

## NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

---

**Published:** North Bay Nugget

**Date:** December 13, 2013

---

### Taxpayers on Hook for Gardens' Disaster

I am completely appalled by the Memorial Gardens assault on the citizens of North Bay. You would have us believe that you, as a council, knew nothing about the \$3.6 million dollar budget overage. This is simply implausible but if, by some ridiculous happenstance, you were not aware of this fiasco then there is incompetence of the first order within your staff at City Hall. Perhaps they decided to approve these expenditures without your knowledge to give you plausible deniability but, if that is the case, then they were given the authority to get that arena ready for the Battalions at any cost. One of these two scenarios is true and it does not matter which one because you have no excuse, it is your job to know. It is your job to ensure the checks and balances are in place to avoid this kind of ineptitude. You are negligent and irresponsible with taxpayers' money. I work hard for my money, as does every taxpayer in this city and it is criminal to see such blatant disregard for those you have chosen to represent.

I will not believe for one second that the contractor is at fault. There is no reputable contractor in this country that would overspend a budget without prior approval by the City, verbal or otherwise, so don't try and go there. As for the "eyes and ears" you hired to oversee this project I would bet \$3.6 million dollars that he was given the same mandate; "Get this arena ready for hockey - no matter what it takes". I know this man and he is not a crook; he is doing what he is being paid to do.

This debacle has no solution - we, the taxpayers, are on the hook for this disaster. I am sure you can find a scapegoat and he or she will fall on their sword but make no mistake your actions (or non-actions) show incompetence and arrogant disregard. It is unforgivable.

Following our Association's initial presentation to Mayor and Council we tried to gift you with a framed "public purse" that would serve as a constant reminder of your collective duty to responsibly manage North Bay tax dollars. Now we know why you refused to accept it.

I personally supported a number of you on council, you know who you are, but I will not make that mistake again. Shame on all of you!

Elizabeth Fournier

Executive Member

North Bay Taxpayers' Association