

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Ward 11 Councillor Jeromy Farkas calls for City Council and Mayor to freeze their pay in advance of budget debate: “It’s time that we lead by example.”**

**Wednesday, November 21, 2018, Calgary, AB** – In the lead up to Monday’s budget debate, Councillor Jeromy Farkas is calling for City Council to freeze their pay for the remainder of the term, and accept any further reductions if they are recommended by an independent citizen committee. “Given that everyday Calgary families still face economic hardship, it’s entirely warranted for Canada’s highest paid City Council to lead by example,” Farkas said.

Farkas will place a motion to freeze City Council’s salary at Monday’s budget meeting.

Calgary City Councillors have their pay adjusted annually on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. This change is based on a formula tracking changes in Statistics Canada Alberta weekly earnings, year over year. Council’s upcoming pay change is not yet confirmed. However, data available as of today suggests that City Council is poised to receive a pay increase, as average weekly earnings in August in Alberta were up 3.2% from the same period in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

Farkas’ proposal follows his decision to decline the Council pension plan and transition payment for Councillors. Assuming Farkas serves for 12 years, and lives to age 85, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimated that this decision amounted to savings of upwards of \$1.1 million.<sup>2</sup>

“Yesterday we learned about a report that warns of a bleak fiscal future for Alberta. Combine this with unemployment, underemployment, and further increases in fees and taxes for families and small business. It’s simply not sustainable,” said Farkas, “If we ran our household budgets similarly, we would plan for a bigger house, a new car, a bigger vacation, then go back to our employer and demand an increase in pay. The real world does not work that way.”

This comes at a time when Council is debating a 13% compounded tax increase and facing much larger commercial property tax increases as a result of the crash in downtown real estate prices.

“My hope is that this pay freeze will mark a change in tone and a return to reality for City Hall. As Calgarians suffer through one of the worst economic recessions in recent history, their representatives at City Hall should do everything possible not to add to their burdens. Calgarians cannot afford a Council that continues to increase spending and wages beyond our means. It’s time for City Council to make tough choices, just as families and small business owners have been forced to.” Farkas concluded.

- 30 -

---

<sup>1</sup> Alberta Average Weekly Earnings – <https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/AverageWeeklyEarnings>

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Taxpayers Federation – <https://www.taxpayer.com/news-releases/kudos-to-councillor-farkas>