

Mississauga leaks 'clear breach of trust'; Integrity watchdog

Wed Jan 26 2011
Page: A8
Section: Toronto
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Source: National Post
Illustrations: Color Photo: /;

The leaking of an email about Mayor Hazel McCallion's 90th birthday gala may be emblematic of "a serious systemic problem for the city," Mississauga's integrity watchdog says.

In a 33-page report distributed to councillors, newly installed integrity commissioner **George Rust-D'Eye** concluded one of two memos on the topic was confidential and should not have been shared with the media.

"[This] constituted a clear breach of confidentiality and breach of trust owed by the city to members of its staff, bordering on contempt," Mr. Rust-D'Eye wrote in his report, a copy of which was obtained by the National Post.

The integrity commissioner could not pinpoint the source of the leaks, and has asked council for direction on whether to continue his investigation.

Mr. Rust-D'Eye's findings come more than a week after the Post exclusively obtained two internal memos outlining a questionable proposal for taxpayer funds. They first detailed the city's offer to send councillors and senior staffers to the Mayor's birthday gala on the city's dime, at a potential cost of nearly \$12,000. City manager Janice Baker retracted the offer in a second memo, citing the media frenzy that had ensued.

Mr. Rust-D'Eye was tasked with investigating after councillors allied with Ms. McCallion expressed outrage at the leaks. In his report, while acknowledging the gala tickets issue was a matter of public importance, the integrity commissioner maintained Ms. Baker's second email-- including a boilerplate sentence stating it could not be forwarded "without express written permission of the author" -- should have been treated as confidential.

"It was marked in at least two different places... that it was of confidential nature," Mr. Rust-D'Eye said in an interview, noting there would have been a "reasonable expectation" of privacy.

While the source of the leaks remained unclear, Mr. Rust-D'Eye said, "whatever it is, it has to be stopped."

Councillor Sue McFadden believes the integrity commissioner's probe should cease with this report.

And Councillor Eve Adams called the report a "costly overreaction."

"To suggest that further tax dollars be spent would

just add to the problem," she said.

McCallion ally Councillor Pat Saito said she planned to provide feedback to the integrity commissioner on his report, but in the meantime declined to comment on whether she felt he should continue investigating.

Mr. Rust-D'Eye's probe was an alternative to Councillor Katie Mahoney's initial call for full electronic searches of city computers, cellphones and fax machines to pinpoint the leak source. Privacy experts scoffed at that idea, calling it heavy-handed. Yet several councillors have also expressed opposition to the integrity commissioner's investigation and associated costs, with Mr. Rust-D'Eye earning in excess of \$600 an hour.

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