

## Islands Trust's Good Fiscal Management

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by Sheila Malcolmson, Chair, Islands Trust Council

in response to [John Money's letter to the editor of the Island Tides](#), which was not printed in its entirety

Dear Editor:

A letter from John Money in your May 5 edition ('Trust Needs More Money') deserves a response, because it contains inaccurate and potentially alarming information about the Islands Trust budget.

Last March, the Islands Trust Council worked diligently in response to public concerns to maintain a tax increase of only 1% for its 2011-2012 annual budget. It did not do this by pulling 'a large amount of money out of their contingency fund, leaving the Islands Trust exposed if they get involved with a large lawsuit,' as suggested by the writer.

Due to careful management, some unexpected income and a few unfinished projects, Trust Council had a surplus of about \$200,000 at the end of the 2010–2011 fiscal year. It simply transferred this surplus to the new fiscal year to complete unfinished projects and fund other projects so that a larger tax increase was not necessary.

In addition, \$100,000 was withdrawn from the surplus because it had been specifically saved over the previous two years to fund the November 2011 general election; this is a normal way to fund such large periodic expenditures.

Over the last several years, Trust Council has carefully developed a responsible surplus, which is forecast to be about \$1.5 million by March 2012. This equals approximately 22% of our operating budget and is 92% of the amount recommended by our policies.

Trustees elected this November will find the surplus in good shape. And they (not this present Council) will be the beneficiaries of increased trustee remuneration levels. Trust Council members did not raise their own pay, as the writer charges.

In regards to the writer's other concerns, trustees are very aware of economic concerns in their communities, as we all weather a global economic downturn. Islands outside the Islands Trust Area, such as Cortes and Quadra, have similar concerns. We are particularly concerned about the impacts of rising ferry fares and have lobbied hard on behalf of Islanders. We also believe that programs that 'preserve and protect' the islands will only strengthen the magnetic attraction that international tourists and long-term real estate investors are interested in, giving Islands in the trust area a competitive advantage.

Sheila Malcolmson  
Chair, Islands Trust Council

[John Money's reply to this letter above, never did not get printed in the Island Tides.](#)

[A reply from SIPOA \(Saturna Island Property Owners Association\) was not printed by the Island Tides either.](#)