

Mississauga News

Integrity commissioner condemns email leak

Wed Jan 26 2011

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Section: News

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Mississauga's integrity commissioner hasn't been able to determine who leaked two internal emails to The National Post, but he says the distribution of one of them to the newspaper constitutes a "clear breach of confidentiality ... bordering on contempt."

The flap about the leaked memos - which brought to public attention a controversial plan to provide free tickets to councillors and staff to attend a 90th birthday party for Mayor Hazel McCallion - will only deepen with a story in today's National Post.

It details the contents of Integrity Commissioner George Rust-D'Eye's report before it has been formally discussed by councillors. That could happen today during a general committee meeting being held at City Hall.

In his 33-page report distributed to councillors, Rust-D'Eye concludes that whoever leaked the emails was guilty of a "breach of trust owed by the City to members of its staff."

One of the two memos sent by City Manager Janice Baker clearly stated that the information could not be forwarded to others "without express written permission of the author."

The report was prompted after Ward 8 Councillor Katie Mahoney compared the incident to WikiLeaks and suggested the City should scour the offices of councillors and staff and their email records to track down the culprit.

Rust-D'Eye's report concludes that the information in the memos was clearly of public importance.

But he adds that the email, "was marked in at least two different places" to indicate the content was confidential. The City Manager had a reasonable expectation that the material should not have been further distributed.

Once the story hit the media, Mayor Hazel McCallion went on the defensive. She appeared on a Toronto radio talk show to suggest that councillors often use their expense accounts to attend public fundraising events. Her 90th birthday party will raise funds for Sheridan College.

But in light of the negative public and media reaction to the idea of spending almost \$10,000 to buy tickets for the party, Baker quickly withdrew the proposal.

The integrity commissioner says the breaches of confidentiality suggest the City may have a "serious systemic problem." The source of the leaks "has to be stopped," he added.

Rust D'Eye has asked council whether it wants him to continue his investigation to try to find the whistle-blower.

With a price tag of \$600 an hour for his work, that suggestion may prompt even more controversy.

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