

Text of letter to Editor – Dec 28, 2016

The City has agreed to a labour agreement that sees CUPE members receive a 1.5% increase in wages and benefits in each of the next three years.

The disconnect between reality and the sheltered world of unions bosses and their supporters couldn't have been more clearly illustrated when CUPE president Brian Phillips commented, in a Nugget interview, that: "I don't think anyone expects to see us have to lose income due to inflation."

Let me just think for a moment, Mr. Phillips. What basis would you have for making that statement? What facts do you have to support a suggestion that everyone in the City of North Bay is determined to protect union employees from inflationary pressures?

Does everyone employed at the City get a note stating that as long as they are a City employees they will be protected from the slings and arrows of inflation? Is there some document that we are not aware of, saying that the citizens of this City will not stand by and allow that to happen regardless of the tenuous relationship that the rate of inflation may have to your particular spending habits?

What about those people who can't find suitable employment? What about those people who have just lost their jobs because the company has cut back or closed down? What about those people who have had no raise whatsoever in the last 4 or 5 years? What about those people on fixed incomes? They are barely getting a 1.5% return on their investments, let alone a 1.5% increase. What about those people who have just had their hours cut back. How concerned do you think those groups are about union members losing income due to inflation?

Here are some facts:

Wages and benefits at City Hall have risen by over 2.3 times the rate of inflation during the last seven years. The rate of inflation during that period was approximately 10% while wage and benefit costs rose approx 23%.

The 2017 average wage and benefit package for City hall employees is estimated at just over \$87 thousand. This means that by 2019 the average will be almost \$92 thousand. I suggest that you collect the names and credit card numbers of all those citizens whom you suggest don't want CUPE to lose income due to inflation and send the list to City Hall. The City can then set up a monthly charge to their credit cards for the cost of this waste of money.

When wages are increased without a corresponding increase in output, inflation is increased. By asking for more money without delivering more value for the money, CUPE is actually causing the inflation.

There has been no press release of any kind from the City on this contract. Why was an increase of any kind necessary? Why was there no action to end defined-benefit gold plated pensions? Why on earth would anyone agree to no layoffs after five years of full time employment? Who negotiated this contract? Why are citizens being asked to pay for an increase in wages every single year while barely receiving the same services and a steadily decreasing value received for taxes paid? Why don't we just give union bosses the keys to the City and let them run things as they please?

In my opinion, the real reason for the current situation is that no one in City administration has the intestinal fortitude to stand up to the unions and their ridiculous demands and union bosses are taking advantage of this year after year and continue to increase their standard of living on the backs of taxpayers.