

Jack's Recap

November 9th, 2015: Timmins a city with no options

After viewing the council meeting this Monday, I think it is safe to assume that frustration is spilling over in the council chambers. I speak of course about the 59% increase in clearing snow from the east end connecting link and some rural roads. Our city engineer, Luc Duval submitted an RFP for this purpose thinking he might receive many bidders, but boy was he wrong. The way the RFP was worded pretty much resulted in receiving only one bidder. One of the requirements in the RFP was that the equipment cannot be older than 5 years old, so this pretty much limited the bidders to only the bigger companies. The successful bidder, Miller Paving, agreed to the plowing contract at a charge of \$267/hour. This hourly rate was justified by them as helping in their capital purchases of new equipment & 12 other factors. Mr. Duval tried to tell council that this hourly rate was acceptable because the rate covered 13 items including: managerial, clerical, supervisory staff, as well as standby equipment such as a front end loaders and even the cost of cell phones. Councillor Campbell blew a big hole into this explanation telling Mr. Duval that Miller Paving does not have managers and clerks and other staff specifically dedicated to this one small project. Mr Duval agreed. All of the councillors spoke on this topic telling Duval how disappointed they were in the lateness of this report. At one point a usually calm Councillor Marks demonstrated his level of frustration by demanding an answer to his question: "What options are you presenting to council tonight should we not vote to accept this bid?" In reality, the report presented a take it or leave it option and this certainly raised the temperature in the room as Councillor Marks and Duval got into a heated discussion. It seems to the occasional viewer that the core services opportunities was meant for another day or another time. So here we are having no choice but to accept a 59% increase over last year's budget item.

As a taxpayer and member of the TTA, I must urge council to hold accountable the people who think that it is business as usual in our city. Our CAO came to the defence of the embattled department head stating that pin point questioning is out of line. What would he suggest? That all questions be asked in camera? The administration's wagons are beginning to circle; however, I believe that most, if not all of this Council are tired of the shenanigans at city hall. We, the taxpayers, have elected this Council to hold accountable the heavy spenders of this city and if that means hurt feelings so be it.

That's a rap on this week's recap!