

# New merit raise system has region councillors confused

by Carmela Fragomera:  
A complicated merit system that could reward hard working regional employees with salary increases as high as 20 per cent

has left regional councillors confused, bewildered and befuddled. "Nobody understands it," said Burlington councillor Joan Little before the Region's

finance and administration committee finally decided to create a sub-committee to deal with the new concept. The concept was created by the consulting

firm of A.V. Chapman and adopted by the Region in 1981. The Region had commissioned the \$14,000 Chapman study to bring staff salaries up to a comparable rate with the private sector and other regions. The study also devised a system for salary increases based on performance in relation to what the community would expect the worker to be paid.

"It's an open salary concept," explained Dennis Perlin, regional chief administrative officer.

All employees who merited it would get the same base increase, and then a possible

additional increase based on their job performance.

"You have to be prepared to give a 16 to 17 per cent, or even higher salary increase for some individuals," Perlin said.

For individuals who aren't performing up to the expected level, but are still considered to have potential, the merit system could reward them with no increase at all. As the cost of living and inflation continue to rise, this worker would actually have his salary reduced.

Perlin warned the committee it could be faced with high increases, though, if it accepted Chapman's system.

"That's what the open salary concept is all about," he said. Perlin said he didn't think councillors would be receptive to a 16, or 20 per cent increase and suggested they might want to look at the traditional methods of salary increases.

"It has become more obvious that the Chapman plan is difficult to understand and is difficult to apply in these times of restraint," Perlin said in his report to the committee.

Perlin's report recommended a modified salary plan be developed using the Chapman plan as the base.

"A 20 per cent increase may be difficult for the politician and the community to accept," he told the committee.

The committee did adopt a performance evaluation manual, but left the manner in which individual job performance would be rewarded up to the new sub-committee to investigate.

The Chapman report had been put into practice for department heads in 1982. The following year, however, provincial wage restraints were in effect and the plan proved unworkable. This situation continues with restraints still in effect.

## Region's off hook on dumping charge

Halton region is off the hook concerning public charges that an American-based company supplying some of its chemicals is illegally "dumping" the materials in Canada.

The region's planning and public works committee had given conditional approval to the company's low tender bid on ferric chloride, a chemical used in Halton's sewage treatment plants.

One of the company's competitors, noting that the bid was far below its own and those of other Canadian companies, warned the committee that if the American firm is "dumping" the chemical in Canada—undercutting other bids to bring it across the border—the region may be party to crime.

With officials of the American firm on hand last Wednesday to deny the allegations, council opted to steer clear of any legal ramifications by having the firm indemnify the region from paying duty should the need arise.

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