

July 25, 2020



Dear Councillor,

Re: Non-Union Compensation

I hope this letter finds you well.

The City of Toronto Administrative Professional, Supervisory Association (COTAPSA) represents the interests of our members, who are non-unionized City staff. This letter is to bring your attention to a matter that is to be considered by City Council, at its meeting of July 28 and 29, 2020.

City Council will consider Report CC23.3, which recommends that: the City's non-union workforce receive zero (0%) COLA in 2020; and also recommends an "immediate" cancellation of the City's pay for performance program for 2020 (already past mid-year interim performance reviews). A subsequent staff communication from the City Manager (July 24, 2020) also indicates an additional cancellation of the pay for performance program in 2021 (payable in 2022).

COTAPSA and its membership have serious concerns with these recommendations.

Over the years, the City's non-unionized employees have made significant concessions, to help the City to manage its financial challenges. While we understand the financial impact on the City as a result of today's COVID-19 challenges, COTAPSA Members have worked on the frontlines, responding to COVID along with our unionized colleagues, and do not wish to be treated any differently.

The City and CUPE Local 416, and more recently the City and CUPE Local 79, have entered into five-year deals awarding unionized City staff a 1% COLA for each of 2020, 2021 and 2022, and a 1.75% annual COLA for both 2023 and 2024.

It is important to note that the performance pay recently received by non-union staff was earned based on their performance during 2019, and therefore should not be viewed as a "perk". To date, the City has had a competitive compensation program, including merit performance rewards, which has been viewed as critical for driving a high-performing workforce, for optimizing organization performance, and for being able to effectively recruit and retain talent.

Many of our COTAPSA Members are paramedics, health care professionals, and workers in shelters and long-term care facilities, and they have been joined by other members who have been redeployed to assist in the essential and/critical areas. However, a majority of the non-unionized employees working on the front lines will not qualify for pandemic pay.

Recently, the City has also implemented a hiring freeze. As a result, COTAPSA Members, along with other City staff, have been working harder to fulfill the City's mandates.

At a May 1, 2020 Virtual Town Hall meeting, Mayor Tory thanked employees for their service, having indicated that he was "proud of the fact that not only have so many people expressed the willingness to go outside of their comfort zone and be redeployed at a time when perhaps they couldn't do their job...proud of the fact that literally hundreds of people said that they would be willing to see themselves redeployed to long-term care or to shelters and these are not the easiest of jobs and in the current circumstances in which we find ourselves they carry with them certain risks...it shows the character of the people that work for the City and shows that we're one team that knows we have to serve all the people and help each other."

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While COTAPSA members and other non-unionized staff have been recognized for their efforts from elected officials and senior management for their efforts at many events, approving compensation reductions and program cancellations is not consistent with this sentiment. The cancellation of COLA and performance pay for only the non-union staff is punitive in nature and not deserved.

Taking the measures outlined above will result in a negative medium to long-term effect for the City, including the following:

- Adverse impact on employee morale. The recent employee engagement initiative was undertaken to promote a happy and a productive City workforce;
- Reduced ability to attract and retain talent if salary wage bands are not competitive;
- Increased vacancies and gapping rates - As hiring freezes are anticipated to continue at least over the next while, the City would want a productive and an engaged work force, otherwise burnout and bad customer service may be some of the potential consequences;
- Increased risk to City Services as critical non-union positions are not filled, resulting in increased reactive services vs. forward strategic planning;
- Salary compression between union and non-union positions. Providing increases to unionized staff, while providing none to non-unionized staff, will result in a narrowing gap of the pay between unionized employees and their supervisors. This may cause a disinterest on the part of skilled unionized employees to seek an internal promotion; and
- Reduced pension income, especially for employees eligible to retire over the next five years.

The City's elected officials and senior management have reached out to City staff for support during this entire COVID-19 crisis, including the COTAPSA membership. Our members have responded and have risen to the challenge.

COTAPSA is now requesting your support in ensuring that non-union staff are not faced with 0% compensation increases, and performance management program/merit pay cancellations.

The City's financial issues should not be solved by punishing non-unionized employees who have stepped up to address the challenges faced by the citizens and businesses of Toronto during this unprecedented pandemic.

COTAPSA recommends that non-unionized employees receive COLA payments similar to those negotiated for unionized employees, and a continued pay for performance program.

Respectfully,

Mike Major
President, COTAPSA

cc. Mayor John Tory, Ulli S. Watkiss, City Clerk, Chris Murray, City Manager, Omo Akintan, Chief People Officer, Heather Taylor, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, Marilyn Toft, Manager Council Secretariat Support, City Clerk's Office