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## NEWS LOCAL

### Council rules tightened

By Elaine Della-Mattia, Sault Star

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civic centre

City council passed a resolution Monday that will see formalized funding arrangements inked with outside boards and agencies it funds before any money flows to them.

Moved by Ward 3 councillors Matthew Shoemaker and Judy Hupponen, the resolution is designed to complement an earlier spring resolution and ensure that city tax dollars are used for what they are intended.

The agencies will be required to make annual budget presentations to council as well as year-end financial statements.

Earlier this year, council also passed another resolution, moved by Ward 2 Coun. Susan Myers and Ward 1 Coun. Paul Christian, requiring outside boards, agencies and organizations to make presentations to council not later than the last quarter of the current year so council understands how taxpayer money is being utilized and can determine what their final budget allocation will be.

That resolution also calls on the groups to outline their financial picture, detailing their revenue and expenses, as well as explain the impact city funding has on fulfilling their mandate.

Both resolutions will apply to outside funded agencies – including the Art Gallery of Algoma, the Canadian Heritage Bushplane Centre, Algoma University, Safe Communities and others.

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Shelley Schell said there are currently six agencies that receive funding and are “grandfathered” but don’t have agreements in place with the city.

Improved accountability, she said, would be a positive thing and something that can be established before the funding is provided in January.

Schell said one standard agreement would be drawn up and then tailored to the receiving organization.

“It’s us doing our due diligence,” Schell told city council. “It’s a common practice in today’s standards.”

Huppenen, the seconder of the resolution, said she welcomes the agreements and the presentations.

The Sault Ste. Marie Humane Society, she said, receives about \$500,000 per year but that amount is listed in the budget under “corporate services.”

“I think the public, who are paying for these funds, should be aware of what they’re doing with them,” she said.

Ward 6 Coun. Ross Romano called the agreements “common sense.”

He argued the resolution could go a step further and the council could have the agencies apply for funding.

“That resolution would be one for another day,” said Mayor Christian Provenzano.

The resolutions are all designed with the intent to transform the city’s budget process and ensure that council holds its budget deliberation before the new fiscal year actually begins.

It was a step taken by city council in a move to cut costs and find greater efficiencies at city hall.