

Salaries should be in line with Newmarket: Hargrave

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them to discuss it. They can pull it at budget time, which is the best time," said Councillor Susanne Hilton who was the only member of council to oppose the proposed raises.

Ms Hilton opposed the hikes because she took issue with the process and suggested enlisting a compensation expert.

"I'm pulling it for the sole purpose of re-affirming my vote," she said.

Ms Hilton noted residents will be able to speak at the start of the budget meeting at 9 a.m. or when the council section of the budget is discussed.

"Quite often, the mayor brings things forward so they [residents] don't have to be there all day," Ms Kennedy said.

During the Nov. 15 meeting, council voted in favour of a 43.28-per-cent raise over two years. The mayor is expected to receive a 47.44-per-cent raise.

Councillor Rob Hargrave tabled the motion to raise the salaries of Whitchurch-Stouffville council members, putting them on par with East Gwillimbury.

"For the hours and the time we're putting into this job, there needs to be some parity," Mr. Hargrave said during the Nov. 1 meeting.

Mr. Hargrave said salaries for Whitchurch-Stouffville council, including the mayor, should be closer to those of Newmarket, which is on the tail-end of its growth and East Gwillimbury, which is at the start of its development.

Newmarket's mayor earns \$86,396 while East Gwillimbury's mayor has a \$61,191 salary, according to a Nov. 1 report from town treasurer Marc Pourvahidi.

Part-time Newmarket and East Gwillimbury councillors earn salaries of \$44,616 and \$38,700 respectively.

Local councillors earn \$27,729.66, while Mr. Emmerson's salary is \$42,148.63. Mr. Emmerson also receives a salary as the

town's representative at regional council.

Since mid-November, letters to the editor, mostly against the pay hikes, have poured into The Sun-Tribune office.

When it comes to residents expressing their thoughts to the mayor and councillors, things appear to be relatively quiet.

Councillor Richard Bartley said he has received one negative e-mail.

Ms Hilton has received fewer than 10 calls and e-mails supporting her.

Former mayor Sue Sherban called The Sun-Tribune office last week to voice her opposition.

"This job was supposed to be about passion and wanting to serve — this is being a career," she said. "I was quite flabbergasted. Forty-three per cent. Give me a break. Who gets off getting that kind of increase? It's just blatant arrogance."

The budget meeting is Jan. 24 at 9 a.m. in council chambers, 111 Sandford Dr.

NO VOTE MEANS NAY

A councillor's failure to raise his or her hand to indicate a yeah or nay vote may appear as an abstention, but it is in fact a nay vote, town clerk Michele Kennedy says.

According to the Municipal Act, the only time a councillor can abstain from voting is when a conflict has been declared.

During the Nov. 15 council meeting, Councillor Susanne Hilton did not raise her hand when council considered its recommendations. That is when all reports on the agenda, with the exception of reports that have been deferred, deleted or listed for separate discussion, be approved and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Although no directive has been handed down by the clerk's department for the councillors to be more obvious in future votes, according to Ms Kennedy, she did note "it's always a good practice to make it clear you have voted" because it's not always easy to see such things as the raised-finger-vote.

Ms Kennedy also noted "I don't run the meetings, the mayor does."

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