



Carpenters' District Council of Ontario

United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America

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Wednesday December 1, 2016

Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua
Mayor, City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

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COMMUNICATION
FAA - DECEMBER 5/2016
ITEM - 3

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua,

On behalf of the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario (CDC), I want to express my appreciation for council's support to move forward with a staff report on implementing a Fair Wage Policy for the city of Vaughan. However, after reviewing the report, we are disappointed to read that staff did not perform the due diligence that was requested of them by council at the Finance, Administration and Audit Committee and are therefore disappointed by the recommendations.

The CDC represents more than 26,000 men and women across Ontario in a wide range of skilled trades, including over 12,000 in the Greater Toronto Area. Headquartered in Vaughan, we are committed to providing training and apprenticeship programs that allow people from a diverse range of backgrounds to enter the workforce and build meaningful careers in carpentry, drywall and resilient flooring amongst other areas of construction. As you know from our previous communications the implementation of a Fair Wage Policy in Vaughan is of the utmost importance to the CDC executive and membership.

In addition to establishing fair wages for employees; Fair Wage Policies promote skills training, improve workplace safety, and are directly related to the uptake of apprenticeships by our younger members. Most importantly, Fair Wage Policies protect employees and municipalities from bad actors that are engaged in unfair compensation practices. When employers pay less than market value to their employees they put both quality and health and safety at risk – this does not serve the public good.

We were encouraged by the responses that we received from many on council, and by the motion directing a report. The motion that was passed in May set out clear parameters for the issues that staff were to report back on:

- a. The feasibility of implementing a Fair Wage Policy for City of Vaughan contracts.
- b. A review of the implementation and budget implications of Fair Wage Policies in other jurisdictions including, but not necessarily limited to the Cities of Toronto, Hamilton, and London (Ont);
- c. A review of the Province of Ontario's Fair Wage Policy, including an update from the Ministry of Labour on the progress of their announced plans to modernize the provincial Fair Wage Policy.
- d. An update from the Federal Government on their election commitment to implement a federal Fair Wage Policy.
- e. Consultations with relevant stakeholders, most particularly labour organizations with facilities in the City of Vaughan.

- f. An overview of the underground economy in Ontario's construction industry and the implications it has on workplace health and safety.

The report submitted by staff does not accomplish a number of critical elements that are outlined in the motion passed by committee.

- 1) The review of Fair Wage Policies in other jurisdictions does not include any budget implications. This was included in the motion so that council can get a reasonable understanding of the cost of implementing a policy, by comparing the costs incurred by other municipalities. This information is critical to the determining the feasibility of a Fair Wage Policy in Vaughan. It also does not provide an overview of the implications around the underground economy and workplace health and safety.
- 2) The federal and provincial governments have announced plans either in their mandate letters or in speeches respectively, to modernize their Fair Wage Policies. The report contains no comprehensive update from the province or federal government about what they are thinking and timelines.
- 3) The report references language that is standard in all City of Vaughan contracts. It says that; "the minimum rate of wages shall be the current Fair Wage Schedules of the Labour Standards Branch, of the Ontario Department of Labour...". When was the last time this language was updated? I am certain that this department no longer exists under that name. This is simply further evidence of the need to modernize the city's policies. In fact the idea that a fulsome report was written by staff and didn't identify that the language in the City's contracts is incorrect and obsolete, further shows that this report was not taken seriously.
- 4) The motion calls for a consultation with stakeholders. This did not occur. The CDC met with staff on November 11th, just two weeks before the release of the report. It seemed clear that the report was already written and the City Manager had already come to the conclusion without hearing from interested stakeholders.

This report and its conclusions are simply inadequate. The adoption of a Fair Wage Policy will help Vaughan become better aligned with labour practices across Ontario. It is important for our membership that Vaughan, our hometown be a leader on labour issues and on matters of fairness. For the reasons that we have outlined above, we do not believe that this report contains the information that council needs to make an informed decision on this important issue. We request that at the Finance Administration and Audit Committee, you direct staff to complete the report based on the matters outlined in the original motion and report back as soon as possible. I will be deeply disappointed if this report, as it is currently written, is used as the basis for council's decision.

Sincerely,


Tony Iannuzzi
Executive Secretary Treasurer
Carpenters' District Council of Ontario