



January 10, 2018

Budget Committee, City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W. 10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Sir/Madam:

COTAPSA (City of Toronto Administrative, Professional, Supervisory Association) thanks you for the opportunity to participate in the 2018 budget process.

We are Canada's oldest and largest organization representing non-union municipal employees. We advocate on behalf of over 4,000 non-union City employees. We have proudly held this responsibility for 52 years and it is these employees, their families and their communities we are representing today.

Toronto is one of the most populated metropolitan areas in North America and as such, the challenges we face are more acute than those faced by other municipalities.

At the same time, Toronto also has the enviable international reputation of being one of the most livable and economically competitive cities in the world.

This is a dichotomy that Council is tasked to balance and fund through the budget process.

Since day one as City Manager, Peter Wallace has flagged the gap between the cost of delivering services demanded by residents and businesses and the revenue the City collects to provide those services. We support his argument and agree, "*That there is a limit to "squeeze strategies," of making due simply by trimming budgets.*"¹

COTAPSA has asserted for years that the City cannot achieve long-term fiscal sustainability **and** meet current and future service demands through:

- expenditure reductions,
- staff reductions,
- one-time fixes, **or**
- the ongoing belief that "*yet to be found*" service efficiencies will solve our long term fiscal problems.

¹ Peter Wallace speech to the Munk Centre , 2017

This year's budget with a proposed 0% tax increase (which, relative to inflation, is a tax decrease), again fails to address the underlying budget issue which is to raise the funds necessary to deliver the existing services demanded by residents and address future challenges including:

- The growing disparity in economic opportunities and quality of life experienced by different segments of our City;
- Homelessness and affordable housing needs;
- Aging infrastructure;
- Public transit built for a generation past; and
- Increased service levels as a result of a population that grows by tens of thousands every year

...and that is just a start.

Employees have expertise that is not listened to during budget deliberations. Decisions are then made which do not take into account the seemingly ever-growing population, its need for services and also any new crises that will inadvertently occur ... and staff is directed again, and again, to do more with less. The reality is that there will be an impact. A member stated, and we concur, that *"No one listens to frontline staff anymore. This is not good for Torontonians."* Staff have the knowledge as to the reality of the impact of decisions the City makes on the work required; they are flagging that work cannot keep being added to and personnel gapped.

Regardless, day to day, these employees, your frontline workers, in addition to other responsibilities are dealing with:

- The shelter crisis
- The housing crisis
- The opioid and fentanyl crisis

They keep this City running and meet new critical demands. Most recently they answered the City's urgent call for volunteers at Moss Park Armoury and other respite centres.

This year, COTAPSA chose to focus on the impact of budget decisions on the Public Service. In order to do so, we decided to put a human face on the non-union workers, a group of employees that Toronto relies heavily on for leadership and creativity.

Our members tell us what they experience and overall they have shared very similar sentiments, so we wanted to share some of these stories. As one observed, *"The work load has more than doubled and I have consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty."* Another member succinctly summed it up, saying that *"With cut backs there needs to be an understanding as to the effect it has on staff who are delivering services"*. Burnout is a reality and it does not benefit the City.

Meet Jane, Jeremy and Nan².

Jane works in Public Health and last year, due to gapping, she maintained two positions. Jane is exhausted and under great pressure. She loves her job, yet she was told in her Performance Review that she did not know how to delegate responsibility. When cuts demand employees cover for eliminated positions, who are they supposed to delegate to?

In his first year as a management employee, Jeremy implemented two projects for the City that achieved significant administrative efficiencies for his Division and saved the City a million dollars. This is just one example of an employee helping the City find savings. Yet, on his Performance Review, Jeremy received 1% performance pay increase (meets most but not all expectations and/or developmental).

Nan told us her responsibilities are detailed in her job description. Yet, she has also been tasked with a large number of patient encounters, phone calls, administration emails, teaching, and retraining staff. Nan is forced to work harder, at a time when productivity is already strained by gapping and equipment breakdowns. She is convinced that few people understand what the impacts have been of seemingly *'arbitrary gapping'*.

Some employees are on stress leave due to the pressure of being constantly responsible for doing more with less. Others return from sick leave too early: worried for their clients; worried for their colleagues; and worried for their own jobs.

These stories are from the people who you rely on to direct the City's vision and meet its needs. Do we really expect our municipal employees to do more with less every year, even as we ask them to resolve issues that are generations in the making?

We support the work already done by Council with the continued harmonization of the MLTT, increases in the TPA income share, and Hotel and B&B lodging tax. But, in the strongest way possible, we also ask Council to confront the budget shortfall through measures that will not affect service delivery by embracing and exploring other available revenue generating options, including an increase in property taxes targeted at least to inflation.

We have a great City and you have great employees - employees who are loyal, well-educated, experienced, trained, ready and willing to do demanding and critical jobs. Council must be aware of, and responsive to, the concerns of the rank and file, who 365 days a year, 7 days of the week, 24 hours a day, keep this City running.

Delivering service requires people to do the work and your budget decisions risk compromising the ability of employees to deliver the credible level of service demanded and required by the people of Toronto.

Thank you for your time.



Heather Nicolson-Morrison, BA, BA, MA, EcD, F
Executive Director, COTAPSA

² Names changed to preserve anonymity.