

It is time to set the record straight! I started investigating Council's expense claims early in 2011 when then Finance Chair Councillor Thapar started asking questions as to how city tax dollars were being spent. I offered to help as I knew the evidence would tell the story. What I found were claims submitted by Sjostrom for expenses the 1/3 Tax Free Expense Allowance was to cover. This meant to me she was being paid twice for the same expenses. We found other travel expenses that should not have been claimed. The remainder of council did not claim reimbursement for similar types of expenses; only the mayor. My next step was to write to the Rulings Department of Canada Revenue Agency to obtain a clear understanding of the intent of the 1/3 Tax Free Expense Allowance for elected officials and in response, the rulings I received provided some insight but they were not easy enough for just anyone to understand. I requested a clear understanding from the Advanced Rulings Department and sent the \$535.00 fee which was returned to me as they do not want to provide the information. I also wrote to Federal Revenue Minister Gail Shea in July 2011 and she referred my letter to Federal Finance Minister James Flaherty that a clear understanding needed to be provided for those providing the Tax Free Expense Allowance and to suggest they get rid of the tax free allowance as it is excessive. During the election, Sjostrom stated the 1/3 Tax Free Expense Allowance was just an added bonus for her job and she proclaimed publically that she was right and I was wrong in my interpretation of the Tax Free Expense Allowance. Instead of dealing with the issues, apologizing for being wrong and paying the money back she just keeps repeating that this is still an election issue. I wrote to the Minister Gail Shea in July 2011 - Sjostrom announced her candidacy in September and Ron Paull in October so how could anyone but Sjostrom be blamed for making this a so-called election issue? All of this took place months before anyone declared their candidacy to run in the election. Sjostrom purposely delayed responding to Thapar in order to make it appear as an election issue.

To misuse tax dollars to defend Sjostrom only furthers my concerns that this mayor is wasting our tax dollars to protect her personal benefit. If I am proven wrong, does the taxpayer benefit? No. Does the City benefit? No. Does Sjostrom benefit? Yes. Too much staff time has been wasted trying to help Sjostrom justify her claims. She repeatedly refuses to show her phone bills, all paid for by taxpayers. Those questionable phone bills are now in the hands of the Freedom of Information Commissioner as every number was blacked out on the few bills provided stating: *"as this disclosure to you might be expected to threaten someone's safety or mental or physical health."* Anyone that knows me understands I am very concerned about protecting the privacy of individuals.

The report from Ron Rasmussen at a cost of over \$8700 is a total waste of taxpayer's money. His report passes the buck and the blame on management. Remember, it is council that directs staff... not the other way around! Questions about the validity of expenses claimed are not answered in Rasmussen's report, the issues are not addressed, nor does information from the Rulings Department of Canada Revenue Agency or travel expense practices of other municipalities back up Sjostrom's claims. Rasmussen's report is a wasteful whitewash. And MP Dick Harris' recent defense of Sjostrom's spending is laughable. Harris is clearly at odds with his government's own Finance Minister! He should stay out of it, as that is like a plumber offering a legal opinion!

Further, how can Sjostrom honestly maintain that she is following "long standing" council policy when in fact the policy she refers to didn't come into effect until March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011? Wasn't this new policy introduced (under the guise of a staff report) by none other than Sjostrom herself? Wasn't this about the same time that Finance Chair Thapar started asking questions? Hmmm...

And, it's not only unanswered questions about expense claims... what about the recent \$170,000 buyout of rookie City Manager, John Steyck, who Sjostrom said resigned for "personal reasons"? What about

the parade of other City management exiting and entering her revolving door? Were they paid to leave as well?

Ask yourself this question, "Who gains by spending taxpayer dollars defending this position and who should reimburse the taxpayers?" It is not council; it is not the city; it is only Sjostrom. Election issue? Nice try... it is a credibility issue screaming out for honesty and transparency!