

October 26, 2015
Cobourg, ON –

Watchdog Responds to Parks and Recreation Staffing Report *Report Raises More Questions Than Provides Answers*

A report by Cobourg CAO Stephen Peacock regarding Parks and Recreation staffing levels proves that the numbers used by Lydia Smith in her September 1st letter to council were right, says the Cobourg Taxpayers Association.

CTA Treasurer Paul Pagnuelo said the CAO's report acknowledges that the numbers she used reflect the numbers in the Financial Information Return (FIR) that the Town is required to file annually with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

"In hindsight, I'm sure that Mayor Brocanier now regrets his poor choice of words at the September 15th Council meeting when he stated unequivocally that the information Ms. Smith used was erroneous," said Pagnuelo.

In a delegation to Council Monday night, Pagnuelo noted that the report raises more questions than it provides in the way of answers.

He said that the CAO didn't even attempt to reconcile his staffing numbers for the Parks and Recreation functions with those in the FIR.

"He also does not explain how the numbers that the Town submitted to the Ministry were arrived at and specifically what they represent."

Pagnuelo told council that the "overall" tax rate increases used by the CAO are disingenuous because they only include what the Town likes to refer to as the "Impact on Prior Existing Assessment".

"Putting aside the political spin, the fact of the matter is, no matter how one slices or dices it, overall municipal property taxes for general purposes according to the FIR and the Town's budget documents increased by 5.06% in 2011; 3.36% in 2012; 4.22% in 2013; and 3.23% in 2014."

Pagnuelo said that in the four year period from 2011 to 2014 municipal property taxes increased by almost \$3 million or 16.8% which is far more than the 7.4% shown in the CAO's numbers.

"If citizens can't rely on the information reported by their municipality to the provincial government as being accurate or if they are only getting selective, self-serving information from those in charge, who or what can they trust?"

The CTA's full analysis is available at www.cobourgtaxpayers.ca