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Flamborough's hard-earned tax dollars cannot be left to chance

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How much can the Hamilton taxpayer endure?

The unjust decision to impose a double-digit tax hike on Flamborough residents in one fell swoop is indicative of city councillors who cannot see the value of unifying the "new" city of Hamilton.

With this blunder, failure (still) to implement an integrity commissioner, buildings literally falling down around us with no respect for their historical significance, no meaningful appreciation for the sense of urgency surrounding the demolition by neglect issue, backing city hall into a shopping mall, no guts on the Lister Block issue, hand slapping for serious breaches of integrity by specific councillors, spending of \$50,000 outside of procurement rules to "unlock the secret of the mission statement," which seems to have gone off like a lead balloon ... with all this and more, confidence in city council is at an all-time low.

This lack of performance and the dire state it leaves our city in justifies serious consideration for the appointment of a provincial supervisor. Hard-earned tax dollars simply cannot be left to chance. Citizens are entitled to good stewardship from municipal government, value for money and good decision making.

With respect to the Flamborough slots issue, while Councillor Margaret McCarthy's passion may have been excessive, it is a red herring to this process. Councillors who factored her conduct into their vote left Flamborough residents and all other fair-minded citizens of Hamilton behind. Moreover, they left a wound that will not heal quickly and rekindles the notion of de-amalgamation.

What is missing is a way of considering and weighing all the factors that had an impact as a result of amalgamation. Factors such as services, accessibility to services (transit, for example), property taxes and the like have had varying impacts on taxpayers.

In absence of a more balanced look at these factors, a focus on slot revenues simply because they are a stark representation of revenue, while casting a blind eye to the other factors, is unsound. In absence of a balanced approach, the notion of phasing out slot revenues over the course of three years is reasonable.

One councillor described the focus on slot revenues as "ripping off a Band-Aid." I would argue it is not like that at all. That position is a callous characterization coming from what, I would guess, is a place of privilege.

I look at what a double-digit increase means to hardworking people, people who may be on social assistance, people who may be struggling to survive, widows, salt-of-the-earth people who work hard to make ends meet and I see the very human impact of a 10 per cent tax increase.

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