

Delegation: Steve Earle, Gabriola Community Bus Foundation, re Funding Increase for Gabriola Community Bus Foundation

Summary: Since 2013 the Gabriola Environmentally Responsible Trans-Island Express (GERTIE) bus has been operated on Gabriola Island by the Gabriola Community Bus Foundation. For the first three years we operated without public funding using volunteer drivers. In 2015 Gabriolans voted to approve a property tax allocation of up to \$250,000 for the GERTIE bus and in June 2016 we started operating with paid drivers.

Our funding covers 48 hours of service per week, which includes the morning and afternoon commuter runs 5 days a week and the mid-day runs 3 days a week. Since the summer of 2017 GERTIE has been offering additional service with the same basic funding. Through careful budgeting and steadily increasing ridership we now operate an extra run on Saturday afternoons, and mid-day service 5 days a week, bringing the total to 58 hours a week.

We didn't request an increase in funding in 2017 but did request a cost-of-living increase in 2018. We are now requesting another cost-of-living increase for the 2019 budget year, plus an additional 1% in order to keep up with increases in our operating costs (mostly fuel and insurance) and to allow us to increase the drivers' wages and the coordinator's salary. Our current (2018) tax allocation is \$135,721. Assuming a cost-of-living adjustment of 2.5% plus an additional 1%, the new tax allocation would be in the order of \$140,470.

Action Requested: The Gabriola Community Bus Foundation is requesting a small increase - an amount equal to the cost-of-living adjustment over the past year, plus 1% - to the tax allocation for the operation of the GERTIE bus on Gabriola.