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# THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

**TUESDAY,**  
 January 18, 2011

Halton Hills' award-winning newspaper

## Police pay dominates budget debate

By **CHRISTINA COMMISSO**  
*Metroland Media Group*

Equating the proposed tax increase for police services to a "large cup of coffee each month" didn't sit well with some regional councillors, who questioned the department's string of wage increases during last week's budget meeting.

Halton Police's request of \$116.4 million from the Region means residents who paid on average \$460 of their residential taxes for policing, will now be paying \$480—a variance police chief Gary Crowell equated to a monthly cup of joe.

"Absolutely, I have concerns over it," said Halton Hills Councillor Jane Fogal, chairman of the administration and finance committee. "There will be questions asked."

"I wonder why our police costs are going up at this rate. If so much is based on salary, what are those contract settlements?" Fogal wonders.

"The \$20 is not the problem," said Burlington Councillor John Taylor. "It's the \$20 every year for the last five to 10 years, and going forward it's the \$21, \$22, \$23. That's a problem because everyone else wants a double-double."

The police budget shows a 6.9 per cent or \$7.6 million increase from 2010. Last year's police budget translated to a 0.1 per cent tax increase. This year's budget, if approved, will result in a 1.5 per cent tax increase.

When questioned about the cumulative pay increase of a median-level policeman over the last 10 years, Crowell said he couldn't provide the numbers, as wages are determined by way of collective agreements with various boards, but did say Halton officers were "somewhere in the middle," of the pay scale, compared to neighbouring services.

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*High fashion*



During her spectacular dance routine at the Georgetown District High School fashion show in aid of the Because I am a Girl campaign, Megan Jukes became airborne. (Inset left) Aubry Petrick blows a kiss to the crowd. **See story page 7.**

Photos by Ted Brown



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