

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

# Ward Three Candidate Calls for Greater Accountability from City-Funded Organizations

(SAULT STE. MARIE, ON – August 13, 2014): Today, Ward Three city council candidate [Matthew Shoemaker](#) announced his intention to increase the accountability and transparency of groups that accept municipal tax dollars. If elected, Shoemaker has pledged to bring forward a motion that would require organizations that receive funding from the City to make their detailed annual financial statements and board meeting minutes and agendas publicly available on the internet.

“The idea here is a simple one: organizations that enjoy support from city taxpayers should be directly accountable to the taxpayers. Residents should not have to go on a scavenger hunt to determine what an organization did with the funding it received from the City. Rather, that information should be provided to the City regularly and it should be publicly available,” said Shoemaker.

To make it easier for the public to view the documents covered by the disclosure motion, Shoemaker envisions creating a dedicated directory on the City website to serve as a “one-stop” access point for the information. Shoemaker’s transparency initiative would also extend to City-owned corporations and entities, such as the Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

“The public has been justifiably frustrated with the PUC over numerous issues during the last several years. When representatives from the organization have appeared at council, their line is always that things are getting better or are going to get better soon, but then events fail to bear those statements out. More transparency is needed from the PUC in order to rebuild public trust. This initiative would be a step in that direction,” said Shoemaker.

During the 2014 fiscal year, the City is scheduled to distribute over \$9 million to outside agencies and “grants to others”. These are among the distributed funds that are targeted by Shoemaker’s proposed motion. Some organizations that receive these funds include the Library Board and the Museum as well as others that are more removed from direct City control such as the Bushplane Museum, the Norgoma, and the Innovation Centre.

“Determining how these funds are used by the organizations that receive them is critical information to council and residents alike,” stated Shoemaker.

Given that the majority of external organizations receiving taxpayer funds are non-profit businesses are part of the broader public sector, Shoemaker is confident that most will have little difficulty complying with his proposed initiative. However, he is willing to consider exemptions in limited circumstances.

“Privately-held companies that access the City’s Economic Development Fund would not be expected to reveal financial information for confidentiality reasons,” he said. “There might be a few other instances where organizations would be exempt from making disclosures, but I expect such occurrences to be rare.”

**About Matthew Shoemaker:** Matthew Shoemaker (B.A., LL.B) is a Ward Three candidate for Sault Ste. Marie city council. Shoemaker currently works as a lawyer at Wishart Law Firm. More information about his campaign is available at [www.matthewshoemaker.ca](http://www.matthewshoemaker.ca).