

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

February 6, 2020

Dear Councillor,

We were pleased to see a discussion on implementing a Living Wage for municipal and Hamilton Public Library employees will be coming back on Friday, February 7th during GIC budget deliberations.

As you know, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Social Planning Council, Workforce Planning Hamilton and Hamilton & District Labour Council have been advocating for Living Wage in Hamilton since 2011 (and in some cases, even earlier). Together, with provincial partners, we helped lead the development of Ontario's Living Wage movement -which now counts more than 30 communities across Ontario. More than 300 employers have signed up and committed to implementing living wage within their organizations. You can read some of their testimonials on the [Ontario Living Wage website](#).

Last year's decision to increase wages of municipal crossing guards to the previous living wage rate of \$15.45 was appreciated; Hamilton's current living wage rate of \$16.45 was calculated and released in November, 2019 through the local leadership of SPRC and in conjunction with the Ontario Living Wage Network's framework that includes Stats Canada data and other relevant measures. We looked at the costs of food, rental housing, transportation and other essential costs for Hamilton families. Living Wage is a local, evidence-based approach to setting wages based on local family costs.



Raising wages for the lowest paid workers in our community is not only the right thing to do, but by helping to end working poverty, significant economic benefits will accrue. When the provincial government raised minimum wage in January 2018, [Ontario saw an increase in employment](#)... More employees had money to spend on goods and services, this in turn helped drive economic growth.

Recently the [City of Kingston signed on as Ontario's 4th certified Living Wage municipality](#). Smaller Ontario municipalities including [Huron County](#), [North Perth](#) and the [City of Cambridge](#) have already committed to implementing living wage for municipal employers. If Hamilton were to make a similar commitment, the municipality would become the largest in Ontario to become a certified Living Wage employer. It would send a strong message to our employees, the community and the province that our City is committed to ending working poverty.

We urge you to continue Hamilton's progress. Let's make Hamilton a Living Wage community in 2020.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cooper".

Tom Cooper

Director, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction