



COMMENT

Province better come up with bail out cash

The Halton District School Board may be stuck between a proverbial rock and a hard place if the Ontario government doesn't come up with some bail out money to offset the cost of teacher retirement gratuities.

The board recently learned from its business superintendent that it stands to run a \$2.2-million deficit by dipping into the board's reserve fund.

The budgetary shortfall will become a much greater concern if the Province isn't willing to pony up the cash to help out school boards across Ontario. Since boards aren't permitted to run deficits, Education Director Dusty Papke has said cuts to the Halton public board's budget may be the only way out of the mess.

Prior to 1998, school boards were permitted to keep the difference between retiring and new teachers' salaries and what was paid for the former's gratuities. That used to bring \$6-million to the Halton District School Board. Not anymore.

While previous administrations may be responsible for creating and continuing retirement gratuities the current government must shoulder some of the blame for creating a system that finds teachers leaving in record numbers.



OUR READERS WRITE

Councillor Malboeuf holds firm in his belief that flyer distributed by colleague was inappropriate due to inclusion of Town name, address

Dear Editor:

There has been much written and reported lately pertaining to Councillor John Challinor's letter on behalf of the Friends of E.C. Drury Park (Friends), not all of it accurate or unbiased and so I have no choice but to respond in this manner to make my position known.

I, as well as other members of council, including the mayor, received several phone calls from residents questioning the Town's involvement in this solicitation for funds as well as to the appropriateness of Councillor Challinor's involvement.

As a member of council it's my responsibility to bring the concerns of residents before council.

That's what I did. I don't believe what Councillor Challinor did was proper. It may have been legal but I don't think it was ethical and the fact the Town name and address was used on the letter was another reason for my raising it.

The mayor used his influence over council to deny me the opportunity to question and debate Councillor Challinor face-to-face in a public forum over this issue — indicating to me that there may be a reason

for concern.

Councillor Challinor sees nothing wrong in what he did.

The mayor, the group Friends and their supporters agree with him.

I wonder if they would feel the same had it been I who had sent out a letter using my position on council to solicit donations on behalf of the developer, also a Milton resident, in order to assist him in paying off the legal expenses he incurred over the same issue.

My concerns over the involvement of the School Advisory Council is due to the fact that it's using its charitable status to issue tax receipts for money received that ends up in the hands of a lawyer.

How can a lawyer be the beneficiary of a 'charitable donation'? Some say I'm trying to prevent Friends from raising funds, which isn't true: I have no problem with the group soliciting donations. I have even donated a couple toonies and loonies myself.

What I'm opposed to is a member of council using his elected position along

with the Town name and address to solicit funds on its behalf.

In a letter to the editor in Friday's Champion, a supporter of Friends stated that they recalled me "glad-handling" at various open houses held by the developer and advising people to go along with the proposal, implying that I had ties to the developer.

That's simply not true.

The only public meetings I attended on this issue were those public information meetings held by Town staff — the same meetings Councillor Challinor attended.

My support for the proposal came only after receiving the staff recommendation advising approval of the project along with a legal opinion that we couldn't prevent the development and to deny the application would only result in costly Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearings that we would lose.

That OMB hearing cost Milton tax payers more than \$250,000.

Milton has a shortage of geared-for-seniors
• see MALBOEUF on page 7

Have your say with a letter to the editor. Fax your letters to 878-4943, or drop them off at our office anytime at 191 Main St. E.



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by Steve Nease

