

Calgary council declines debate on aldermen salary hike

BY KIM GUTTORMSON, CALGARY HERALD JANUARY 26, 2009 11:02 AM

City council has decided not to debate a cut to its 2009 5.5 per cent salary increase after some procedural wrangling.

Ald. Andre Chabot wanted his colleagues to consider reducing that hike by half.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart wanted council's salary frozen at last year's level.

To debate either of those, council first had to reconsider its 2006 decision setting how that 5.5 per cent rate was determined.

Increases to council's salaries are tied to Statistics Canada's average salary increase for Albertans, ending September the previous year. That method of determining salary hikes — which means council isn't setting its own rate — was recommended by an independent committee and approved by council.

To reconsider that decision required eight votes, but lost on a tie. Ald. Dale Hodges is off sick.

Chabot said given the current economic conditions, council should lead on the issue. He pointed out that Premier Ed Stelmach's government is looking at reducing the salary hikes it gave MLAs last year.

© Copyright (c) The Calgary Herald