

Hydro purchase of Espanola Hydro – January 24, 2018

Having been enlightened to the need to address the issue of North Bay Hydro Distribution (NBHDL) attempting to purchase Espanola Hydro, both the City and NBHDL continue to fail to provide any evidence of the benefits to North Bay taxpayers of this initiative.

In a recent interview with the Nugget, the Mayor explained the steps required before any agreement could be finalized but apparently could not provide any benefits that would occur as a result of any agreement. Mr. Payne who is the CAO of NBHDL indicated that the utility “will not be providing further comment on the proposed acquisition”. This position by an official of NBHDL is an indication of the ongoing culture where owners and customers are a mere distraction to be catered to only for the purposes of public relations. Members of the public and press have been barred from attending NBHDL board meetings since its inception resulting in a veil of secrecy that has been detrimental to taxpayers.

This action has no redeeming features and if any did exist the City and NBHDL would be, as they are wont to do with minimal encouragement, broadcasting them from the rooftop. The Mayor describes the move as positive but provides no proof. His suggestion that the City should wait until after all the time and effort has been spent on negotiations before stopping the process is without merit.

This company is 100% owned by North Bay taxpayers. This company is merely the old Hydro board formatted as a limited company which had no practical effect on the service that the old Hydro board provided. The sole reason for its existence is the delivery of electricity to citizens. All of its funds are supplied by North Bay taxpayers. Any funds required for this purchase would come from taxpayers pockets. If allowed to proceed, this action will increase delivery rates for North Bay customers and provide no benefit regarding the quality of that service.

We suggest that the City curtail this project immediately and concentrate on opening up the operations of NBHDL to public scrutiny on a regular and continuing basis.