

Good Deal or Bad Deal?

Responsible Government Group Requests Details From Mayor

July 28, 2009 (Toronto): The question in every residents' mind today is, was it worth it? Did the City negotiate a deal that is good for tax-payers? Knowing they will be expected to vote on the tentative settlement at this week's City Council Meeting, the Responsible Government Group met with the Mayor this morning and requested the details of the settlement, a briefing to Employee and Labour Relations Committee on Wednesday and holding Council on Thursday, rather than Friday, to speed up the process.

"This is a very important issue," said Councillor John Parker. "I want to understand the terms of the deal and their implications fully and comprehensively before I cast my vote at Council," he said. "Moreover, I don't want the information at the last minute; we need it now," he added.

The Responsible Government Group feels there are a number of issues that they need to better understand prior to the Council meeting. These include:

- How does this deal affect the financial health of the City of Toronto? How much money will it save?
- What is the exact cost of the sick-bank payout offered by the Mayor? Given the significant unfunded liability posed by the sick bank benefit, does the City in fact have the money to pay it out?
- How can a pay raise to union staff be reconciled with the zero per cent increase given to non-union staff?

"While we don't have all the details, the information we are hearing from non-City Hall sources suggest that this deal could have been struck in March," said Councillor Karen Stintz. "If this is true, it is a travesty that Toronto residents gave up many of their summertime activities and endured a five-week strike," she said.

The Cost of Garbage Pick Up

Previously, the Mayor indicated that he would do everything he could to pick up garbage as quickly as possible, matching or beating the 36 hour turn around time achieved in 2002. While the Responsible Government Group applauds the commitment to cleaning up the City as quick as possible, the Group wants to balance time with cost.

"If we are a City suddenly trying to be more mindful of how we spend our money, does it really make sense to pay overtime to workers over this holiday weekend to remove garbage?" ask Councillor Lee. "Let's get the garbage picked up, as quickly as we can but as the Mayor says, in an affordable manner."

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