

PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

April 1, 2016

HAWKESBURY, ON - This press release is being issued in response to the annual “Sunshine” list of salaries that are paid to provincial and municipal public employees. The Municipal Council of the Town of Hawkesbury wishes to provide the following explanations regarding the salaries paid in 2015 to the full-time firefighters of the Town of Hawkesbury including the actions that have been taken by the Municipal Council. The newly elected Municipal Council officially took office on December 1st, 2014, of which there were four (4) new Members including the Mayor. The new Council was aware that there were many issues that had to be addressed and amongst them were the salaries paid each year to the full-time firefighters that have continued over the past several years.

The new Council quickly realized that the main problems creating these high salaries paid to full-time firefighters were due to two (2) reasons, the first being the inability of properly filling vacancies. The second issue has been the existing management practices of personnel. Both of these issues created extensive overtime being paid to full-time firefighters. As such, the Council directed senior staff to now give priority to current volunteer firefighters employed by the Town of Hawkesbury to become permanent full-time firefighters. This new policy of Council has eliminated the high “turn-over” rate in having to replace firefighters which created excessive overtime payments. By replacing missing full-time firefighters within the ranks of the volunteer firefighters and ensuring their proper qualifications immediately, this has significantly reduced payment in overtime. Also, following the hiring of the new Fire Chief on a “contractual basis”, this individual was given a very strong mandate to review existing management practices and policies in order to reduce overtime and to implement other cost-saving initiatives that will **not** impact on the safety of our residents, businesses and industries in the Town of Hawkesbury. These activities of the new Fire Chief include a monthly report on overtime claimed and reviewed by Council on a regular basis to ensure that best management practices are being maintained.

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In concluding, the year 2015 has been a “transition” year and, as such the cost–saving corrections implemented by Council during 2015 will only become visible in 2016. The new Municipal Council including the new Fire Chief wishes to implement efficient and effective operations of the Town of Hawkesbury Fire Department. The Municipal Council also wishes to ensure the residents and taxpayers that these operations will continue to be monitored closely and that these changes being implemented will continue to provide positive results in the years to follow.

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