

June 13, 2012 – “From the Mayor’s Chair” Tillsonburg focus feature

From the Mayor's Chair:

The financial pressures seem to be never ending.

Today I want to share with you the financial cost for our community policing delivered through the OPP.

To begin, it needs to be said the **increasing costs to us the tax payers has nothing to do with the excellence of the police services being delivered by the dedicated OPP officers here in Tillsonburg. We have a safe community thanks to their efforts.**

This is a disconnect between the municipalities being serviced by the OPP and the Minister of Safety and Correctional Services. We the tax payers are told what it will cost, yet we are not allowed to have any input on how these costs are determined. This needs to stop.

The wage increase was front loaded by the Government. This came unexpectedly, and when this happens it puts pressure on operating revenues to deliver other requirements in our community.

In 2012 the Government announced an 8.5% wage increase to OPP wages effective January 2014.

Eighty percent (80%) of police costs are attributed to payroll costs. This increase will add \$239,000.00 to the cost of policing here in Tillsonburg. This impacts operating costs to Tillsonburg currently and into the future.

Add it up.

Year	Total Tillsonburg OPP Costs	Increase
2010	\$2,918,379	
2011	\$3,131,399	213,000
2012	\$3,364,319	233,000
2013	\$3,403,000 (estimated)	49,000
2014	\$3,711,000 (estimated)	308,000

This is a total of \$803,000; or, put another way 27.5% increase over four years. These are additional dollars added to revenue requirements to operate our municipality. This impacts monies available to spend on delivery of services, debt repayment, and infrastructure needs, and puts serious pressure on the tax revenue requirements.

Currently policing costs represent 29% of the \$12,106,000.00 Tillsonburg 2012 Budget.

What can be done? This is an issue in municipalities across Ontario. A coalition of Mayors from across Ontario representing small urban and rural communities serviced by OPP has been formed to have dialogue with the Ministry of Safety and Correctional Services to bring **Affordable, Sustainable, Accountable Policing**.

The partnership between the municipalities being serviced by the OPP and the Minister of Safety and Correctional Services is disconnected. If we the tax payers are writing the cheque for the police services then allow us at the table to have a say on how those costs are determined. If this is not possible, then the Government should upload the costs and have everyone across the Province pay the same amount per person, as is currently being done with our health care and education. This is the mandate of the Coalition. If this is to be fixed, it will be at the political level.

We respect the Ministry Task Force consisting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ministry staff and the Ontario Police Association staff members who are reviewing various aspects of the day to day service delivery model. The Ministry of Safety and Correctional Services are to be commended for imitating this dialogue. However, as you have read, this is an urgent matter, costing us the tax payers thousands of dollars.

As your Mayor, I am taking a very proactive role as one of six Mayors on the Steering Committee for the Mayors' Coalition. This present system is not Affordable, not Sustainable, and has no Accountability.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message. Please take a minute to review the web site to better understand the role of the Mayors' Coalition.

It is an honour to serve as your Mayor.

Mayor John Lessif