lumby, \$14,443

Shirley Fowler, Armstrong, \$14,007

Juliette Cunningham, Vernon, \$12,375

"Many represent us on provincial committees or committees elsewhere in the Okanagan," said Nicol, adding that 2012 was focused on major issues like meat processing rules and water.

"It's a pretty frugal group. There's a lot of carpooling and members can put in for stipends (for meetings) but many do not."

In terms of RDNO staff, 24 employees earned more than \$75,000 in 2012. Leading the pack was administrator Trafford Hall with a salary of \$156,852 and expenses of \$11,362.

A total of \$5.6 million was spent on all regional district staff for wages and expenses in 2012.

There was one severance package for \$4,300 after a building inspection clerk position was eliminated because of declining building permit revenue.

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