

## NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

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### Association Has No Ulterior Motives

To the Editor

Arrogance is rearing its ugly head in North Bay City Council chambers. A presentation by Miles Peters to an unreceptive council this week was clearly unwelcome. Councillors – some more than others – react to every association request or commentary with indifference and sometimes outright hostility.

When local taxpayers complain that mismanaged road projects are costing their businesses thousands of dollars, councillors just nod their heads in mock concern like a collection of bobble-head dolls.

When residents say a proposed housing development threatens to diminish their property values, they have barely left the microphone when council rubber-stamps the project to go ahead. And when – at the Mayor's request – the North Bay Taxpayers' Association volunteered some of their summer vacation time to produce a list of municipal cost-saving recommendations –(while councillors enjoy a lengthy recess from looking after city business) – the suggestions are dismissed as “only representing about a million dollars in savings” which is complete nonsense – the recommendations, if implemented, would save many millions of dollars.

The North Bay Taxpayers Association has no ulterior motives. They want to see the community they call home avoid the financial pitfalls being stumbled into by municipalities across North America.

The association made concerted efforts to get information on the budget process posted on the city's website; city hall staff initially acted like it was nobody's business but theirs. “How dare you ask us these questions?” is the attitude literally reeking from some responses. “We were elected by the voters, and you weren't”, seems to be the message implicit in some of their retorts.

Well ladies and gentlemen, you were not elected to preside over the largest municipal debt in Northern Ontario -- \$60 million – and you were not elected to maintain a staff wage and pension structure that could bankrupt North Bay, and you were not elected to cut deals with sports teams that could put a \$2-million bigger dent in local tax bills than you promised.

The city's Water and Waste Water budget includes half a million dollars in planned overtime costs. Would any council member permit such fiscal recklessness in their own business ventures? Please get over your own sense of self-importance and start putting the interests of those of us who pay your salaries at the top of your priorities. If other peoples' ideas and suggestions won't work, tell them why. But, above all, show us some of your own.

We're all in this together. Mayor Al McDonald is fond of telling council petitioners “My door is always open.” There are likely to be a lot of local residents walking out that door to live elsewhere if he and his colleagues don't soon show they are up for the jobs they were elected to do.

Yours truly,  
Elizabeth C. Fournier  
Executive Member  
North Bay Taxpayers' Association