

From: Peter Meyer

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 7:39 PM

To: McRae, Angela <Angela.McRae@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Horwath, Andrea <Andrea.Horwath@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Written Submission - General Issues Committee - Budget Process

Dear Angela,

I would like to make the following submission to the General Issues Committee as the budget process begins on Monday Nov 6. I would hope and expect that this submission would carry the same weight as an in-person submission and for this reason I'm also copying my councilor who I hope will consider it when discussions begin, and our mayor.

There has been a number floated by city staff of a 2024 tax increase of 14%. While I suspect that this is pure nonsense and is only being presented to make a lesser, still excessive increase seem palatable. If not, then there needs to be some serious discussion with the staff who came up with this number -ie - tell them to be realistic in the proposals as this number is not close to that. Better yet, start the process by telling them the increase will not be above a certain value and go from there.

I've always been of the opinion that increases should not be more than the current rate of inflation. This number is reflective of what the taxpayer can afford and so is a justifiable number. Although retirees, who are on a fixed income would disagree,

But my main point is that it's about time council move to a budgeting process similar to that found in the private sector. That is, you don't tell your customers how much you're going to increase the cost of your product. You decide how much they can afford to pay and figure out how to run your business with that amount of an increase over last year's revenue. In the case of the city, pick a reasonable number that should not be more that 5%, hopefully less. Decide how to allocate that increase to the respective departments based on priority and it's their job to manage their budgets based on that amount. YOU NEVER ASK THEM WHAT THEY NEED, it's always an excessive amount. And if they have to cut staff, expenses, services, that's reality.

It's also about time to reduce funds to some of our [REDACTED], such as the police force. I'm not a " defund the police" person, but year after year they get whatever they ask for. Out of fear for consequences. I believe a 1 year freeze of the police budget is in order this year. Again it's up to the police administration to prioritize and allocate funds where they're most needed and I believe they can do that without affecting public safety.

But stop the nonsense that council needs to make all their departments happy. If they're all happy with their budget increase, you're doing something wrong. For once make affordability for the taxpayer the top priority.

Thanks You
Peter Meyer