

“Always in Control?” — What Member Control Really Means at Delaire

At the most recent Board meeting, the president emphasized a central message:

“The members always have complete control on all assessments, as well as how any of our capital funds are spent, by exercising their vote.”

It’s a powerful statement.

It sounds reassuring.

It suggests that members have direct, ongoing authority over assessments and capital spending.

But when you compare this message to how Delaire’s governance process **actually works**, a different picture emerges — **one where member control is far more limited, conditional, and structurally constrained than the phrase implies.**

This isn’t about opinions.

This isn’t about accusations.

This is simply about **how the system functions in practice.**

1. The Board already has full authority to pay off the existing debt — without any member vote

This is the foundational fact:

The Board does not need member approval to use the Debt Service Fund to pay down or pay off debt tied to previously approved capital projects.

That is exactly the situation today.

So when the Board **links the payoff** of the old assessment to approval of a new permanent assessment, it is not because members must vote.

It is because the Board has chosen to make the payoff conditional.

If members **truly “always have control,”** the Board could:

- pay off the old debt now
- end the old assessment now
- and then ask members separately whether they want a new permanent assessment

That would be genuine control.

2. The Board says members can vote on assessments whenever they choose — but that’s not how the system works

The president stated:

“The members always have complete control... by exercising their vote.”

But here is the actual process:

- The Board controls what appears on the ballot.
- The Board is not required to schedule a vote on an assessment.
- The Board has no incentive to voluntarily put a revenue-reducing question on the ballot.

So how would a vote happen?

It would require **a petition signed by 30 members.**

That is not whenever members choose.

That is “whenever 30 members organize, coordinate, and formally petition.”

How often does that happen at Delaire?

Those are very different things.

3. If members truly have control, why is the payoff tied to a new permanent assessment?

The president framed the current ballot as:

- “fairness”
- “responsibility”
- “the future of Delaire’s capital needs”
- and a “level playing field”

But the structure of the vote tells a different story:

- The payoff of the old assessment is bundled with approval of a new permanent assessment.
- The Board could pay off the old debt today without a vote.
- The Board chose not to.
- The Board chose to make payoff conditional on approving a new, ongoing revenue stream.

If members truly “always have control,” **the payoff would not be used as leverage.**

Control means choice.

A conditional payoff is not a choice.

4. If the Board genuinely wants members to control assessments, there is a simple solution

There is a transparent, democratic way to prove that member control is real:

A. **Unlink the payoff from the new assessment**

Let members vote on the permanent assessment *on its own merits*, not as a condition for paying off old debt.

B. **If members approve a permanent assessment, make it subject to an annual renewal vote**

Delaire already holds Board elections every year.

Adding one line to the ballot would be simple:

“Shall the permanent capital assessment be renewed for the coming year, and at what rate?”

That is what real member control looks like.

Not theoretical control.

Not rhetorical control.

Actual, practical, annual control.

5. The current structure gives the appearance of member control — not the reality

The president’s statement sounds empowering:

“Members always have complete control... by exercising their vote.”

But the mechanics tell a different story:

- **The Board can pay off the debt without a vote.**
- **The Board chooses not to.**
- **The Board ties the payoff to approval of a new permanent assessment.**
- **The Board controls the ballot.**
- **Members can only force a vote through a 30-signature petition.**

Under that structure, members are not “always in control.”

They are “in control if they can organize a petition and overcome structural barriers.”

That’s not the same thing.

6. Member control should be simple, not theoretical

If the Board truly believes in member control:

- **Unlink the payoff.**
- **Let members vote on the permanent assessment by itself.**
- **And if it passes, let members renew it annually.**

That is transparent.

That is democratic.

That is real control.

Anything less is control in name only — a phrase that sounds empowering, but functions very differently in practice.

VOTE NO ON THE PERMANENT ASSESSMENT