

City moving forward on living-wage designation

Feb. 24, 2021 — In an effort to lead by example, the City of St. Catharines is moving forward on a commitment to become a Living Wage Employer through the Ontario Living Wage network.

On Monday City Council approved a motion that will see the City certified as a living wage employer. St. Catharines already meets the support level of requirements, meaning all its full-time employees are paid a living wage of at least \$18.12 an hour. As part of this certification the City has pledged to meet champion level requirements by 2024. These requirements would see all part-time staff and employees of City contractors brought up to at least this minimum threshold for a living wage by 2024.

“Council is proud to support the City of St. Catharines becoming a Living Wage certified employer,” said Mayor Walter Sendzik. “We join a growing list of Niagara companies that believe in the principles of a living wage as a means to generate greater economic opportunity for everyone, and to call attention to this vital quality-of-life measure. Thank you to Couns. Porter and Miller for leading this initiative.”

A living wage is calculated by the Ontario Living Wage Network to show how much a household – two adults working full-time supporting two small children – must earn per hour in order to make ends meet and enjoy modest participation in their civic and cultural community. The commitment to a living wage is an extension of the City’s social strategic goal to build strong, inclusive neighbourhoods, providing a high quality of life for all residents.

The City is the fifth Ontario municipality to undergo certification, joining 16 other Living Wage employers across St. Catharines and 50 across the region. Beyond providing for its own employees, the City hopes to lead other employers in the community by example.

“Public sector employers are important employers to the local economy. By paying a living wage, the City of St. Catharines is taking action to address working poverty in the community. The unanimous vote of the St. Catharines city council to seek certification for paying a living wage sets a strong example for employers in the community, region and province,” said Ontario Living Wage Network Program Manager Anne Coleman.

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN), which has spearheaded local living wage certification efforts, was quick to praise the City for its leadership.

“The City of St. Catharines deserves congratulations and thanks for moving toward becoming a living wage employer. NPRN began working with the City in hopes of

achieving this goal three years ago. We're delighted to see the result. No one should have to live in poverty," said NPRN Chair Aidan Johnson.

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