



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO BUDGET COMMITTEE AGENDA PUBLIC INPUT SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday, November 21, 2012

6:10 p.m.

Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener

Present were: Chair T. Galloway, L. Armstrong, J. Brewer, T. Cowan, D. Craig, R. Deutschmann, J. Haalboom, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, K. Seiling, S. Strickland, and C. Zehr

Members absent: J. Wideman

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

None declared

DELEGATIONS

- a) [Mary Ann Wasilka](#) Re: Transit Fare Increases and Living Wage

M. Wasilka expressed concern for transit fare increases and cycling safety. The written submission is attached to the original minutes.

- b) [Peter Durksen](#) Re: Tax Impact

P. Durksen expressed concern about tax increases over the last four years and Regional spending. The written submission is attached to the original minutes.

- c) Eleanor Grant, on behalf of the Alliance Against Poverty Re:2011 Ontario uploaded social services costs and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits (OWDB)

E. Grant explained the negative impacts on poverty in the Region if the OWDB was reduced and spoke in support of maintaining the OWDB and Community Start Up Benefits.

- d) Mary MacKeigan and Matt Betik, on behalf of [Opportunities Waterloo Region](#), Re: Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits (OWDB)

M. MacKeigan and M. Betik explained the services Opportunities Waterloo Region provides to the community and the financial significance of the OWDB in the operation of the organization. They expressed support for maintaining the OWDB.

- e) Cathie Stewart Savage, Out of the Cold, Re: Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits (OWDB)

C. Savage explained the negative impacts on poverty in the Region if the OWDB was reduced. She reviewed the organization's services and explained that they have experienced a significant increase in the number of people looking for shelter.

ADJOURN

MOVED by L. Armstrong
SECONDED by S. Strickland

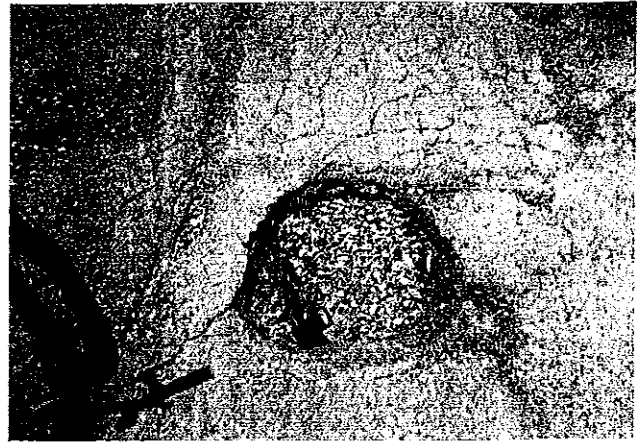
THAT the meeting adjourn at 6:57 p.m.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE CHAIR, *T. Galloway*

COMMITTEE CLERK, *J. Reid*

Potholes on **YOUR** street



POTHOLES ARE DANGEROUS:



They cause cyclists to swerve to avoid them.

In the rain potholes become INVISIBLE.

**A cyclist who falls due to a pothole may
BREAK BONES or be HIT BY A CAR.**

**Please prevent an accident! Report the street
address of the pothole to the City of Kitchener:
519-741-2345**

Pothole! 519-741-2345

Pothole! 519-741-2345

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Census of Canada

The Census of Canada Place of Work survey is the best source of information that correlates mode of travel to work with personal income. Specifically, census respondents answered which mode of transportation they usually used when traveling to their place of work. Respondents can choose to record personal income figures themselves on the Census questionnaire or allow Statistics Canada to access their income tax records. This permits comparisons of the age, gender, and income profiles of GRT riders to the entire workforce and full population of the Region.

Age

Passenger surveys completed in 2004 and 2006 indicate approximately 60% of GRT riders are students, 38% are adults, and 2% are seniors. Census data indicates that the age distribution of transit riders traveling for work is younger than that of the entire workforce and the entire population of the Region. This reflects the high level of students who use transit, the fact that persons over the age of 65 tend to make fewer work related trips, and the lower income profile of younger persons. Table 1 illustrates the age distribution of GRT riders who make trips to work.

Gender

Census data indicates that a higher proportion of females use GRT to travel to work than males. In 2006 approximately 61% of transit users were female compared to 47% of the entire workforce and 51% of the entire population of the Region. Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution of GRT riders who make trips to work.

Income

Some highlights of the 2001 and 2006 Censuses are:

- 61% of GRT riders reported personal income of less than \$20,000 annually in 2001. That number had declined to 54% by 2006. GRT riders between the ages of 15 and 25 years who responded to the Census include high school and university students with part time jobs. When those between the ages of 15 and 25 are excluded 45% of all respondents who were GRT riders reported personal income of less than \$20,000 annually in 2001. That number declined to 38% in 2006. In comparison, 24% of the entire workforce reported personal income less than \$20,000 annually in 2001. That number declined to 22% in 2006.
- From 2001 to 2006 the proportion of GRT riders over the age of 25 years earning less than \$10,000 annually declined from 20% to 16%.
- The proportion of GRT riders who reported personal income of greater than \$30,000 annually grew from 15% to 18% while the proportion of the full regional workforce earning greater than \$30,000 nominally increased from 32% to 33% between 2001 and 2006.

Transit riders traveling for work typically earn less than the entire workforce; however the gap declined from 2001 to 2006. To a certain extent, the variance between the entire workforce and transit riders reflects the younger age distribution of transit riders. It may also reflect that for

May 4, 2012

Kitchener, Ontario

Members of Regional Council.

I'm writing to the members of council, to suggest another alternative for your consideration regarding the proposed Grand River Transit Fare Increase July 2012. In addition I would like to request your consideration of collecting annual data on Regional Transportation Modal Shifts.

I would like to thank Waterloo Regional Council and members of the Staff of Grand River Transit for their efforts in keeping Transit Fares lower by placing advertising on the GRT buses and by increasing transit revenues by transporting local students to local educational institutions, (60% of total ridership is student ridership) without this additional transit income GRT fares could be significantly higher.

I would also like to thank staff for providing an opportunity to submit our comments regarding the proposed 2012- 9% transit fare increase. I was unable to attend the public information meeting and regional staff have also agreed to provide some additional information on GRT ridership demographics and meet with me to discuss ridership demographics and trends.

Stats from Census Canada regarding Grand River transportation from 2001 and 2006 indicate that— (excluding the student ridership) - the GRT Ridership was 60% female and in 2001- 40% of the ridership had incomes under \$10,000/ year, this figure dropped to 30% in 2006, which may indicate that these riders could no longer afford to ride the public transit system and are now either walking or cycling. These stats are old — and lose their relevance other than to indicate past trends-- 2006 data would indicate that those using the GRT and having incomes under \$10,000 are approximately 6.4 % of the GRT ridership.

The proposed 2012 GRT transit fare of 9.5% increase to the monthly bus pass would equal \$816/ year which is 7.5% of their monthly income. A tax credit for the bus passes comes off taxable income and would provide some additional saving at the lowest taxable rate providing a very small refund.

Low income GRT ridership appreciate the contributions of the property tax base as it subsidizes their use of GRT, however increasing user fees is a form of targeted municipal tax increase and in this case it is being transferred to those who are vulnerable women and the destitute. These residents can no longer afford to use public transit, and are forced to walk or cycle in all forms of weather. The Transit for Reduced Income (TRIP) is subsidized by Income Support dollars and not everyone who qualifies can access these program funds.

The Region of Waterloo wishes to balance the provision of valued services, while maintaining a reasonable level of property taxation. A GRT trend to increase users fees (by 9%) in order to maintain this reasonable level downloads property taxation to those least able to pay them and are marginalized by their poverty. In an emergency room, patients are classified by triage according to the urgency of their care, politically the allocation of limited resources is frequently allocated as it is expedient, rather than the need or moral principle.

I would like to suggest for your consideration — that using the emergency room model that those Regional Residents with incomes under \$10,000 be provided a GRT monthly bus pass at no cost. This would be approximately 6.4% of the total GRT ridership according

to 2006 census and could be funded by use of Regional Federal Gas Tax dollars. Additional spaces which are opened could be used to assist those earning \$20,000 or less in the TRIP Program.

The Region does provide free bus passes to other groups with equally compelling situations and I would suggest that this low income group — living on low wages would benefit from a safe ride to work. I have attempted to keep this letter brief. Those living hand to mouth cannot fund a public transit system, but they are in the most need of this public service. I hope the stats provided can give you some cause to review this proposed fare increase.

I would also like to suggest for your consideration that if the Region of Waterloo is promoting long term transportation modal shift, that collecting current data on personal transportation use may indicate if current programs are achieving this objective.

I would like to thank Council and Staff, and residents for their ongoing support of the local public transit system.

Yours Respectfully,

Mary Ann Wasilka

November 20 2012

To: Region of Waterloo
 From: Peter Durksen,
 Re: Property Tax Increases

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns.
 You have a difficult task in setting the budget for our Region.
 Nevertheless, having run for public office, you have taken on that responsibility.

The concern:

My concern is the rapidly increasing property taxes and local government spending. I expressed that concern in a letter to Regional Chair Ken Seiling dated August 23 2010 and in a meeting with Woolwich Councillor Bonnie Bryant and Woolwich CAO David Brenneman on Jan 19, 2011. I will also convey this concern to the Waterloo Region District School Board.

My wife and I live in a bungalow built 24 years ago in a rural part of Woolwich Township.

Our property taxes in the past four years were as follows:

2009- \$3,747
 2010- 4,004
 2011- 4,172
 2012- 4,435

My pension increases from a government plan in each of the past three full years averaged 1.48%
 The rate of inflation over the last three years according to various sources was between 1.75 to 2.0 % annually.

My property taxes increases over each of the last three years were 5.78%
 Thus my property taxes increased almost four times as much as my income, and about three times as much as the rate of inflation.

That is the personal situation for my wife and me.

I have shared our concern about rapidly increasing taxes with about 30 of our neighbours.
 The vast majority have a similar concern, making statements such as, "it's about time something is done about this".

The bigger picture:

In addition to looking at our personal situation it is important to consider the context or bigger picture.

We are aware that your budget expenditure estimates must include operating expenditures as well as a capital expenditures, and perhaps also special levies for infrastructure or other items.



We are also aware that our municipal property tax bill includes payments which go to the Region of Waterloo (56%), to one of the two district school boards (21%), as well as to our local municipality.

We realize that assessment and tax rates have a bearing on our tax bill. The province through MPAC determines the assessment and the township sets the tax rate. Our concern is about the bottom line, the final tax bill, which invariably is higher than the percentage increase announced in the media.

We are also aware that some wage settlements with employee groups in the public sector, are frequently determined by arbitration, and we know that arbitration boards, while using criteria, are not accountable to any level of government. We are also aware that the strongest unions in Canada, are the public sector unions, the unions with which you deal.

We are also aware of the employment situation in Canada. Statistics Canada's data on employment over the last six months, May to October 2012, indicates that private sector lost 12,000 jobs, while the public sector, mostly unionized, gained 76,000. This growing private-public employment trend is extremely troubling.

The challenge:

We urge you the Region of Waterloo councillors, as the elected representatives of the level of government close to the property tax payers, to show leadership in the financial affairs of our region and province by doing three things:

- First, hold the actual property tax increases in 2013 and beyond to no more than the rate of inflation,
- Second, inform staff that cost overruns are unacceptable, and
- Third, petition our provincial government to set limits to arbitrated wage and benefit settlements at no more than the rate of inflation.
- Fourth, for 2014 and beyond, reduce the percent spent on salaries, and institute a long infrastructure fund.

Conclusion:

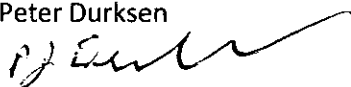
The economic future of Canada is worrisome, even more so in Ontario where we have been losing manufacturing and service jobs to foreign countries largely because of the high wages in our private sector, which have driven up by wage increases in the public sector. New ways of thinking about municipal priorities are required.

Ontario was once the driving force in Canada's economy. Due to high wage settlements and other unwise decisions it is no longer that. I urge you, as the elected members of this council, to do your part in correcting our situation at the local level. I will continue to monitor the budget development process.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make our concerns known to you.

Respectfully

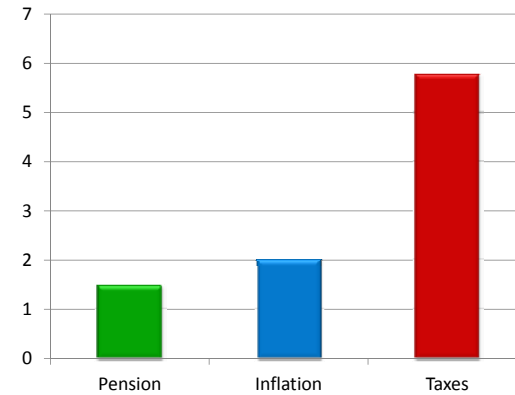
Peter Durksen



Delegation- Presentation

Peter Durksen

Annual Percent Increase 2009 - 2012



Budget Expenditure Estimates

- Operating expenses
- Capital expenses
- Special levies

Our Property Tax Bill

- Region of Waterloo- 56 %
- District School Boards- 21 %
- Township of Woolwich- 23 %

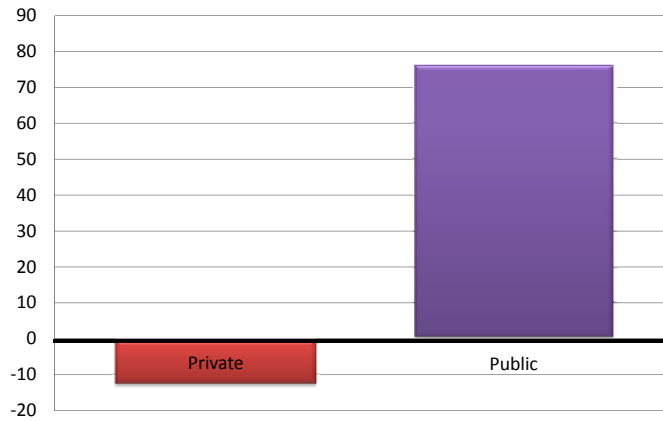
Our Tax Bill

Assessment X tax rate = **tax bill ??**

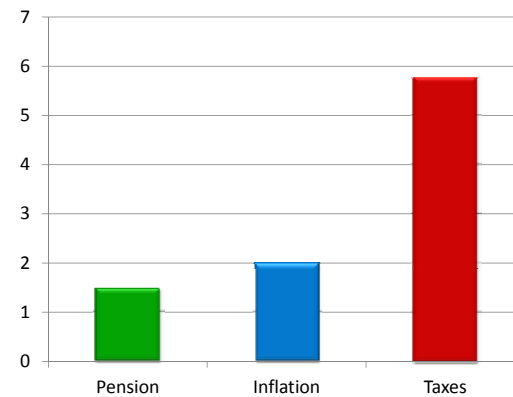
Salaries and Wages

- Highly unionized
- Arbitration

Job Losses/Increases - May - Oct 2012 (in thousands)



Annual Percent Increase 2009 - 2012



The Leadership Challenge

1. Hold actual property tax increases to no more than inflation
2. Inform staff that cost overruns are unacceptable
3. Petition the provincial government to set arbitration awards at no more than inflation



Engage Ignite Facilitate Connect Link Support

Collaborate

Organization Development Activities

- increased board membership
- refreshed logo, tag-line, position statements
- new web-site soon to be designed
- board governance training through Capacity Waterloo Region
- researched fund raising ideas



Projects and services

Project/Service	Highlights
Increased access to free tax clinics	\$1,084,020
Canada Learning Bond	200 children = \$400,000
Community Gardens	\$1 invested = \$6 in produce
Awareness of Low Income Voices – ALIV(e)	Blog receives 96 hits; 600+ on Tamarack site
Healthy Communities Partnership	Active participant/partner
Community Conversations Series (5 events)	- Over 110 attendees at Nov. 21 st event
Shifting Societal Attitudes	- Research project in 2011 and 2012
Community-University Partnerships	- WLU and National partnership
Increasing Awareness, Education	- e-newsletter 4 times per year; Twitter; Facebook; presentations; other media

Other services include:

- Consultants (Regional Poverty Reduction Approach; Social Assistance Review)
- Group membership s (Poverty Free Waterloo Region, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee with WRDSB; National Poverty Reduction Summit – Vibrant Communities)

Per Issue Paper	Project/Service	Request
\$10,000	Increased access to free tax clinics	\$15,000
\$10,000	Canada Learning Bond	\$20,000
\$ 7,000	Community Gardens	\$10,000
\$25,000	Awareness of Low Income Voices – ALIV(e)	\$30,000
\$ 7,000	Healthy Communities Partnership	\$10,000
0	Community Conversations Series (5 events)	\$15,000
0	Shifting Societal Attitudes	\$ 5,000
0	Community-University Partnerships	\$ 5,000
0	Increasing Awareness, Education	0
0	Other services:	0
	- Consultants (Regional Poverty Reduction Approach; Social Assistance Review)	
	- Community groups (Poverty Free Waterloo Region, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee with WRDSB)	
\$59,000	- Presentations to university and college students	\$110,000

Region of Waterloo Investment in Opportunities Waterloo Region

- Over the last five years our revenue has averaged \$300K; during that time Region of Waterloo funding averaged \$125K
- We have used your contributions wisely – multiplying them by 240% in developing programs in partnership with the Region
- Much of this additional funding has come from outside of the Region – Trillium Foundation, Federal Government, McConnell Foundation

 **Opportunities**
WATERLOO REGION
MOBILIZING SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY

Thank you.

Funders and Sponsors:

 **United Way**
Kitchener Waterloo & Area

 Region of Waterloo

 **Vibrant**
COMMUNITIES
CANADA

 **THE ONTARIO**
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION

 **LA FONDATION**
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

 **Elementary**
Teachers'
Federation of Ontario
WATERLOO REGION

 **THE J.W. McCONNELL**
FAMILY FOUNDATION

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FAMILLE J.W. McCONNELL