

# Sarnia CAO gets a \$30,000 raise

by Chris Cooke



Chris Carter

Sarnia's Chief Administrative Officer Chris Carter has been given a nearly \$30,000.00 raise. With just two years into the job and in the midst of a pandemic Carter, who came in from the Niagara Region in 2019 is moving from \$185,000.00 to \$214,679.66.

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley says he doesn't have a problem with the raise noting that Carter trimmed the previous administration of Margaret Miskew – Evans from 10 administrators to four or five.

"We felt he had done an excellent job creating a more business-like atmosphere at City Hall and we wanted our salary level to match that of Lambton County."

Ron Van Horne is the Chief Administrative Officer in the County and has always been paid more than his City counterpart...until now.

Last year as the pandemic was erupting, Carter slashed the budget by more than \$2 million dollars and "rebalanced" the City's cost structure."

George Vandenberg told First Monday it was important that Carter be placed on parity with other Chief Administrative Officers across the Province. "It was based on population, revenue and operating efficiency."

Vandenberg says Carter checked all the boxes. "Now he has to pay more income tax."

While Carter was saving money, the number of City employees making more than \$100,000.00 has increased to 264 from 256 in 2019. That includes 30 City administrators, 14 City staff, three fire department administrators, 111 fire fighters, 12 police administrators, 93 out of 119 police officers and one transit official.

Police Chief Norm Hansen is paid \$198,084.08 while fire Chief Bryan VanGaver is paid \$162,181.50.

City Council cost taxpayers \$357,000.00 last year down from \$389,000.00 the year before. Registrations for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference were down due to the pandemic.

However, Terry Burrell who was the big spender last year not only registered for AMO, but purchased a new laptop at City expense. He also cost taxpayers \$16,600.00 for a Code of Conduct review that he orchestrated. His total expenses exceeded \$2,000.

Bradley was paid just over \$77,000.00 as Mayor along with \$6,250.00 in car expenses. His other expense totaled \$99.00 for a credit card membership.

Margaret Bird and Bill Dennis didn't log any expenses.

"I couldn't bill the City for a laptop," says Dennis. "I treat City money like my own."

He says he uses his four-year-old cell phone for City meetings on ZOOM. "It works perfectly well."