



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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BOARD OF HEALTH LAST MEETING

The Board of Health for the Northwestern Health Unit held their last meeting of the year on Friday, November 26, 2010. Eight of the current Board of Health members are municipal appointees whose term of appointment ended November 30th. The Board expects to have some new faces at their first meeting of the new year on January 31, 2011, in Dryden.

Chair of the Board of Health John Albanese praised current Board members for their dedication to public health, and for the Board's accomplishments over the past four years.

"At the beginning of 2007 our Medical Officer of Health announced his pending retirement. In the intervening four years we have not only recruited a new Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Jim Arthurs, but we have also restructured our entire management team. Concurrent with the organizational restructuring we have expanded our public health services, upgraded our offices and have become an accredited health unit through the Ontario Council on Community Health Accreditation."

At the Board's final meeting, management presented a preliminary budget for 2011 which factors a \$204,000 reduction in revenue from municipal levies. Mark Perrault, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), explains that as part of the Board of Health's strategic direction, the municipal per capita levy has been frozen since 2005. According to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation's population data released prior to the 2010 municipal elections, the total municipal population for the Health Unit's nineteen obligated municipalities has dropped by 3,766 from previous population statistics; resulting in an anticipated overall decrease of \$204,607 in their municipal levies for 2011.

"Management is committed to preparing a balanced budget for 2011 that will maintain the current level of public health programs and services provided to the communities and population of our region," says Mr. Perrault.

The Health Unit's final consolidated 2011 budget will be presented to the Board of Health at their February meeting.

Also at the Board's November 26th meeting, the Board of Health approved a proposal by Mark Perrault, CEO, to freeze his salary grid for the next two years. Employees at the Health Unit have had their wages frozen from March 24, 2010, until April 1, 2012, under the Ontario government's *Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010* (Bill 16, Schedule 25). While the Act does allow some exceptions, including movement on established salary grids, Mr. Perrault noted that many staff are at the top of their salary grids and will not receive a cost of living adjustment for more than two years. It seemed inequitable for him to continue to move along his salary grid, which spans the years 2008 to 2013.

Board of Health Chair John Albanese observed, "The Board was very appreciative of the offer and the leadership that Mr. Perrault has shown."

-30-

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