

December 16, 2019

Re: Community Non-Profit Tax Exemption Policy – Organizations not Recommended

Good evening Your Worship members of Regina City Council, my name is John Hopkins and I am the past Chair of the Regina Trades and Skills Centre with me is the center's Executive Director Brian Shankowsky.

We are here to provide some comments on the *Community Non-Profit Tax Exemption Policy – Organizations not Recommended* report before you.

Back in the early 2000s we had a problem as a community. We had employment opportunities, but we did not have people with the skill sets required to take advantage of the opportunities. What we needed was just in time training to match supply with demand. Back in those days we engaged with the Government of Canada, the Province of Saskatchewan, the City of Regina, SIAST, Gabriel Dumont Technical Institute, the Regina Public School Board, the Regina Separate School Board, a number of community organizations and business. Our goal was straight forward match supply with demand.

In order to achieve our goals, we partnered with many of the organizations I just stated with the Government of Canada providing wage-based funding through the Province of Saskatchewan, the Province providing training dollars and the City of Regina partnering with a tax exemption. Back then the City Manager was active on our Board.

On the other side we partnered with community organizations to help us find the people who wanted training that was directly tied to employment and employers looking for those people. We worked hard over the years and have achieved outstanding results so much so that we were a national model because it works, and it works well. We literally take people with little or no skills and help them find career paths into the trades, human services and other areas.

One of the programs that we offer that we receive zero funding for other than the tax exemption we have received from the City is the TASCAP program where we partner with the school boards to build homes for Habitat for Humanity. This program is clearly targeted to those in need and we are a proud partner.

Another area that we believed was vital from day one was, and still is Indigenous Engagement. Your Worship we were doing this work well before the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action because we believe that it is important to serve our community. Moreover, one of the fundamental objectives of our organization is to ensure that the programs we offer are successful for the students and for employers. The last thing we want is to provide training for the sake of training.

Your Worship, in due course what the Regina Trades & Skills Centre will look to do is to apply to have the same educational provincial exemption as other training institutions like Saskatchewan Polytechnic, the U of R, and others. However, in the meantime we would like to respectfully request that you consider some options:

1. Amend the policy to allow for educational non-profits like RTSC to be approved under the policy
2. Provide an exemption to the Centre but not the parking lot

3. Phase out the tax exemption over 3 years to allow for those organizations that do not qualify under the current policy the time to make alternative arrangements

Thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

John Hopkins