



## Media Advisory

### 2015 Town of Newmarket Budget Fails Taxpayers

**Newmarket, ON, April 21, 2015** –On April 20, 2015, Town of Newmarket Council unanimously approved the 2015 Operating Budget of \$ 112,926,115 resulting in a 2.5 % Tax Increase as well as a 1.0% Infrastructure Levy. The 2015 Capital Budget was approved for \$ 29.3 Million. This budget nets to a 3.5% tax increase (With the implementation of the NTAG suggested cost cutting from the miscellaneous accounts, the actual tax increase would have been closer to 3.0% vs 3.5%).

Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. reiterates that the Town of Newmarket has failed taxpayers with this budget. Of concern:

1. The 2014 actual budget numbers for the Town of Newmarket will not be available until June 2015 - two months after this budget is passed. In order to accurately forecast and budget for 2015 it needs to be understood what was spent in 2014.
2. The Town of Newmarket continues to increase spending while decreasing services. 14 new employees have been added to the payroll, there has been an > 11% increase in employees on the Sunshine List (earning over \$100,000/year), and yet snow removal on courts has been eliminated.
3. Mayor Tony Van Bynen claims significant public consultation relating to the budget. Consultation was, in reality, 801 respondents in a telephone survey, or 245 in an on-line survey equalling <1% of the taxpaying public. Despite the <1% taxpayer representation, (which NTAG does not feel is an accurate representation of the taxpaying public), the survey conducted in 2014 by Forum Research clearly shows the #1 area of dissatisfaction for taxpayers is “Public Consultation on Municipal Processes”, with only a 34% satisfaction rating. Furthermore, “Residents Willingness to Pay to Improve Town Services” indicated that 70% of residents were not willing to pay more to improve services. In fact, 66% of respondents felt they do not have the information they require regarding how tax dollars are spent.  
<http://www.newmarket.ca/en/townhall/resourcelibrary/NewmarketFinalReport.pdf>
4. A deputation by NTAG relying on actual, quantifiable data from the Town of Newmarket, indicated \$256,000 of waste in 2014 on items such as staff BBQs and lunches, flowers, and cakes was completely ignored. This annual slush fund could be used to maintain services, such as snow clearance on courts.

“There appears to be a lack of leadership at the Town of Newmarket to reduce costs while maintaining services”, NTAG President Teena Bogner states. “Neither staff nor council have listened to taxpayer’s concerns to reduce wasteful spending nor to aggressively pursue cost savings measures. This budget fails Newmarket taxpayers. “

**For information on Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc.:**

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