

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall, 1 Carden Street

DATE Wednesday March 11, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.

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

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

2015 TAX SUPPORTED OPERATING BUDGET

Delegations

Randalin Ellery, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Barb McPhee, Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Jane Londerville, Wellington-Guelph Housing Committee
Vince Hanson
Susan Ratcliffe
John Gruzleski, Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association
Jason Dodge
Susan Watson

Correspondence

Jason Dodge

ADJOURNMENT

To Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, and City Clerks:

I am not known to write emails to city hall often, so I truly hope that you appreciate the sincerity of this letter.

On Monday evening I watched your meeting and listened closely to the debates around the horseshoe. It is obvious that we have some very passionate people on council and I believe that is a wonderful thing. However, I have some very serious concerns that I would like to bring up.

In regards to the long census form discussion, I would like to briefly state that I believe the issue had very little to do with the well-being of Guelph. It appeared to be more of a political protest to the federal conservatives. I hope I am wrong.

More importantly, I want to comment on the debate regarding the motion for a different way to approach taxes and the budget. I am disappointed that it was such a fight.

This motion was the first opportunity for council to uphold the public's chosen mandate. Last October, the majority of citizens in Guelph voted for a change in approach and attitude. Rejecting the idea to explore this direction was rejecting the public's request for change.

For years now, our city has approached the budget by throwing our needs, our wants, and what we might want into the pot and working from those numbers. By setting a benchmark of some sort (i.e. inflation rates, CPI, etc) you would have more incentive to only increase the taxes to cover what our city needs. We can not afford to throw money at wants right now. Our infrastructure and depleted reserves should take precedence.

I do not appreciate the fear mongering that was involved in Monday's debate. Budgets can, and must be trimmed. But stop threatening the public with saying that a stricter budget approach will result in less services and increased user fees. That statement is false.

There are many things that could be cut or run more efficiently that would keep our tax increases lower without compromising jobs, services, or user fees.

Have the courage to change the status quo and do what actually needs done tonight. Guelph is blessed with a seemingly intelligent council. Put the personal agendas aside and set a new, positive direction that respects the citizens as a whole.

With thanks,

Jason Dodge