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January 28, 2020

Budget Committee
Toronto City Hall,
100 Queen St. W.,
10th floor, West Tower,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: 2020 Budget Deputation

COTAPSA (City of Toronto Administrative, Professional Supervisory Association) is Canada's oldest (54+ years) and largest such municipal organization, advocating on behalf of the over 4700 non-union City of Toronto employees. Our members not only work for the City, but many live and raise families in Toronto, so the decisions made during this process impact them on multiple levels.

Toronto is consistently ranked as one of the best cities in the world. While Toronto holds an enviable position, it can be costly. For years, Toronto has faced a variety of issues, each with its own funding challenges. While some issues are age-old (infrastructure, transportation, accommodating population growth), others are new (growing gun violence, lack of affordable housing, climate change, refugee immigration).

Tax Rate and Special Levy

COTAPSA supports the recommended 2.0% tax increase on residential properties and 1.5% City Building Fund for transit and affordable housing. These increases are necessary to keep pace with a growing population, an aging infrastructure, and new challenges on the horizon.

Taxpayers should be responsible for the services provided in their communities. Nobody likes to pay more taxes. However, the City of Toronto has had one of the lowest residential property tax rates in all the GTHA municipalities.

The housing market in Toronto remains hot, and prices continue to increase. Despite pricing levels, people continue to purchase property in the City, demonstrating that they are willing to pay to live here. As Toronto continues to grow, it is reasonable to expect this growth will be mirrored with a need for increased infrastructure and services. It follows that Toronto taxpayers should bear the responsibility to pay for the required infrastructure and services. But it seems everyone wants someone else to pay.

Other Orders of Government Need to Contribute Their Fair Share

While the City does its best to address citizen's demands, COTAPSA encourages Council to continue to pressure the federal and provincial governments to contribute their fair share particularly for transit, affordable housing, and public health, and poverty reduction.

The Inward Search for Efficiencies:

For years Council has sought to resolve funding issues using a multi-pronged solution that included an inward search for efficiencies, often involving staffing cuts. To do more with less will not address the budget shortfall but more importantly will not deliver the services demanded of taxpayers. We are encouraged by Mayor Tory's recent comments that "*Efficiencies alone cannot produce the amount of money that we will need to fulfill our own obligations*". Finding efficiencies internally through staff cuts has been played out and it is no longer possible to deliver the services demanded with less staff and reduced program funding.

Respect for Non-Union Staff:

COTAPSA's motto is "*Our City, Our People*". Our members are proud of the work they do and the City for which they work. Should a labour disruption occur, COTAPSA will remain nonpartisan in regard to this action, and our only focus will be to help keep Toronto running.

The City's non-union staff are loyal, well-educated and experienced and carry out demanding, critical jobs for 'their City'. These employees already work hard for the City on a daily basis in their normal job roles, and will go the extra miles necessary to ensure that the City is the best it can be during a labour disruption.

We ask that Council remember this when deliberating Cost of Living increases when the time comes.

Thank you for your time.