

## **Taxpayers take notice of your elected officials**

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Editor:

I think it is important for the taxpayers of Quesnel to know just how fiscally irresponsible most of the elected officials really are.

As you will know from the article on June 29, I was fired following a complaint against the manager.

My stress leave was only the second time in nine years that I was absent on medical leave. It is also important to know that I was not the only one experiencing problems, but I was the one who was prepared to make a formal complaint.

Mayor and council were aware last June that staff were not happy and, last December because of their failure to act, we lost a much loved long term (23 year) staff member due to the difficult work conditions we were experiencing.

Although skills can be replaced, the organization cannot afford to lose its knowledge base in this way.

As there was no process to deal with my complaint, the executive committee (Mayor Sjostrom, Coun. Coleman, Coun. Roodenburg) created one, and all parties agreed to this.

All meetings were supposed to be without prejudice.

In spite of the agreement, the executive committee refused to follow their own process through to the final step – hiring an outside consultant to advise on a resolution – claiming that would be a waste of taxpayer money.

Nevertheless, my complaint was upheld, but then I was promptly fired without notice. The city has admitted it is without just cause.

Thus, it is difficult to comprehend the executive committee's stated concerns regarding taxpayers' money when, in practically the same breath, it fired me without just cause and thereby exposed itself to my claim for damages for wrongful dismissal.

As well as severance, there are also hidden costs to the organization. I was not able to leave the department in good order because I was fired without notice. My termination has left the city with the loss of my institutional knowledge and this is already creating further liabilities for the city.

I am very appreciative of the support I have received from both colleagues and taxpayers. I am pretty certain that there will be further losses to the city as more staff leave when they are able to do so, due in part to their disillusionment with Council over this issue.

The organization will suffer from the loss of this knowledge and experience, all because council has failed to put the taxpayers and the organization they are supposed to represent above their own personal agendas.

I hope through this letter that taxpayers will become more engaged, take more of an interest in how their hard earned tax dollars are being wasted and hold their elected officials accountable.

Meriel Wild

Quesnel