

?Sunshine list? civil servants continue to grow in York

By Mark Pavilons

In the sea of high-paid civil servants in government agencies serving York Region, the legions of those earning \$100,000 a year or more continue to escalate.

The average salary on the Public Sector Salary Disclosure list was \$127,433 in 2013, a decline from \$127,576 in 2012. The average salary on the list has decreased for four out of the last five years, but the total numbers continue to grow.

York Region

The top prize within the Regional Municipality of York goes to Karim Kurji, medical officer of health, who earned a whopping \$323,850.62.

By comparison Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne earned \$198,521.29. Kurji's salary is on par with that of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The average salary for Canadians is roughly \$40,000 annually.

Bruce MacGregor, York's CAO, earned an equally impressive \$295,079.73. Lilian Yuan, associate medical officer of health, was next with a salary of \$262,255.69.

Next was James Davidson, commissioner corporate services, who earned \$223,214.69.

He was followed by Bill Fisch, chairman CEO, who earned \$217,780.95.

Next were Erin Mahoney, commissioner of environmental services, (\$221,149) and William Hughes, commissioner of finance and treasurer, (\$221,148.99).

Dino Basso, executive director of strategic planning, followed with a salary of \$205,820.70.

Rounding out the top 10 were Richard Leary, general manager transit, (\$194,017.06) and Sylvia Patterson, general manager of housing and long term care (\$183,770.81).

Mary-Frances Turner, president, York Rapid Transit, was paid \$230,593.85.

York Regional Police

Many high-ranking officers earn well over \$100,000 at York Regional Police.

Police Chief Eric Jolliffe was the top wage-earner with a salary of \$228,529.29 and \$7,233.81 in benefits.

Deputy Chief Thomas Carrique was next with \$214,929.32, followed by Detective Claude Nicho Ibbott, (\$187,883.76), Staff Sergeant David Trach, (\$185,556.14), Det. Sgt. Alvaro Almeida (\$182,278.25) and Det. Sergeant Cameron Walter, (\$182,139.39).

York District School Board

The York District School Board had its fair share of staffers basking in the ?sunshine.?

Ken Thurston, director of education, was the top civil servant, earning \$295,933.94 and \$12,638.42 in taxable benefits.

Associate director Christopher Tulley was next with a salary of \$216,519.74 and \$4,335.21 in benefits.

Denese Belchetz, associate director of student achievement, earned \$221,874.21 and \$6,500 in benefits.

Leslie Johnstone, associate director of school and staff resources, made \$164,615.10.

All superintendents and principals, along with most vice-principals and some teachers, earned over \$100,000.

York Catholic

Like its counterpart, the York Catholic District School Board had hundreds of staffers on the list.

Patricia Preston, director of education and secretary of the board, earned \$230,461.30 and \$5,646.42 in taxable benefits.

John Sabo, associate director leading services and treasurer of the board, pulled in \$203,170.24 and \$10,763.28 in benefits.

Some of the top-paid superintendents included Lynda Coulter, Bryson Eldridge (\$162,984.90), Michael Nasello, (\$161,391.88) and Nancy DiNardo, \$158,483.84.

All principals and vice-principals at both boards earn over \$100,000, along with a handful of teachers.

King's Bill Cober, principal of a new elementary school in Newmarket, earned \$121,684.99.

The provincial government has already frozen salaries for executives at hospitals, universities, colleges, school boards and provincially owned electricity companies. All aspects of compensation plans are currently frozen and base salaries cannot be increased.

As well, on March 20 the government introduced legislation that would, if passed, extend a freeze on MPP salaries until the Ontario Budget is balanced. As the government is committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18, no pay increase would take effect until April 1, 2019.

The \$100,000 threshold has remained the same since the Public Sector Salary Disclosure list was introduced in 1996. If the threshold had kept up with inflation (based on the consumer price index up to 2013), it would now be \$141,705, meaning a fifth of the current disclosed list, or an estimated 19,300 employees, would be reported.