

CITY OF HAMILTON

NOTICE OF MOTION

General Issues Committee: February 26, 2025

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. SPADAFORA.....

Strong Mayor Powers And How It Applies To The City of Hamilton Property Tax Budget Process - REVISED

WHEREAS, several City Councillors have expressed frustration of being hamstrung, rushed, and stifled amid a new interpretation of Strong Mayor Powers pertaining to the 2025 property tax budget process whereby only amending motions were permitted instead of debate and direction on the 2025 Property Tax Budget as a whole;

WHEREAS, the majority of amending motions brought forward by Councillors were jointly deemed out of order by the City Clerk and Budget Chair amid the new Strong Mayor Powers budget process, without any opportunity for neutral, apolitical, procedural collaboration to make changes to said amending motions so as to make them in order;

WHEREAS, for successful amending motions to actually be enacted, they were ultimately subject to, and at the mercy of, the Mayor's veto, regardless if the veto was used or not used;

WHEREAS, during the first two years of budget deliberations against the backdrop of Strong Mayor Powers in Hamilton – 2022 for the 2023 budget and 2023 for the 2024 budget – the budget was not considered “the Mayor's budget”, and accordingly, Councillors were able to propose germane amendments to the budget and motions to direct staff accordingly to amend the proposed property tax increase without the risk of said amendments or motions being deemed out of order by the City Clerk and/or the Budget Chair;

WHEREAS, the 2025 Property Tax Budget was deemed “adopted” by the Mayor outside of any Council meeting negating Councillors the opportunity to go on the record of either voting in favour or against the 2025 Property Tax Budget, something that has historically been deemed jointly important by Councillors and constituents alike;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

- (a) That the Mayor ask the Ontario Premier to allow the City of Hamilton to not use Strong Mayor powers for the City of Hamilton budget process, reverting to the traditional budget deliberation process as was the case with the 2023 Property Tax Budget and 2024 Property Tax Budget;

- (b) That the Mayor and City of Hamilton staff involved with interpreting and applying the rubric of Strong Mayor Powers to the 2025 Property Tax Budget process ask the Office of the Premier of Ontario to review said interpretation and application of Strong Mayor Powers as they pertained to the 2025 Property Tax Budget process and to comment on if they believe it was done properly and appropriately, and whether there may have been different interpretations and applications;
- (c) That the City of Hamilton Finance and Legal staff research and report back on how other municipalities that have a Strong Mayor Powers process applied the Strong Mayor Powers to their budget process, if at all;