

Bainbridge Island Council Member Peltier
July 13, 2017

Community Taxes and Debt Task Force

Agenda Bill Description

Bainbridge Islanders are understandably concerned about the many taxes they are required to pay. Of particular concern are property taxes, which are placing an increased burden on Islanders of all economic levels. This concern will likely be heightened by the recent legislation at the State Capital to increase K-12 funding to satisfy the State Supreme Court's *McCleary* Decision through increased property taxes. It's estimated that increase will add \$490 to the average home on Bainbridge Island.

Bainbridge Islanders are looking to the City for fiscal responsibility but they are also looking for leadership amongst the Island's various taxing districts on their behalf. That leadership by the City might include:

1. An initiative by the City of Bainbridge Island to provide easily understood information regarding the community of Bainbridge Island's various taxes and overall debt. This could include a well designed webpage on the City's site dedicated to information regarding taxation and bonds.
2. Additional financial policies at C.O.B.I. regarding fiscal responsibility and metrics related to how spending impacts the community.
3. A strategy and commitment by the City to work with the Island's other taxing districts to coordinate requests for new bond measures within the context of existing debt and with sensitivity as to how Bainbridge Islanders are impacted by that ongoing debt.

To advise and provide involvement by citizens, I am proposing that the City establish a temporary task force that would be formed and convened at the earliest time practical. The task or mission statement would be to develop recommendations to the City Council regarding the three points listed above. The Community Debt and Taxation Task Force could consist of around 15 members with backgrounds in the following fields: 1) finance and accounting; 2) government service; 3) web design; 4) experience working with one of the other Island taxing districts; and 5) any other background or knowledge that could be helpful to the task force's mission.