

NORTH BAY TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

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Credibility Enhanced By Research, Issues Raised

TO THE EDITOR:

The North Bay Taxpayers' Association likes to believe that our "legitimacy", as columnist Dave Dale puts it, depends more on the research and issues we raise about how council and paid city staff are managing the public purse, than on whether any of our members or supporters are seeking public office.

Carried to its logical conclusion, that line of reasoning means The Nugget writer believes that the current mayor and members of city council are engaging in activities that are somehow "illegitimate".

In any event, we like to think that our credibility is enhanced by other factors, not least of which was the recent presentation by Derek Shogren, president of the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce. Judging by his comments, members of the local business community share our concern about North Bay's current status as the highest-taxing municipality in Northern Ontario.

Shogren also echoed our position on the escalating cost of police and fire department payrolls that keep adding city employees to the province's "sunshine list" of public workers who enjoy six-figure salaries. We appreciate the job they do, he said, but chamber members expect the budgets for those services not to increase by more than 1.5%.

Members of the Taxpayers' Association have not received as polite a reception by city council as that accorded to Shogren, perhaps because some elected councillors also happen to be chamber of commerce members. So far, our secretary informs, no council members have joined the Taxpayers' Association.

Maybe that will change with the 2014 municipal elections.

The North Bay Taxpayers' Association encourages the candidacy of people not afraid to bring new ideas - indeed, ANY ideas - to city council chambers, so that the operation of our municipal government more accurately reflects the changing world and economic forces around us. We hope they feel welcome to join our association, the chamber of commerce, the Rotary Club - any group of local citizens committed to making North Bay the best place it can be.

Our association's only proviso for council candidates is that they publicly announce their resignation from our group at the same time as they publicly confirm their candidacy - nomination papers can be filed anytime between 8:30 a.m. Jan. 2, and 4:30 p.m. Sept. 11, 2014.

Actually that might be a good practice for incumbent members of city council to follow. If they want to continue to be seen as "legitimate".

Mark King
President

North Bay Taxpayers' Association