

# ORONO Weekly Times

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Orono Weekly Times

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## Pay procedure merits criticism

Councillors are always quick to point out, it is uncomfortable for them to set their own salaries. No matter how the salary increase is handled, they are always portrayed as being caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

It is for this very reason, the process of elected officials setting their own salaries should be done in as open a manner as possible.

Whether the recent Clarington council increase of 18 per cent on the Mayor's salary and 14 per cent for the councillors was appropriate or not, the way it was handled makes it look like it was snuck through the back door.

The resolution dealing with council remuneration was not listed anywhere on the agenda of the January 19th council meeting nor was there a report issued previously dealing with the matter. Councillor Jim Schell said while he had been working on the resolution since May, he waited till January to introduce it because he didn't want to spring the motion on a new council, and he wanted to take advantage of the Rogers Cable Television coverage at the January 19th meeting.

With council going behind closed doors for a lengthy in-camera session, and nothing left on the agenda, the Rogers Cable camera crews went home as did everyone else. The pay raise and severance package motion which passed unanimously, was entered into the recorded minutes of that meeting, but went through under the radar screen.

While Councillors are technically well within their right to suspend the rules and introduce motions at any time, in this instance it does smack of back room politics.

In February 2002, council adopted a report that tied councilor salary increases to that of the negotiated settlements of the unionized staff, and set councillors' pay raises to 40 per cent of the mayors. There was a third recommendation in that report which would have made this whole pay raise package easier to digest. The recommendation was that councillors at the end of their three year term would set the pay for the following term of council. The report (ADM 03-02) states, "This is prudent to ensure integrity in the process as well as to address any negative criticism, perceived or otherwise, from the public." Council chose to not to act on this clause in the report.

Apparently 'at the end of the day', council can pretty much do what they like, as evidenced on the January 19th meeting.

## Letter to the Editor

### Sever the severance

Dear Editor:

I really enjoy and appreciate being able to read and hear of the latest news from my home community of Clarington. It helps me to keep in touch.

But, these past few months there have been a few articles that have me puzzled and wondering have things really changed that much in the short three years that I have been gone?

First, it was only a couple of months or so ago that the news reported on a former Mayor in the Region of Durham receiving in excess of \$100,000. as a severance package when he left local Council to serve at the Provincial level of government.

Then, I read the news that the current Council of Oshawa has denied the former Mayor of Oshawa her right to a severance package of \$56,000.00 that was the result of an approved policy put in place a few years ago by a former Council. (Can a Council really do that - treat one person different than everyone else is treated?)

At the Regional level of government it is only within the past three years that the Regional Council approved an increase to the Regional severance package that, up until that time, was a month's salary for every year served up to a maximum of 12 twelve years. The severance package is now much healthier. And, in this morning's Toronto Star, it is

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## Opinion by Rob MacDonald

### A burning issue

As I perused our Saturday Star, there was our mayor, John Mutton promoting an idea that really burns me - garbage incineration, or in his politically correct terms "energy from waste". He would like to use what he describes as a safe non-polluting incineration process to reduce the levels of waste going to landfill (dumps)! Wouldn't everybody! It doesn't exist!

The first law of physics states that matter can neither be destroyed nor created. In other words if you start out with a ton of garbage, no matter what you do to it, you will still have a ton of matter. If you burn it and are left with 100 lbs. of toxic ash (that no one wants or knows how to safely dispose of) the other

1900 lbs. went up the stack. What goes up comes down, as particulate all over the lakes and countryside, headed to a water glass, or a pair of lungs near you. If "their" stack scrubbers can extract all the pollutants and toxins before they head off across the country (they can't), you'd have your missing 1900 lbs. of transformed garbage, much of it plastic and chemical based carcinogens.

How is that waste reduction? How does this not contribute to global warming?

Many people are not aware that the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) are actually in order of their positive impact on our environment. So, while recycling is good, it has less of an impact than the other two.

We as a society need to

embrace the first two R's to really make an impact—hopefully soon! Considering that Canadians are the largest per capita producers of garbage! Much of what we purchase is over packaged and disposable.

Most manufacturers want little to do with reusing. The soft drink industry under the title of Ontario Multi Material Recycling Industries (OMMRI) helped fund our blue boxes to avoid government legislated deposits on cans, or from their view worse yet, the mandatory use of reusable bottles.

When the Brewer's Retail can boast that 98% of it's bottles come back, but only 50% of pop cans get recycled, something's wrong. Prince

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