



## Media Advisory

### **NTAG Condemns Town's Unwarranted Spending, in lieu of proposed tax increases.**

**Newmarket, ON, November 17, 2015** – The Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. (NTAG) has been steadfast in reducing the excessive and unnecessary spending at the Town of Newmarket. In March, 2015, NTAG delivered a deputation to Town of Newmarket Council about Town staff's exorbitant entertainment and dining expenses in 2014.

Regrettably, staff spending in 2015 continues to be outrageous and unwarranted. Despite all proposed tax increases this year, neither Council, nor senior management at the Town, have mandated a decrease in unnecessary spending.

From January to September, 2015:

- The Central York Fire Services had 49 meals at local restaurants during this time period totalling \$2,534.31. Many of these meals were taken by well-paid senior managers earning in excess of \$100,000. The CYFS clearly has no shortage of charges to Tim Horton's or pizza restaurants. The CYFS also enjoyed \$ 1,059.35 at local grocery stores, and an additional \$ 298.60 spent at local party and flower shops.
- The Marketing and Sponsorship department spent \$ 4,880.35 spent on restaurant meals during these nine months. In March alone, 14 meals were eaten at restaurants – 11 by the same person.

Charges such as \$3.95 at 7-Eleven, \$5.60 at Cob's Bread and \$5.92 at Mac's Convenience store are insulting to taxpayers whom pay for these luxuries through user fees and property taxes.

NTAG wrote each member of Council on September 22, 2015, with our concerns. Alas, only two councillors responded and subsequently raised our concerns with CAO, Bob Shelton. Mr. Shelton stated in a response to NTAG that "Such expenditures are reasonable in respect to industry and even business practice" referring to the excessive staff meals with the CYFS. When questioned as to the existence of a formal staff entertainment expense policy, Mr. Shelton stated "it is not a current staff priority" to consolidate or create expense policies.

A formal staff entertainment expense policy does not exist at the Town of Newmarket.

"It is absolutely deplorable that in this current economy, when so many taxpayers are struggling, and countless corporations, including municipalities, have downsized, have decreased spending, and implemented aggressive internal efficiencies, that the Town of Newmarket continues to justify out-of-control spending," states Teena Bogner, President of NTAG. "Rather than consistently and predictably increasing taxes, user fees, hydro and water rates, why not cut costs? It seems fairly obvious that money can be saved with internal efficiencies. At what point do Town council and management realize they work for us, that they are accountable to us, the taxpayer? This is shameful and unacceptable."

Eliminating unnecessary and unmonitored entertainment spending will not close the current budget gaps. At issue is the Town's utter lack of leadership, starting with Council and the CAO's office, to demand internal cost-cutting measures, and end the free lunches and groceries. If the town is unwilling to address uncontrolled entertainment spending as



outlined, then clearly they are not able to address the high internal management costs that contribute to the year-over-year tax increases placed upon the taxpayers of Newmarket. This unacceptable abuse of taxpayers' money must end.

A copy of the Freedom of Information request that provided this information can be found at [www.ntag.ca](http://www.ntag.ca).

The Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. (NTAG) is a provincially incorporated non-for-profit ratepayers group in Newmarket, ON. NTAG is a non-political, non-partisan, advocacy organization dedicated to fair taxes, less waste and transparent and accountable government in all levels of government (town, region and school boards) in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada.

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