

Citizen-based compensation committee could be formed

Committee would make recommendation about town council members' salaries

By Christina Comisso
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With the salaries of elected representatives being a sensitive topic for councillors and the public alike, the Town is hoping to de-politicize the issue with a citizen compensation advisory committee.

Monday, the administration and planning committee approved the formation of the committee that will review councillors' and the mayor's salaries and recommend an increase, if warranted. Milton council will make the final decision on the committee Monday.

"I've been dealing with these kinds of things on and off and they're never the easiest to deal with," said Mayor Gord Krantz. "If you and I get one per cent, or half a per cent or a 50 per cent raise, you can turn it back in to the Town or take it and give it to your favourite charity," he suggested, explaining council doesn't have to accept a raise.

Krantz warned he wouldn't want to see a councillor oppose a pay hike, and later accept it. "That's when you become hypocritical and that has happened in the past."

In July, council and non-unionized Town staff received a two per cent salary increase as

part of their yearly wage adjustment.

The annual pay increases are to ensure Town staff and council salaries remain competitive and keep up with inflation. In 2010 council voted to freeze their salaries.

A council compensation review, undertaken every few years, ensures the salaries of Milton's councillors and mayor are in line with those of comparable municipalities.

The last review in 2007 led to a hefty increase — the mayor's salary increased from \$49,133 to \$60,480 and the rest of council saw an increase from \$21,096 to \$25,096.

Ward 6 Councillor Mike Cluett, who in the past has criticized council's yearly raises, said it's important Miltonians understand it's residents, not councillors, who would determine how well council should be compensated through the review process.

"I don't think there's a prevailing feeling in the public that we're overpaid...but I think we should take the citizens' committee recommendation seriously, but remembering that it is an advisory committee and we can accept whatever the pay increase may be, we can take it back or we can try to defer it to a future date of council. That's something we might want to consider."

Ward 4 Councillor Rick Malboeuf said he would be pleased to see salary recommendations taken out of staff and council's hands.

"I've been through this process before and my advice is to stay as far away from this issue

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The application form and information on the eligibility and duties of committee members can be found at www.sourcewater.ca.

The form and information will also be available at the head offices of the Grand River, Long Point Region, Catfish Creek and Kettle Creek conservation authorities. Check the website for office locations and contact information.

The deadline for applications is Friday, Dec. 2, 2011.

Send applications to:

Martin Keller, Source Protection Program Manager
Lake Erie Source Protection Region
c/o Grand River Conservation Authority
400 Clyde Rd., Cambridge ON N1R 5W6
Fax: (519) 621-4844
E-mail: mkeller@grandriver.ca

Find out more at www.sourcewater.ca