

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Mayor Fontana, Councillors:

- re: Any expenses claimed by Councillor Dale Henderson in regards to Dale TV should not be allowed.**
- re: Investigate whether Councillor Henderson may keep equipment purchased with City expense money.**
- re: City staff review allowable expenses to clarify and tighten what is allowed.**

Disallow expenses

With respect, and in the strongest possible way, I request that any expenses claimed by Councillor Dale Henderson in regards to Dale TV not be allowed.

I expect that I am like others who knew that Councillor Henderson was broadcasting his thoughts on various topics over YouTube: we figured he was doing this "on his own dime," never would have expected he purchased thousands of dollars of equipment to do so, and absolutely do not want our tax dollars used for it.

It was discussed at the Corporate Services Committee meeting of Tuesday, March 20 that expenditures made by Councillor Henderson for equipment and other items to do with Dale TV should be questioned and not allowed. A majority on the CSC voted to allow those expenses, however.

I have done what reading I can concerning councillors' expenses¹ - news coverage and Corporate Services Committee reports - and also requested and obtained (from the City Clerk's office) the 26 page detailed councillors/mayor expenditures sheet.

Councillor expenses are supposed to support communication with constituents. In his broadcasts, Councillor Henderson does not relate his "topics" specifically to his ward. Often, they are not even referenced in a way to make them specific to London.

Speaking as a citizen and taxpayer, as far as wise use of money goes, there was no need for Councillor Henderson to have purchased thousands of dollars of video equipment, a green screen, or even a special account for Dale TV:

- Video equipment is not expensive. I have equipment in my own home - purchased three years ago at a cost of approximately \$100.00 (on sale) - that allows me to take a video of myself and upload it to my computer. From there it can be uploaded free to YouTube.
- An average teenager or college student can record video on her cell phone and upload this to YouTube, for no cost additional to her monthly cell phone plan.
- And if one does want a professional presentation, there are services which can do this task for a price far lower than the amount spent on equipment and other things Coun. Henderson claims for.

On the most personal level, I do not want any of my tax money spent on presentations that seem to be unscripted and - to be blunt - where even a careful listener cannot follow and know what the point is. I acknowledge that this could be termed subjective.

Can equipment be kept?

The London Free Press reported that Councillor Henderson expects that he will "probably" keep the video equipment after his term is over. Please request City staff from appropriate departments (legal, finance, clerk's) to look into whether this is even allowable. It doesn't seem right that equipment purchased with citizen/city money should be retained by a councillor once he is out of office.

Review allowable expenses

Finally, please review - with an eye to tightening up - just what may or may not be claimed under councillor expenses.

Most sincerely,

Maureen Temme

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cc: Cathy Saunders as City Clerk and Council Secretary

¹ Agenda items for the Tuesday, March 20/13 Corporate Services Committee meeting.
The McLeod Report, *Your Share of Dale TV*, <http://themcleodreport.ca/home/1131-your-share-of-dale-tv-709825-.html>
London Free Press article, Wed. March 20/13, *His Show, Your Dough*, <http://www.lfpress.com/2013/03/19/should-city-council-clamp-down-on-how-councillors-can-spend-their-expense-accounts>
London Civic Watch, March 18 and 19 - three entries, www.ginabarber.blogspot.ca