



Council still split on decisions

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HAMILTON TOWNSHIP -- Like the firing of its former chief administrative officer, a recent Hamilton Township council decision to deny Betty McIntosh an opportunity to hear why she was fired and respond to those concerns was a split council decision.

"It was not unanimous...a 3/2 vote," Mayor Mark Lovshin said in an interview yesterday, a week after the special, in-camera session on the request.

Lovshin, who together with long-time Councillor Gary Woods, voted to allow Betty McIntosh and her lawyer to speak to council on the matter (as well as against her firing), said he really can't say more because he really doesn't know the reasons for McIntosh's termination endorsed by the balance of council last April.

"I am not really aware of what those reasons are," Lovshin said. "You have to ask those who were in favour..."

Telephone messages left for Deputy Mayor Isobel Hie and new Councillor Donna Cole were not returned by press time. Councillor John Davison who, like Cole, was elected for the first time last fall, declined to comment when reached at his home.

In addition to McIntosh's letter, Lovshin confirmed that council has also received a notice of libel from McIntosh's Toronto lawyers, Falconer Charney LLP.

"We'll have to see what comes of it," he said.

At the same time the township's own legal representative, Suzanne Hunt of Templeman Menninga LLP of Belleville, is handling "settlement" negotiations with McIntosh's law firm, Lovshin said.

"There was an offer given (from the township to McIntosh) some time ago," he said. It is up to McIntosh's lawyers to respond and there was a recent change in representation, the mayor added.

"It's between the lawyers now."

In addition to a notice of libel being given to the township's council as a whole, an independent notice was given to Hie, McIntosh's attorney, Julian Falconer, told Northumberland Today in an exclusive interview last week. Hie did not respond to a telephone inquiry for an interview about the notice of libel she received.

Lovshin said he does not have his own personal lawyer involved in any of these matters but is aware some other councillors do, since there was a request to the municipal lawyer from a legal representative for some of them. He did not say which of his fellow councillors had individual representation.

In the July 6 letter McIntosh sent to council last week, she spoke publicly about her termination for the first time, her lack of opportunity to be informed about why she was fired without reason after 23 years, and the subsequent impact on staff and the community.

"I urge council to reconsider not only my future, but the future of this proud township," McIntosh stated.

Council, meanwhile, is moving forward with interviews to hire an interim chief administrative officer (CAO).

Interviews with the two finalists will be held this afternoon, Lovshin said. He anticipated one of them would be hired between this week and the end of the year to take over the CAO's duties and take on the important task of resolving issues between councillors and staff with McIntosh's departure.

"We're behind in a lot of our (municipal council) business," Lovshin said. "And we need to build back good relations with staff and good relations within council."

Council must be turned around, he said.

If not, "we'll have a disastrous four years," Lovshin said.

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