

?Sunshine List? issues

In the Thursday April 10, 2014 issue James Matthews received front page coverage for his article ?Town, school board employees on soaring 2013 Sunshine List?. I understand that publishing the names of those on the ?Sunshine List? is a sensitive matter and I am not going to comment on any individual on that list.

James writes ?some have argued that the \$100,000 benchmark isn't fair in light of increased living costs since the list was first introduced by the Mike Harris government in 1998?.

I do not remember Mike Harris having his own government but do believe James is referring to the Progressive Conservatives who Mike Harris was the leader of at that time. My writing is not to be political and I will not dwell on who was in power or when.

James may believe that only those making over \$100,000, have increased living expenses, ones I often refer to as ?equal opportunity expenses?, as I do not know of any grocery store, municipal authority, or indeed the government run post office, assesses expenses based on any ?means test?. As an example, the current mortgage borrowing costs are at an all time low, approximately 3%, not long ago the average cost for a mortgage was 12% and some of us remember when the borrowing rate for a mortgage was over 20%, as was the case in 1981. It is true that the average mortgage was considerably lower in 1981, but when you realize the average wage was less than \$30,000 at that time, one can easily calculate the borrowing costs during that period was, on a comparative basis, much higher and ?ate? up a greater percentage of the family income.

As we consider ?increased living costs?, take a moment and think of the senior citizens, many of whom are faced with increased rent. Their incomes are (for the most part) much less than \$25,000 annually. Many of the ?Sunshine list? have wage increases which in turn will increase their pensionable earnings (when the time comes for them to retire), yet, most pensioners do not get any pension increases, from any source.

James writes that Rob Adams advised him that it is very difficult to budget, yet, I suspect Rob and many on town council were fully aware there would be an arbitration and some changes with salary scales and failed to make any provision within the town budget. Do understand who is paying for these ?decisions?, the home owners in Orangeville. When the tax rate increases to cover the ?unforeseen? expenses we can all be assured the tax rate will never come down, more ?increased living costs? for ALL to absorb.

I expect most readers of the Citizen have parents or grandparents who spent little if any time thinking of how they could spend \$100,000, but these same parents/grandparents can share plenty about the ?increasing equal opportunity expenses?.

Mr. Matthews, perhaps in your follow-up article you might dig into the reasons ?why? some on the ?Sunshine List? are making the incomes they are and ask each one what they intend to do next year in order that their name does not appear again.

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