

## **Paula Hope – Submission to TOBM Council Compensation Committee**

**August 14, 2019**

*Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts about Council compensation with the TOBM Council Compensation Committee.*

*I would also like to thank the committee members for their commitment to this very important topic.*

The success of any organization is determined by the quality of its leadership.

Appropriate compensation for key leadership roles in TOBM, therefore, is a task of critical importance to the welfare of the residents of TOBM.

I had reason to muse on the topic of appropriate compensation when I was deciding whether I should run for Council during the last election.

As a possible fledgling member of Council, there were many questions about compensation that ran through my mind. I promised myself that I would share these questions with you when the opportunity came up. So here they are,

- 1) It did not take long in conversations with past Council members before they would raise the fact that they were so poorly compensated. Comments such as “I earn less than minimum wage” and “It’s certainly not for the money” were a regular part of their conversations. I felt sorry for the Council members and wondered, “What is the impact on Council member performance when they are reminded constantly of what little value the members of their constituents put on their services?” Going further with that thought, “Are we paying for our miserly ways with poor decisions?”
- 2) As a consultant, trainer, coach and speaker in my field of specialty, I receive handsome remuneration for my time and expertise. I asked myself, “Am I being fair to myself by giving up four years of strong revenue production for a minimum wage position with enormous responsibilities? And with no small risk, considering the challenges of the last Council?”
- 3) My next thought was, “I am fortunate with my current resources. What about the capable residents who might also want to run for Council and who may not have the same resources? How many people can live on \$17,000 - \$24,000 per year, even if it is presented as a part time role?”
- 4) “Part time role” lead me to my next question. I remembered other conversations that I had with past Council members about the amount of time that was needed to be a member of Council. “This is really a full- time job” came up often from active community members as well as Council members. I have not heard anything differently about the workload from new Council members. Quite the opposite. So I asked myself “Do I want to give up important family time, friend time, “me” time in exchange for compensation that does not reflect the value of my services, nor those of my colleagues?”

With these questions, my summary thoughts were not pretty.

“Why would I run for election, lose time with my family and friends, risk my reputation and privacy in exchange for insulting compensation and massive responsibilities?

Well, ran I did. And I am glad that I did. I was keenly aware, however, of the potential tradeoffs that I might be making. I always had the nagging question at the back of my mind, “Why does it have to be this way?”

One final question remains: Why are we asking for so much sacrifice from our public officials for so little compensation? Why? To my mind, there is not a good answer. Everyone should be paid according to the value placed on their contribution. Everyone.

Let us be responsible employers as residents of TOBM and compensate our Council members for the full-time work that they do - at an income level that reflects the true value that we put on the level of quality decision-making that we expect.

Our future rests on the shoulders of our elected officials. Let us honour them through remuneration that is respectful, fair and reflective of their true value.

Thank you.