

Three solutions for expense ?dumpster diving?

(Re: Politics as Usual, April 16, 2013)

The electioneering silly season doesn't begin in eight months, for the simple reason that it never actually ended.

Expense account ?dumpster diving? in the hopes of discovering one's rival has attempted to claim a private island or liposuction for their over-indulged hamster is simply one of the many forms of low-brow political muck-raking.

You know, idle hands, devil's workshop and all that.

On the other hand, if council really was interested in addressing expense account issues and had a free afternoon to spare, the solutions, in my opinion at least, are quite simple.

1. Mayor and Councillors don't need an expense account. Town hall has all the office supplies they need. What else do they need expense money for?
2. Expense money is taxpayer money ? our money ? meant to help Councillors do a better job of serving us. It is not bonus salary or ?mad money?. It is not a ?use it or lose it? fund. It is not meant to buy meals and drinks for other people. Nor is it meant to be spent on tickets, charitable donations and gala dinners. I'll decide what charities I want to support and events I want to attend. Councillors can attend galas on their own dime or the organizers can comp their tickets if they are so keen to have them attend.
3. Set policy on which meetings, conferences or training sessions are appropriate to participate in. Set per diems such as \$20 for a local (GTA) day-long session or \$50 for extended out of town events. You attend, you get the per diem and the town staff arranges and pays for conference fees, travel and hotels. Spend however much you want on whatever you want. Buy wine and golf clubs for all of your new friends. We don't care and we don't need to see the receipts either because you'll only be getting the per diem anyway.

Barry Hall
Aurora