



GENERAL BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2006

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Submitted by David Ridley

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Before the VIHA Board can make an informed decision concerning the upgrading of hospital facilities on the North Island it is important that the Board clearly hear the concerns of stakeholders. During the meeting held for this purpose in Port Hardy it was clear that VIHA senior staff were strongly in favour of a new regional hospital located at a neutral location. No Board members were present at that meeting to hear our concerns directly and apparently they must rely on reports from staff who are already committed to the VIHA preferred solution. Did any Board member attend any of the consultations meetings on the North Island? If so, how many Board members attended which meetings?

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A significant consultation process initially occurred across the Island regarding the Draft Five Year Strategic Plan from October 2005 to February 2006. One of the key elements of the Draft Five Year Strategic Plan revolves around acute care options for the North Island.

VIHA hired Turnkey Management Consulting (TkMC) earlier this year, through a competitive bid process, to identify and analyze strategic options, and thoroughly consider the critical factors and issues related to future acute care service delivery in the Comox-Strathcona area. TkMC delivered an Options Appraisal Report to the VIHA Board on March 29th, 2006 that indicated sustainable acute care services on the North Island would best be served by the construction of a new regional hospital in a neutral site.

The VIHA Board asked staff to take the TkMC report back to the community for further consultation as they felt further public input was required before they could make a decision on how the health authority should proceed.

In June 2006 staff commenced a further public consultation process, including public town hall/open house meetings in six communities in the north area of the Island. VIHA staff have also participated in over 32 meetings/presentations to various community groups and we continue to receive numerous emails and letters expressing various opinions regarding the options.

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Three Board members, including the Board Chair, attended the town hall and open house sessions in Campbell River on June 21, 2006 and in Courtenay on June 22, 2006. The full Board is having an open house in Campbell River on July 26, 2006, immediately following the General Board Meeting to provide a further opportunity for the public to share their thoughts, suggestions and concerns on this, and other health care issues. It is simply not possible for Board members to attend all events in VIHA and the Board relies on the processes we have in place to keep them apprised. In this particular case, there were no Board members in attendance at the open house in Port Hardy.

The feedback received will be reviewed and a summary document will be developed and posted on VIHA's public website. The Board is confident that the summary document will fairly reflect the full range of opinions/viewpoints regarding this matter, and this summary document will be one of many factors that will contribute to informing the VIHA Board decision-making process on the renewal of acute services in Comox-Strathcona in September 2006.