



**Our slogan is Making Local Government Accountable. We have several ongoing issues to share with you, our local readers!**

- **CTA Directors meet with Mayor and Deputy Mayor**
- **Could Cobourg Electricity Bills be LOWER?**
- **No Semi-Annual Budget Report received from Council**
- **Taxpayers being asked for \$645,000 for a Travel Lift for Boaters**
- **CTA participates in Council's 2017 Pre-Budget Public Submissions**
- **Update on the Northumberland Taxpayers Coalition**
- **Update on Live Streaming of all Council Meetings**

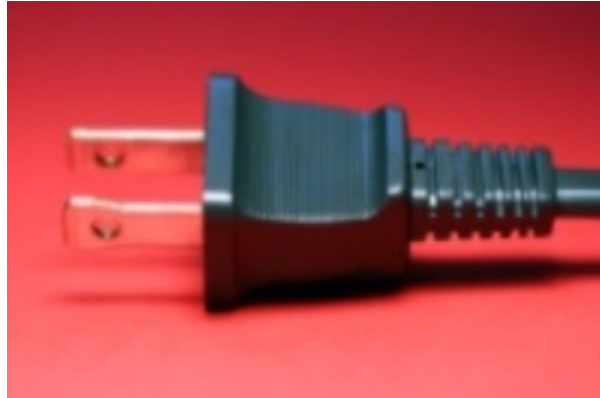
On October 19th, at the Cobourg Taxpayers Association's invitation, President Lydia Smith and Secretary Dennis Nabieszko met with Mayor Brocanier and Deputy Mayor Henderson at Victoria Hall.

The CTA wanted to clear up misunderstandings, air and resolve differences, and build relationships. Our intention was to see things from council's perspective and to have them understand the CTA better.

We were pleased with the outcome of the meeting and we think the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were as well. We believe the doors on both sides have been opened to allow easy discussions and quick resolutions going forward. We all

want Cobourg to thrive and prosper and intend to work to that end going forward.

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### **Could Cobourg Electricity Bills Be Lower?**

As reported in our summer newsletter, the CTA was granted intervener status in Lakefront Utilities (LUI) Cost of Service application hearing before the Ontario Energy Board (OEB). Our purpose was to question the proposed 10% increase to the electricity delivery rates that Lakefront charges its customers [Click here for more information](#). (On a personal note, I was shocked when I looked at one of my bills and saw that I paid \$82.00 for delivery on a \$365.00 bill!)

Lakefront Utilities pays the Town of Cobourg 7.25% interest on a \$7 million demand loan. This rate was first set in 2000. Over time, interest rates have slowly dropped to 3% or less. We don't understand why the Town continues to charge such a high interest rate. Why hasn't Lakefront negotiated a lower rate or found lower rate financing elsewhere?

The annual interest payment is over half a million dollars. If the interest rate were 3%, the interest would be \$210K. Why couldn't the almost \$300K saving be used to reduce customers' electricity bills?

Another area of concern is the role of Gil Brocanier. He is our town's Mayor. He also sits on the board of Lakefront Utilities. How can he represent the interests of each fairly?

What can you do? Contact Mayor Brocanier and ask about this issue. Here are his contact details: Tel: 289-251-5939 Email: [gbrocanier@cobourg.ca](mailto:gbrocanier@cobourg.ca)

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## **Cobourg Democracy Goes Hi-Tech**

Cobourg citizens will now be able to watch local democracy at work from the comfort of their home, cottage or winter getaway using a computer, smartphone or tablet.

Originally scheduled to launch on September 12th, the Town of Cobourg has completed the installation of the video production system for the web streaming of Council meetings. The equipment was tested during the October 24th Committee of the Whole meeting.

The Town experienced delays in the project due to a connection issue between the video production software and live streaming software. Working with its two suppliers, the solution required an additional piece of equipment to convert the video to an acceptable format.

“Live streaming is available through a link on the front page of CivicWeb <https://cobourg.civicweb.net/Portal/>. This viewing option is available while public meetings are in session,” said Kara Euale, Communications Officer for the Town. “At the end of the meeting the recording will be uploaded to the Town of Cobourg server and time stamped for easy viewing capabilities. A link to the recorded video will be available through the Meeting Agenda page or Meeting Minute’s page on CivicWeb. The time stamping feature will allow individuals to navigate directly to any discussion topic such as Protection Services or General Government Services through the use of hyperlinked headings.”

Archived video will be available for a period of three months. The in house recordings of public meetings will also provide Cogeco with the ability to broadcast both Committee of the Whole and Regular Council meetings on their network.

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**\$645,000**

That's the amount council has in the budget to help about 45 boaters get their boats out of the water this fall and put back in the spring.

For this past year, the CTA has done delegations, written letters, and talked to Councillors and staff asking them to remove the travel lift from the budget. Our most recent October 12 budget presentation can be found here:

[Bryan Lambert's presentation](#) (PDF document)

More information can be found at <http://cobourgtaxpayers.ca/>.

Council and staff's reply is not to worry. It is only a "place holder" and that a full business case will be prepared. Why would they even consider holding a place for this? Is this the leanest, most effective and efficient use of hard-earned tax money they can find to help Cobourg's taxpayers?

The Travel Lift only benefits a few financially secure people. It puts an unfair burden on seniors with fixed incomes and working families. Please remove the Travel Lift from the budget.

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## **No semi-annual Budget received from Council**

The CTA wrote to Deputy Mayor Henderson and council several months ago to ask how our town was doing financially with respect to the budget. We wanted to know if we were on track or whether we were over budget. We were disappointed because we were not given budget numbers.

Lydia Smith asked the question again at the public budget submission meeting on Oct. 12th. Still no reply. Still no actual spend information. Link to Lydia's presentation: [click here](#)

## **CTA supports Local Business but not free handouts**

Paul Pagnuelo presented at the October 12, 2016 Town's Budget Public Input meeting, on behalf of the Cobourg Taxpayers Association (CTA), its opposition to the Community Improvement Program (CIP) and its future Community Improvement Venture Initiative (CIVI). Some of the key highlights are:

- Enhancements to private property should be the responsibility of the building owner. The Town should not be in the business of funding grants or loans to private enterprise.
- It is unfair to non-participating businesses in the downtown area and elsewhere in Town.
- It is unfair to taxpayers that public money is being used to benefit a select few in the private sector and increase their wealth through property improvements instead of being directed to basic infrastructure or other capital projects.

- No true measurements on how CIP has affected vacancy rates, new tenants staying, or increase in sales or number of employees.
- There appears to be no credit analysis of the borrower by a qualified lender being conducted that we are aware of.

[Please visit www.cobourgtaxpayers.ca for the complete article and a link to the budget submission made by the CTA](http://www.cobourgtaxpayers.ca)

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## **News from the Northumberland Taxpayers Coalition**

Ever wonder where your hard-earned money goes when it is taken off the top of your tax bill to pay for county taxes? We have too!

A new group has been formed which we are calling The Northumberland Taxpayers Coalition. The group includes members from each of the four major citizens groups in the county: Port Hope, Cobourg, Hamilton Township and Cramahe. Additional feedback is also being provided from Brighton.

On Thursday, Sept. 29, one member of each of our groups met with the Chief Administrative Officer from Northumberland County, Jennifer Moore, as well as Glenn Dees, the financial officer for the county.

Here's something that will surprise you. **It was the first time in her eight years in office that Ms. Moore had ever been questioned in any detail about how county taxes are being spent.**

Some of the good news is that detailed budgets are provided with a time line of ten years. The county is also working on reducing the projected annual increases from 2.5% to a projected increase in next year's budget of 2%. We did impress upon Ms. Moore that this increase is still too large, and that the county should be moving in the direction of zero based budgeting.



The bad news is that two huge projects are weighing on the county budget: replacement of The Golden Plough, and replacement of the Campbellford Bridge. Ms. Moore also acknowledged that movements towards shared services and purchasing within the county has been slow. We strongly encouraged her that more needs to be done and that the county level is the best avenue for such initiatives. We also encouraged the need for more efficiencies at the department level within the county. Ms. Moore also acknowledged that on her watch there has never been a decrease in staffing levels at the county level to promote efficiencies.

To that end, the coalition has adopted a two pronged approach. We were able to determine which mayors within the county were responsible for overseeing which departments. We will be sending out e-mails to each of the mayors within the county to enquire of them what they are doing in terms of increasing efficiencies and shared services. We also plan to attend the county council budget meeting on December 14 of this year with as many of our members as possible. Come out and be a part of that meeting to find out how **your money** is being spent.

## PLEASE DONATE TO THE CTA

The CTA is completely volunteer run with no paid staff, no funding from government or special interests. Donations will be used to pay for Freedom of Information requests, our website, and other expenses to help everyone enjoy our Feel Good Town with less government waste and lower taxes.

Cheques are also welcomed and can be sent to:

Cobourg Taxpayers Association  
24 Pebble Beach Drive  
Cobourg ON K9A 2C5



Contact us at : [info@cobourgtaxpayers.ca](mailto:info@cobourgtaxpayers.ca)



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