

Councillor Bill Evans reads statement opposing pay increases for the mayor and council to compensate for federal tax changes, December 9, 2019:

Requests for funding normally originate with staff in the course of them doing their jobs of fulfilling the priorities that council has established to provide infrastructure and services for the citizens of Sackville. All such requests should get evaluated through the lens of what is in the best interest of the whole municipality. So, where is this initiative coming from? This issue was raised by councillors. It was raised because the federal government decided to tax our income in the same way they tax everybody else's income. We have enjoyed a perk that none of our citizens have enjoyed and now we're going to lose that perk and we'll have to pay tax the same way everybody else does. So, it seemed that to compensate us for the "hardship" of being treated like everybody else, we are considering making those who have always paid tax on all their income subsidize us with their after-tax income. I don't think *that's* fair. I think that the benefit councillors enjoyed previously was unfair and that this change in the tax code is an attempt to make it fair for all concerned.

If the citizens whose interests we are supposed to be addressing were polled, I don't think they would list council remuneration as one of the top priorities competing for the town's scarce financial resources. I don't think that giving ourselves a raise is in the best interests of the town. I think that it would be good for us as individuals, everybody likes more money, but as I have said on many occasions, doing this job is not about what's good for us personally.

Speaking of "our job", none of us makes our living doing this. This is a part-time job, a sideline. We support ourselves by other means. It's not like the town had to compete with other employers to attract people to work as councillor by paying competitive salaries the way employers do for regular employees. We all and I include in this all the unsuccessful candidates too who are willing to do the job for the current compensation package. Where is the evidence to support the case that paying councillors more would be better for the municipality as a whole? What problem are we trying to fix?

However, in listening to others on this topic in September, something was pointed out to me that I had failed to notice before. While we all have been managing to make do on our personal incomes before we were elected, there may be people unemployed or under-employed who would like to offer, but who, in order to participate in our evening meetings, would need to employ someone to look after their dependent family members. I would be happy to explore ways that if they were elected, these individuals could have additional expenses covered so that they could afford to do the job.

In conclusion, according to the information requested by us and presented to us by staff in September, we are among the best-compensated councils of municipalities of comparable size in New Brunswick. I see no evidence that increasing that compensation would be in the best interests of the town. Our job as councillors is to look after the town's cookie jar and I don't think that helping ourselves to the cookies is fair to the people who elected us. I will be voting against this motion.