



November 23, 2017

Councilor Barry Ward
Chairman
Finance Committee
Barrie City Hall

Re: Request for property tax relief for prior tax years

Dear Councilor Ward,

I was truly fascinated with last night's meeting both from the audit proposal and the city long range financial plan, financial policies and 5-year forecast, I gleamed a few gems that will be valuable from the centre's perspective and myself personally at the meeting and have download the entire document for further review.

I appreciate the effort of the staff review of the potential exposure as it relates to retroactive rebates although I am not sure when the educational component was included as it is fully recoverable. Quite frankly the exposure is also a future exposure as well. A \$70,000 exposure is truly minuscule (0.00028%) in relative comparison to the city overall budget, if I understood last night's math 1% is equivalent to \$2,500,000. One might say the \$70,000 is "monkey math" in that the probability that each charitable organization actually qualifies is speculative at best and the likelihood of 100% uptake is all but unprecedented. Although I suppose never say never.

I would expect that when building the city's budget, one would use some type of methodology to forecast the Charitable tax refund needs and amount of funds that need to be retained from the taxes paid to the respective applicants, as such that reserve would not be considered revenue and funds are set aside to offset the pending applications. When building the potential exposure, the city staff identifying charities that were "ineligible", one of the criteria the staff applied was "the charity occupied a residential property and were therefore ineligible and where excluded." That is the very sustenance of Season's Centre's argument of extenuating circumstances. It is not reasonable to expect to pay commercial taxes on a residential property.

With respect to the board's concern for historical actions and precedent setting decisions I believe the whole procedure around setting policy is to negate that effect.

Merriam-Webster defines "Policy" as;

- a) a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.
- b) a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.

A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision making. It is a platform to separate the historical way of doing things from its future decision-making procedures.

Given the fore mentioned I would encourage the committee to treat the centres' request re retro charitable tax rebates as a separate matter than the proposed Charitable Tax Rebate Policy as outlined in appendix C of the Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee dated November 22, 2017 and weigh the merits of the charities in particular Seasons Centre for Grieving Children as presented previously to the committee along with my letter dated October 20th, 2017 and my comments today.

Thank you again for your committee's consideration with our request and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely



H. R. Ramey
Managing Director (Volunteer)

CC Richard Kelly
Chair, Finance Committee
Seasons Centre for Grieving Children