

Saturday March 19 2011

New mayor, same old secrecy

Mr Mayor: While I accept you inherited one hell of a mess, also you have the old guard to contend with, your performance, leadership or lack of, leaves many of us disappointed.

More debt, same old secrecy within council.

Sir, you have done nothing to prove you have the leadership skills that you claimed during the election.

If you were subject to the 90-day trial period that is applied to others (new to a job) you would be looking for other employment.

That is based on your election platform.

While I understand there is still an active investigation going on by the Auditor General's Office, re: the Northland Events Centre, and that the NRC appears to have some queries concerning ratepayer billing and money paid to the Northern Rugby Union, plus what exactly is the function of the centre? It is now vastly different from the original plan.

May I suggest Morris, in your capacity as mayor, you have the vested authority, "by the electorate" to order your council and the paid council employees, to open the books on exactly how much rate money has been paid to the NRU.

As an example, there is a \$300,000 loan that I understand has been written off. Plus, money in the vicinity of \$4 million to \$5 million dollars above the stipulated \$3 million cap.

To sum up, the NRU owned nothing of Okara Park, it had a peppercorn lease of \$1. The NRU while holding that lease, failed to maintain the buildings and car park and was in debt up to its eyeballs. Yet council decided to buy the lease/resource consent from the NRU that council had paid for in the first instance.

Sadly, you as mayor are left holding the buck for a situation not of your doing. You can change the culture, within the district Council, you can insist on openness, you can instruct your councillors to respond to questions from the electorate, "in writing" and not through the CEO or some other paid employee.

I wish you all the best for the rest of your term.

Brian J Craig
Whangarei