

Tue, November 23, 2004

**Council motion targets pay-hike politicking**By [JOHN STEINBACHS](#), Ottawa Sun

Pay increase politics are alive at City Hall as council gets ready to debate the first salary increase for politicians since amalgamation. In an effort to stop some councillors from having their cake and eating it too, Coun. Rick Chiarelli is proposing an "anti-hypocrisy" motion that would force councillors to declare publicly whether they would take the pay hike if re-elected.

"What it's going to say is that members of council who honestly disagree with (the raise) can opt out of the raise and they will remain opted out unless they write a letter to the clerk explaining why they changed their minds," said Chiarelli.

Tomorrow, council will debate the recommendations of the Citizens Task Force on Remuneration. The independent body has called for a plan that would remove a tax-free option in the salaries of councillors and raise their pay from about \$70,000 to just under \$88,000.

The pay raise would take effect in 2006. The decisions would have major pension benefits immediately and cash benefits for councillors who are elected in 2006.

Chiarelli is concerned that some councillors will vote against the plans, knowing that if the pay hike measure is passed they'll get the money if re-elected.

"Every time council debates pay, there are always a couple of people who believe it's going to pass anyway, so they grandstand against it thinking they will get accolades from opponents while at the same time getting the ability to collect," he said.

Chiarelli said he has received a legal opinion on his proposal from the city's solicitor and has the support of the mayor.

Not all his council colleagues agree, however. Coun. Peggy Feltmate said she understands Chiarelli's frustrations but thinks the motion goes too far.

[john.steinbachs@ott.sunpub.com](mailto:john.steinbachs@ott.sunpub.com)