



OTTAWA TAX PAYERS ADVOCACY GROUP

"The Silent Majority is Silent No More"

The Ottawa Taxpayer Advocacy Group Releases Detailed Plan for 2 Year Budget Freeze – No New Money

Monthly Variance Report

In 2008 Ottawa was charged taxpayers 50% above the Canadian average for property tax and utility bill for a single detached home. This was the worst record in Ontario and Canada.

http://www.edmonton.ca/business/documents/PropertyTax_Report_2008revised.pdf

[t_2008revised.pdf](#)

The bus garage discussion started at about 38 million dollars and is likely to be completed at a cost of 100 million dollars. The fire department recently announced that they are already over budget, other departments have failed to achieve efficiencies. If there were monthly budget variance meetings, Council would be able to take preventive decisions as opposed to being informed after the fact. Efficiency targets have simply become a way to hide spending growth and raid the reserves to pay for targets that managers have no intention of meeting. The intent of legislative reserve requirements is emergency savings and should not be used as a tool to hide the real spending increase.

While a 2 year budget freeze should make departments more efficient, Council should have a monthly variance report that includes attrition, hiring and job classification changes, consulting fees, overtime, different types of benefits, Top 35 capital projects and Top 15 departments by operating cost. Council should spend at least a couple of days to discuss the reports and pass motions that will reduce costs. Is there any reason why Council should not have such a reports on a monthly basis? If staff were asked to implement this, how long will it take to start producing the reports?

City Response:

In response to a similar comment made by OTAG last year, the following was provided which dealt with municipal comparisons.

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In addition, City Council at its meeting of March 24, 2010 approved the following motion with respect to positions that become vacant due to retirement:

"That staff routinely analyze each position that will become vacant due to retirement looking at the job description, compensation level and whether work could be consolidated with another position and report to the Corporate Services Economic Development meeting on the results of such analysis on a quarterly basis."

Results of the first quarter review indicate that 55 positions became vacant due to retirement. Thirty of these positions have been permanently filled, the remainder are either in the process of being filled, redesigned or still under review by the Manager. It should be noted that as a result of the Manager's review of position requirements and subsequent compensation reviews to date, two have resulted in the creation of positions at a lower compensation rate and two at a higher compensation rate.

Ottawa Taxpayer Advocacy Group
www.ottawataxpayer.com
