

Council declines option to delay staff raises

COLLEGE CHRONICLE
By Bob Owen
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Responding to calls he had received from township residents and additional information he had gathered, Councillor Tim Gilligan proposed to Cramahe council on February 6 that it rescind raises given to staff. The raises could be reviewed again at budget time in March, he suggested.

The proposal launched a lively discussion on the topic, but resulted in no change.

Deviating from the rules of procedure in order to allow debate, Mayor Marc Coombs allowed a discussion without asking for a seconder for the motion.

Mr. Gilligan was concerned on two accounts about the pay being received by some supervisory officers. One is the level of pay. As well, they all live outside the community. The councillor is disturbed that the pay they are given is spent outside the community. In the future he'd like to see a greater effort to hire locally.

But his big concern on February 6 was the amount being paid and how council can bring salaries more into line with other communities in the area.

Councillor Ed Van Egmond was the first to respond to Mr. Gilligan's suggestion.

Mr. Van Egmond acknowledged that the raise may have been a little high but observed that the three per cent raise was

also going to those at the low end of the pay scale. Owing a farm, he said he has seen his income drop 10 per cent a year for the last four years.

Township Clerk Administrator Christie Alexander stated that pay equity rules require municipalities to give a raise across the board, if anyone receives one.

Mayor Marc Coombs noted the last council had discussed performance reviews, but they had not been instituted. Since the February 6 meeting, he has gone on record that he will endeavour to have these put into place.

If the township did institute performance reviews, it would have the option of granting zero pay increases, with performance bonuses to those who merited them.

OTHER MEMBERS SPEAK

Councillor Gilligan didn't accept Councillor Pat Westrope's argument that she had made the original motion. He offered that she could go back on her decision.

Deputy Mayor Jim Williams said he did not like the optics of council changing its mind so quickly. He didn't like the work that would be involved if council voted to rescind the raise. He also questioned the validity of the comparisons with other

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Ratepayers' ire raised by raises

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It was generally agreed by those in attendance at the Cramahe Ratepayers Association meeting on February 8, that the current staff salary situation in Cramahe Township is unacceptable.

Cramahe Township Council voted in its first business meeting on December 19 to give staff an across-the-board three per cent increase.

Information published by the *Chronicle* on January 24 pointed out numerous situations where Cramahe administrators were paid more than the norm for their job categories.

Councillor Tim Gilligan, responding to calls from

residents and new information, moved at the February 6 meeting of Cramahe Council to have the raises rescinded until budget time in March. No one on council seconded his motion and it died.

Cramahe Ratepayers Chair, Ferne Dobson reminded members at their

February 8 meeting that the members of council had campaigned on platforms of fiscal prudence. She suggested that the high salaries of some staff in the township should be frozen until people doing the same

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WINTER DRIVING ADVISORY

Northumberland OPP are asking the motoring public to slow down and exercise caution on roadways in the county.

Localized snowfalls and below normal temperatures have produced varying road conditions resulting in a higher than normal number of collisions, some of them serious.

The most common cause or driver action in these collisions is listed as "speed too fast for conditions".

Drivers must moderate their speed if they expect to be able to slow or take

evasive action, OPP advise, and using cruise control in less than ideal conditions is an unsafe practice.

Other tips include:

- clean windows and headlights are a must; if you can't see you can't drive;

- increase your following distance. Start braking early to help you find out how much traction or stopping power you have.

- Unsafe speed is a contributing factor in 35 per cent of all fatal motor vehicle collisions, so slow down.

