

# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



**Consolidated as of February 20, 2015**

**Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street**

**DATE February 23, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.**

Please turn off or place on non-audible all cell phones, PDAs, Blackberrys and pagers during the meeting.

**O Canada  
Silent Prayer  
Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof**

## **PRESENTATION**

a) None

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (Councillor Billings)**

1. That *the minutes of the Council Meetings held December 8 and 15, 2014 and January 19, 21, 26 and 28, 2015 and the minutes of the Closed Meeting of Council held January 26, 2015 be confirmed as recorded and without being read.*
2. That *the minutes of the Striking Committee and the Closed minutes of the Striking Committee held December 8, 2014 be confirmed as recorded and without being read.*
3. That *the closed minutes of Council meeting as the Shareholder of Guelph Junction Railway and Guelph Municipal Holdings Inc. held December 15, 2014 be confirmed as recorded and without being read."*

## **CONSENT REPORTS/AGENDA – ITEMS TO BE EXTRACTED**

*The following resolutions have been prepared to facilitate Council's consideration of the various matters and are suggested for consideration. If Council wishes to address a specific report in isolation of the Consent Reports/Agenda, please identify the item. The item will be extracted and dealt with separately. The balance of the Consent Reports/Agenda will be approved in one resolution.*

### **Consent Reports/Agenda from:**

<b>Audit Committee</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>City Presentation</b>	<b>Delegations</b>	<b>To be Extracted</b>
AUD-2015.2 2015 Audit Committee Work Plan			

Adoption of balance of Audit Committee First Consent Report - Councillor, Chair  
Wettstein

<b>Infrastructure, Development &amp; Enterprise Committee</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>City Presentation</b>	<b>Delegations</b>	<b>To be Extracted</b>
IDE-2015.1 Sign By-law Variances – 5 Gordon Street			
IDE-2015.2 Sign By-law Variances – 80 Stone Road West			
IDE-2015.3 Sign By-law Variances – 400 Speedvale Avenue East			

Adoption of balance of Infrastructure, Development & Enterprise Committee First  
Consent Report – Councillor Bell, Chair

<b>Public Services Committee</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>City Presentation</b>	<b>Delegations</b>	<b>To be Extracted</b>
PS-2015.1 Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Management Program			
PS-2015.2 Revised Tourism Advisory Committee Terms of Reference			

Adoption of balance of Public Services Committee First Consent Report – Councillor  
Downer, Chair

<b>Council Internal Auditor</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>City Presentation</b>	<b>Delegations</b>	<b>To be Extracted</b>
IA-2015.1 Print Room Audit Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loretta Alonzo, Internal Auditor</li> </ul>		√
IA-2015.2 Print Room Audit Management Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stephen O'Brien, City Clerk</li> </ul>		√

Adoption of balance of Internal Auditor's First Consent Report -

<b>Council Consent Agenda</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>City Presentation</b>	<b>Delegations</b>	<b>To be Extracted</b>
CON-2015.6 Proposed Demolition of 23 Aberdeen Street, Ward 3			
CON-2015.7 Proposed Demolition of 1405 Gordon Street, Ward 6			

Adoption of balance of the Council Consent Agenda – Councillor

**ITEMS EXTRACTED FROM COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL REPORTS AND COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA** (Chairs to present the extracted items)

*Once extracted items are identified, they will be dealt with in the following order:*

- 1) *delegations (may include presentations)*
- 2) *staff presentations only*
- 3) *all others.*

Reports from:

- Audit Committee – Councillor Wettstein
- Infrastructure, Development & Enterprise Committee – Councillor Bell
- Public Services Committee– Councillor Council Downer
- Council Internal Auditor
- Consent – Mayor Guthrie

**SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS**

a) **Delegations:**

- **Susan Watson**

Councillor Allt’s motion for which notice was given February 9, 2015:

That the following motion be referred to the Infrastructure, Development & Enterprise Committee for their consideration and report back to Council:

1. That the City of Guelph affirm its support for the reinstatement of the long form census.
2. That this resolution be forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Large Urban Mayors Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) and the Minister of Industry.

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b) **Delegations:**

- Yvette Tendick, President, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation
- Evan Ferrari
- Suzanne Gates

Councillor Van Hellemond's motion for which notice was given February 9, 2015:

That Council reconsider the motion of December 15, 2014 to refer the Trail Master Plan, encompassing the redevelopment of the GRCA property around the Hanlon Creek to include new trail sections and the underpass at the new Speedvale Avenue bridge over the Speed River, and consideration of funding assistance from FCM's "Green Municipal Fund" to this regard, to the Public Services Committee for consideration.

If this reconsideration motion passes, the following motion will be considered.

That the Trail Master Plan encompassing the redevelopment of the GRCA property around the Hanlon Creek to include a new trail sections and the underpass at the new Speedvale Avenue bridge over the Speed River, and consideration of funding assistance from FCM's "Green Municipal Fund" to this regard, be referred to the Public Services Committee for consideration.

c) **Delegations:**

- Susan Watson (also written submission)

Mayor Guthrie's motion for which notice was given December 15, 2014:

That the following be referred to the Corporate Services Committee:

That Recommendations be brought back to Council on:

1. Define rate of inflation and a recommended index; and
2. Present options for a revised predictable formula and/or strategies aligned to achieve that rate of inflation.

**BY-LAWS**

Resolution – Adoption of By-laws (Councillor Downer)

***“THAT By-law Numbers (2015)-19863 to (2015)-19868, inclusive, are hereby passed.”***

<p>By-law Number (2015)-19866  A by-law to amend Zoning By-law Amendment (2013)-19630 as it affects property known municipally as 1850187 Bristol Street and legally described as Lot 18, Part Lot 19, Registered Plan 42, City of Guelph (ZC1216) (OMB File PL131232)</p>	<p>To amend Zoning By-law Amendment (2013)-19630 as directed by the Ontario Municipal Board.</p>
<p>By-law Number (2015) – 19867  A by-law to adopt an Emergency Management Program and an Emergency Response Plan for the protection of public safety, health, the environment, critical infrastructure and property.</p>	<p>To adopt an Emergency Management Program and Response Plan as per Public Services Committee Consent Report PS-2105.1.</p>
<p>By-law Number (2015)-19868  A by-law to confirm the proceedings of the Guelph City Council meetings held February 10, 18, 19 and 23, 2015.</p>	<p>To confirm the proceedings of meetings of Council.</p>

## **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Please provide any announcements, to the Mayor in writing, by 12 noon on the day of the Council meeting.*

## **NOTICE OF MOTION**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

From: susanejwatson

Sent: February 19, 2015 11:29 AM

To: Clerks; Mayors Office; Dan Gibson; Bob Bell; James Gordon; Andy VanHellemond; Phil Allt; June Hofland; Mike Salisbury; Christine Billings; Leanne Piper; Cathy Downer; Mark MacKinnon; Karl Wettstein

Subject: City of Guelph Tax Deferral Program

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

I would like to bring your attention to the Property Tax Deferral Program available through the City of Guelph. I don't believe there is much awareness of this program, either in the community or at City Hall. I also have concerns that under the current parameters, almost no one is able to access this program.

I will cut and paste the description of this program at the end of this e-mail. You can also read about it on the City website at this link:

<http://guelph.ca/city-hall/budget-and-finance/property-taxes/bill-payments/deferral-program-and-rebates/>

The majority of Guelph households are in a better position than ever to absorb a modest tax increase. Guelph now has the lowest unemployment rate in the Province:

<http://www.guelphmercury.com/news-story/5326485-guelph-s-jobless-rate-now-lowest-in-ontario/>

Households with cars are now saving an estimated \$25 a week with lower gas prices:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/business/canadians-could-save-12b-on-gas-in-2015-report-1.2170088>

A 3% tax increase on Guelph's average annual residential tax of \$3,265 would work out to \$98. In many households, that amount would be offset by just one month of lower gas prices.

I think it's fair to say there is a widely shared concern about the impact of even small tax increases on low-income seniors or people with disabilities. No one wants to see someone lose their home because of the cumulative impact of rising property taxes.

At the same time, I believe that low-income seniors and people with disabilities are the group most impacted by service cuts. They rely heavily on City services such as sidewalk plowing, public transit, libraries and recreation services.

While the intent of the Tax Deferral Program is excellent, I'm not sure who is currently able to access it. Eligibility for partial deferral of property taxes only clicks in when the increase is equal to, or greater than \$300. In our current climate of low tax increases, almost no one would be eligible to access the program.

Using the 2014 property tax increase of 2.38% as a guideline, a household would have to have existing property taxes of \$12,605 to trigger an increase of \$300 at that rate. A property of that value would be almost 4 times the value of the average home in Guelph. It is unlikely that someone living in such a property would fall into a low-income category.

At the other end of the scale, the 2.38% increase in 2014 would have translated into a \$78 increase on the average property tax bill of \$3,265. While this amount might represent an inordinate additional burden for a low income household, it is not high enough to allow access to the Tax Deferral Program.

Can this program be adjusted to allow even small increases to be deferred via a property lien? Are the thresholds set by the Province, or does Council have discretion in setting the amounts which can be deferred?

I think a more targeted response to those who truly need tax relief would protect the most vulnerable in our community while allowing Council flexibility to set tax rates which sustain investment and services. Rather than directing Finance staff to work on a policy limiting tax increases to the rate of inflation, I would like to see the effectiveness of the Tax Deferral Program investigated and enhanced.

How many people are currently accessing the Tax Deferral Program?

What is the current impact on Guelph Tax Revenues?

What would be a reasonable maximum of deferred tax for the City budget to absorb?

Can the Tax Deferral Program be restructured to facilitate increased accessed by low-income residents?

Information about the Tax Deferral Program from the City website is below. Thank you for taking the time to consider this information and my input.

Sincerely,  
Susan Watson

## **Deferral Program and rebates**

### **Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

Low income seniors who are in receipt of the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or benefits under the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) Program and have attained the age of 65 years and low-income persons with disabilities who are in receipt of benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or in receipt of disability benefits under the current Family Benefits Act (FBA) or in receipt of benefits under the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) for the Disabled and be eligible to claim a disability amount as defined under the Income Tax Act may apply to the City of Guelph for a partial tax deferral of their annual property taxes.

Relief is based on the total tax increase over the previous year which is equal to or greater than \$300 annually. The amount of tax relief granted represents a lien against the property.

Applications for tax relief must be made annually to the City to establish eligibility or continued eligibility. Applications must include documentation in support thereof to show that the applicant is an eligible person and that the property with respect to which the application is made is eligible property.

Applications must be submitted to the City on or before the last day of December in the year for which the application applies, on a form prescribed by the City for this purpose. Applications are available by calling the City of Guelph Tax Office at (519) 837-5605, or by printing the Application form.

### **Deferral of taxes for Low-Income Seniors and Low-Income disabled Persons**

Tax relief is only allowed on one principal residence of the qualified individual or the qualifying spouse. Either the owner or spouse of the owner has been assessed as the owner of and has occupied the property for a period of one or more years preceding the date of application.

For properties which are jointly held or co-owned by persons other than spouses, all coowners must qualify under applicable eligibility criteria in order to receive tax relief. Tax relief applies to current taxes only and are only deferred after payment in full is received for any current or past year amounts payable.

Tax relief amounts are not transferable to the estates of deceased owners. Any tax relief ceases to apply once the property is sold or when the eligible applicant dies or ceases to be eligible under the criteria established by by-law. Any deferred amounts immediately become a debt payable to the City.

Completed applications can be returned to the City by mail to: City of Guelph, Finance Dept.- Revenue & Taxation , 1 Carden St, Guelph, On N1H 3A1 or by fax to: (519) 837-5647.



From: susanejwatson

Sent: February 20, 2015 8:46 AM

To: Clerks; Mayors Office; Dan Gibson; Bob Bell; James Gordon; Andy VanHellemond; Phil Allt; June Hofland; Mike Salisbury; Christine Billings; Leanne Piper; Mark MacKinnon; Karl Wettstein; Cathy Downer

Subject: Tax increases and the rate of inflation

Mr. Mayor and Members of Council:

I would like to submit some additional observations regarding Mayor Guthrie's motion on investigating a policy to limit tax increases to the rate of inflation.

Unlike Federal and Provincial Governments, by law, Municipalities in Ontario are not allowed to run a deficit. I don't believe this is something which is widely known or understood in the community.

This fact removes a significant lever which is employed by both the current Provincial and Federal Governments. Guelph City Council does not have the option of running a deficit. This means that balanced budgets can only be achieved via four options: raising taxes, raising user fees, finding efficiencies or cutting services.

I think it goes without saying that everyone is in favour of identifying efficiencies, no matter where they sit on the political spectrum. This work is ongoing through the efforts of the City Auditor.

If tax increases are set to a fixed guideline, such as the rate of inflation, the only areas of flexibility which will be left to Councillors will be raising user fees or cutting services. I think this would be an unwise decision.

All Councillors are sensitive to the ability and willingness of citizens to absorb tax or user fee increases. At the same time, issues involved in running a corporation with a multi-million dollar budget are complex. Both current and future needs must be weighed in the balance.

There are two examples already within this term of Council where decisions have been made to implement increases greater than the rate of inflation.

The most recent example was Council's decision to raise water and waste water rates by 4.3%. There was only one dissenting vote on Council for the non-tax supported budget which contained this recommendation. From a simplistic point of view, one would have thought that water and waste water rates should have simply followed the rate of inflation, however, Council was mindful of the need for new infrastructure and repair and maintenance of current infrastructure. In fact, one Councillor who would likely identify as a fiscal conservative, pushed for even higher rate increases precisely to address what he felt were significant infrastructure deficits.

The second example is Mayor Guthrie's decision to accept the 22% increase in the Mayor's salary recommended by the Citizens' Review Committee and supported by the last term of Council. This increase is to be phased in over 4 years. On December 1st, 2014, the first increase of \$10,000 was added to the base salary of \$95,383. This represents a 10.5% increase for the 2015 fiscal year.

While there are many valid arguments for moving the salary of the Mayor of Guelph to the 55th percentile of Ontario Municipalities, I do not see Mayor Guthrie's decision to take a 22% pay increase as being consistent with the motion he is putting forward. Choosing to walk the talk would have seen the Mayor take a salary increase which matched the rate of inflation.

Thank you for considering my input. I look forward to addressing these issues further as a delegate on Monday evening.

Sincerely,  
Susan Watson