

Jack's Recap

December 7th, 2015: **0 for 4 = off to a poor start**

So far city council is living up to its reputation of paying for studies and not following the recommendations. The KPMG report recommended the following: closure of satellite landfill sites, curtail the hours of operation at Deloro, establish a small user fee and terminate spring cleanup. On each opportunity, Council voted tonight to keep the status quo. We had an opportunity to save nearly \$100k on the spring cleanup and add another 100k to our revenue side if we adopted a small user fee of \$5 per visit. Council voted to keep the kamiskotia land fill site open despite the fact that weekly garbage pickup was already in place, contrary to the report that recommended discontinuing curb side pickup and keeping the land fill site open. So, instead of saving well over \$100k by instituting small user fees, as well as shortening the hours of operation, Council instead decided to ignore these opportunities and spend over \$100k on the annual spring cleanup. The annual spring cleanup does not guarantee sorting for recyclable materials since all of it goes directly to the land fill site. So, do you feel like a leaf's fan yet? We're off to a 0 for 4 start and that is only for the opportunities presented publicly to Council, the remaining in camera discussions are even less hopeful.

Luc DUVAL has proposed a 3.5% water and sewer increase in perpetuity. Regardless of whether we have a surplus in 10 years or not the citizens of Timmins can expect a raise in their water and sewer rates. Why would you raise the rate, if after 10 years you are in a surplus situation? The answer is quite simple according to Luc. We raise the rate because we can, plain and simple. When Mayor Black did the math, he found that we will be in at least a \$1M deficit, but neither Luc nor our city treasurer could put together an intelligent response, at least not one that our Mayor or most of the yawning Council could understand.

Time for my pet peeve:

Each time a question is posed to one of our department heads where his or her reply is that they will get back to the councillor asking the question, this question goes unanswered, at least to the public. The typical reply is that "I will email you or I will get back to you, I don't have that information right now with me." Do we not insist that every department head attend all public city meetings and budget meetings? Do we not provide each department head with the agenda of items to be discussed? Are they not appropriately remunerated for their attendance? Are we expecting too much for the department head presenting his particular budget to be fluent in answering all questions posed to him by any and all Councillors? What happens is this: the unanswered questions are never answered in a public forum and therefore remain in camera. All unanswered questions should be answered publicly and not transmitted by email from a department head to our Mayor or a Councillor. And certainly not discussed privately at a later encounter.

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