

Springfield News and Views

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COUNCILOR COMPENSATION BY-LAW CHANGES PROPOSED

The present system of councilor compensation needs improvement to prevent excessive expenditures from accumulating throughout the year. In 2007 the councilor from Ward 1 incurred a total of \$61,000.00 in expenditures which would include indemnity, mileage, hotel rooms, air fares, meals, conferences, etc. This means on the average 61 families (households) would have paid municipal property taxes to offset the expenses of one councilor. \$61,000.00 is substantially higher in comparison to the average compensation paid to members of council throughout the capital region. This amount far exceeds the remainder of the Springfield council members who stay well under the \$50,000.00/annum range. One of my first recommendations to council in November, 2006 was for members of council to look at the streamlining the number of the different committees and conferences they attend by self evaluation. It is true that the attendance of certain conferences and committees are very beneficial to the municipality in the big picture. Others have very little value or no value to the present day or future of the municipality. In reality we are not operating a travel agency or a college to educate a councilor on activities which do not benefit the RM. We have a Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer and a large group of Managers and Assistant Managers who have the expertise to operate and manage the RM. Passing a resolution to attend a meaningless conference or event is an irresponsible way of respecting the public purse. It is no different than passing a resolution to rob the municipality. The current councilor compensation policies and bylaws need to be updated as there are no mechanisms in place to prevent a member of council from incurring or accruing excessive expenditures. Since the self policing method is not working I as the head of council have brought forward a resolution to update the compensation system (bylaws and policies) which will have the adequate checks and balances for all of council and which includes an expenditure/salary cap of \$50,000 per annum. This resolution #08-427 was approved by council to move forward with the changes proposed on September 3, 2008. We will see shortly when councilors vote for the new improved compensation by-law who are working for the people and who are working for themselves.