

MINUTES
Public Meeting
Denman Island Community Back Hall
January 12, 2026

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Present: Jenny Balke (Chair); Ron Wilson (Vice-Chair); Andrew Pringle (Secretary); and Tony Gregson (director); Stirling Fraser (Treasurer) and nine members.

DIRA Business

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion to accept the agenda was approved with no changes.
3. **Approval of Previous Public Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes of December 8, 2025, was approved with no changes.

Committee & Liaison Reports & Activities

MEOW (Make Everyone Wanted)

Fireweed gave a presentation on MEOW which offers a program of spaying and neutering at a reduced cost of feral and home cats. MEOW became a registered charity in 2006. Over the years they have handled 313 cats, 82 of them feral. Half of the feral cats were female which probably prevented the birth of about a thousand kittens given the natural rate of reproduction. Cost of the procedures has tripled since the program began. MEOW is open to everyone regardless of income. People are generally expected to cover the cost but MEOW will subsidize where people do not have the money, keeping mind that MEOW's income is dependent on donations, most of them through the Bottle Depot.

INNER ISLAND DANCE COLLECTIVE

Quinn Lundberg and Taina Uitto have a presentation on the work of the Collective which was the recipient of a Recreation Grant (\$1,250) in 2025. The Collective came about because skills-based training tends to drop off after age seven on island when parents are compelled to send kids off-island which is time-consuming and expensive. At the same time, Denman has a lot of highly-trained people in areas like dance, theatre, and gymnastics who love to work with kids. The Collective is able to pay instructors and can also offer subsidies (part of the recreation grant went to bursaries). They now offer a program ranging in ages from very young children to seniors. Parents are very pleased, classes are growing, and kids enjoy the rigour of learning an important arts skill. The Collective is looking ahead to stabilize availability of the program over time given that instructors will come and go.

ISLAND TRUST UPDATE

Jenny Balke gave a brief update on behalf of Trustee David Graham on upcoming meetings which will be concerned with review of a staff report on housing policies, and changes to the density bank.

DIRA's FUTURE

After last year's crisis in filling seats on the board, the DIRA Executive is concerned about the growing difficulty of finding directors amongst senior residents who are willing to carry an administrative burden on a volunteer basis. For that reason, the board is planning to meet with HIRA (Hornby Island Residents Association), who have had a paid Executive Director for the past twenty years, to see how that works and if that could be an option for Denman Island.

DICES UPDATE on Food Bank

Gracie MacDonald, Executive Director of DICES, submitted an update on the presentation to the public meeting of December 8th. The Food Bank had a very successful Christmas drive, creating 49 holiday hampers and collecting enough donations to sustain the Food Bank until the end of the summer. Gracie conveyed DICES thanks to all the volunteers and islanders for their fabulous generosity. There are now 150 people who personally come to the food bank on a regular basis, so the number of people, including children who rely on the service, is actually higher

PUBLIC INPUT FORUM

City West

Steve Hawkins requested the meeting to pass a motion regarding the lack of information from City West on completion of the installation of connections for fibre-to-home. Steve said that the CVRD and Ministry of Citizen Services have been very responsive to concerns about the lack of accountability, but ultimately pressure had to be brought on City West which is actually getting the extra \$2 million in funding announced early last year for completion.

MOTION: That DIRA submit letters to CVRD Area A Director Daniel Arbour, the BC Ministry of Citizen Services, and Northern Development Trust requiring City West to provide information on:

- Current status of project completion
- Status of recent milestones

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- Which areas or properties remain unserved and why
- Expected timelines for remaining connections, and
- Whether additional funding is required to complete universal service.

Moved Steve Hawkins; seconded Ron Wilson; CARRIED.

The meeting ended at 8:32 on a motion to adjourn.