

Region

1982 budget given approval

A 1982 budget of more than \$3 million has been given Halton Region's stamp of approval. Regional councillors last week approved the budget, of which they will pay \$650,000, and urged the Provincial government to also approve the amount.

Spokesman for the CAS had urged members of the health and social services and administration and finance committee to approve the budget, which they felt could not be reduced any further without seriously harming the ability of the agency to meet the needs of children.

"This is a very bare bones kind of budget. I just don't see how the society could be expected to operate with any less," commented Coun. Ted McDonald.

The budget must now be presented to the Provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services for approval.

Crafts room must wait

A new crafts room for Halton Centennial Manor will have to wait until 1983 at least.

That's the word delivered to regional councillors recently by the Provincial ministry controlling the purse strings.

Councillors agreed to a motion to approach the Ministry of Community and Social Services later in 1982 to ensure that money for the project is made available in the next budget.

Davis making a mistake

Bill Davis may be making a serious mistake by re-appointing four members of the Niagara Escarpment Commission for only a one-year term, regional councillors decided last week.

Councillors gave their approval to a planning and public works committee recommendation expressing concern over the short term appointments "at this stage in the development of the Niagara Escarpment Plan."

In a report to committee members, Regional planning director Rash Mohammed noted that two of the four members reappointed for the short terms (artist Robert Bateman and former Milton Mayor Ann MacArthur) have been members of the NEC since its inception in 1973.

"While it has been indicated that the reason for the shortened term is because the Province has applied a policy of rotating membership to the Commission, staff is of the opinion that it would be unwise to alter the composition of the Commission, until the Plan for the Niagara Escarpment is approved and the future role of the Commission has been established," he wrote.

Vaccinations available

Vaccinations for a wide variety of preventable, but serious, diseases will be available for children and adults through the regional health department between March and June.

In a recent press release, chief public health nurse Dorothy Craig said the vaccination program is being offered primarily to school children, but adults were also welcome to have their shots updated.

A consent form is being sent home through the schools. Parents are urged to complete the form or take their children to their family doctor for vaccine. Shots for measles, mumps and rubella will be offered for children in Kindergarten, Grades 1, 7 and 8. Vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus and polio shots should be received every five years.

—Steve Arnold

Halton teachers

Early retirement considered

By ALEX MATHESON
Special to The Champion
Teachers want to investigate an early retirement incentive plan although they don't visualize much gain. However, there seems to be little financial justification to convince the Halton Board of Education to go for such a scheme.

An extreme surplus of teachers would be one reason to use such a plan, said Rae Stoness, superintendent of instruction for the board.

An infusion of new blood into the teaching system is another reason for such a system he said.

Halton is developing an aging staff, so they may be a factor, said Mr. Stoness.

This would favor a system that gave incentives to the teachers nearing retirement.

However, both Mr. Stoness and representatives of the teaching organizations don't see the board perceiving much financial savings by getting these people out of the system.

"They are about to leave anyway, so why give an incentive?" asked trustee Cam Jackson.

In addition, if they have reached the full pension retirement position, they will be receiving 70 per cent of an average of their last seven years salary anyway.

This is half funded by the Province, hence the taxpayer.

So to realize an immediate savings for the taxpayer, the board would have to hire somebody for less than 65 per cent of the average of the retiring teacher's last seven year's pay, confirmed Mr. Stoness.

To really hope to make gains for the taxpayer, the board would have to encourage retirement of people who have not reached full pension.

The penalties in pension loss for teachers retiring below full amount is substantial.

Mr. Stoness admitted that on the "new blood" theory these were not really the people the board wanted to get rid of.

There may be a benefit to the economy of the province to retire some teachers in favor of certified teachers not now working, he said.

With a financial squeeze to make early retirement profitable, the board may be forced into hiring

teachers who don't exactly fit the needs, Mr. Stoness admitted.

Then there is the question of how much the incentive to retire would cost the board.

"There are a lot of unanswered questions and we are just at the investigation stage," he said.

Mr. Stoness received requests within the past week from both the Halton Elementary Teachers' Association and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation district 9 Halton to set up a committee to study the idea.

"We are not married to the idea and we are not sure we need it," said Gerry Dunn, president of HETA.

Mr. Dunn doubts that more than half-a-dozen teachers a year in each panel would be interested in such a plan.

There are a lot of absence schemes already in place like deferred salary, he added.

He believes that the financial advantages in the elementary panel may not be as great for the board.

A full pension for a teacher is based on a 90 factor, he explained. That is, full pension is available when the combination of teaching service and age add up to 90.

If you left before attaining the 90 level the drop in pension could be as much as five per cent per year, he added.

"I don't think people would flock to the plan," he said.

"I'm in favor of it but not dying to get it," said Joe Harwood, president of the local branch of the OSSTF.

It would not be an issue in bargaining, but a board policy like the deferred salary leave plan to be administered as the board thought fit.

However, Mr. Harwood would not rule out its becoming a bargaining issue if implemented by the board, then withdrawn or not utilized at all.

"It is not a good deal for the board. The scheme could be used by the teachers to get more bodies on staff," said Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Jackson fears that someone near retirement might leave early from a soon-to-be-redundant position. This would force the board to hire a teacher it didn't really want in the long run.

Although in theory the board can lay off redundant teachers, in practice it is difficult to do, he said.

He admitted that there could be a saving to the board in the first year, but it would evaporate over time as the new teacher's salary grew faster than the one being replaced.

Mr. Jackson doesn't see the replacement teachers being hired at the lowest rates. The board is looking for specialized teachers to do a job and they won't come for \$17,000 or \$18,000 but closer to \$25,000 he said.

Such a system would mean that "taxpayers would be paying to have teachers stay at home," he said.

"There is no way to give financial inducement to retire early without it costing more in the long run," he added.

"Why do teachers have to be given so many financial inducements to do things?" Mr. Jackson asked.

A retiring teacher earns more in his first year out, if at full pension, than he does teaching.

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