



Councillor to City staff: I know your job better than you do

Posted by [Steve Kupferman](#) on Saturday, January 28, 2012

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Buried in today's Post is [this gem](#) about a standoff between Councillor Paul Ainslie, a Ford-allied councillor from Scarborough, and the city's strategic communications staff.

From the article:

Mr. Ainslie, chairman of the government management committee, made a motion to the committee in May proposing a city-produced 30-minute weekly roundup of city news similar to podcasts done in Edmonton and Ottawa.

On Monday, the strategic communications department will be seeking approval instead for only a five-minute podcast.

Jackie DeSouza, the city's strategic communications director, said a 30-minute production would require hiring another staff member and cost the city \$50,000 annually, whereas a five-minute format would be absorbed within the existing communications budget.

Mr. Ainslie is not pleased.

"All the research I have done says that a well-produced half-hour podcast can be created in five or six hours," he said. "Now they are trying to say it would take 20 to 30 hours."

Ainslie is apparently planning on opposing staff at the upcoming committee meeting, in an attempt to hold them to the 30-minute target.

There are several layers of absurdity to this story. For one thing, why is a politician dictating what strategic communications staff do with their time? StratComm is the city's publicity department. Their job is to make the City look good when politicians screw things up. That inevitably becomes harder to do when the political mistakes concern StratComm specifically.

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And as to the notion of creating a city-run press organ, has Ainslie seen [Our Toronto](#), the city's print newsletter? It's arguably the most unnecessary use of pulp in town. And this is a town that produces the Toronto Sun. (Also, Our Toronto is actually already available in audio format, though it's just a voice reading the print articles verbatim.)

This is one of countless examples of ways city councillors have found to micromanage staff. Imagine having 45 bosses, all of them prone to capricious decision-making as they try to curry favour with voters. It can't be easy to handle. No wonder the union bosses are such hard-asses.

[Blog image via Paul Ainslie's Facebook page.](#)

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Miroslav Glavic 1 month ago

The fact that staff say it takes 30 hours to edit a podcast and a cost of a new staff and \$50,000 it is idiotic. I edit podcasts, I have been editing podcasts (both audio podcasts and video podcasts) for close to 10 years. I can guarantee the 30 hrs/one new staff/\$50,000 is complete ping bullshit

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