

# Jack's Recap

**April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015: To Donate or Not to Donate? This should never even be the question.**

I have been struggling with my recap this week. I want to speak to the grants to organizations and the amount of taxpayer's money distributed towards these organizations. There was no less than 5 requests for donations at this past Monday's council meeting and all were approved. Not to single out one specific event, but the Northern Expo is a perfect example. They do wonderful work and even provide bursaries for eligible students, but all the organizations get up there in front of Council and proudly say how many tourist dollars are spent in Timmins during their specific event. The Ringette Association states that they brought in over \$1 million dollars generated within the city. I don't want to alienate any organization with my recap because I know first-hand how difficult it is to put on a special event, but other than leisure activity brought to the city the only other benefactor of these events are restaurants and hotels. Why should the residential taxpayer foot the bill of over \$145k of grants to organizations? I know Council is struggling with this as well but they just don't seem to be able to say no to anyone, even when they previously agreed to cut any request by 50%. Once they are faced by a group in Council chambers, they just seem to completely lose any courage. The easy answer is simple: follow the KPMG report and completely eliminate the fund. That would absolutely eliminate the back and forth gnashing of the teeth decision making by our courageous Council. The KPMG report advised Council that one of their easier opportunities was to eliminate the grants to organizations fund. The fund stood at \$105,000 last year. So what did our brave council do? They increased it! It should not be up to Council to decide which organization deserves a grant and which one does not. This money belongs to the taxpayers of Timmins and as far as I can see excluding the leisure component the only sector benefitting from these events is the retail sector. This fund stands at approximately \$145,000 so far this year and climbing, and as councillor Bamford warns "We are only in April!" When the answer is staring you in the face and recommended by the KPMG report and paid for by the taxpayers of Timmins for a paltry sum of \$105,000 to me it sounds quite simple: if you organize an event plan for all the costs. Allow for your event to grow so it can support itself as it grows. The city is too easy a mark. Walk before you run.

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