

Letter to Guelph City Council re: Motion for Guaranteed Livable Income

Dear Members of the Guelph City Council,

I'm writing the City Council to urge your support for Counsellor Klassen's motion asking other levels of government to work to implement a Guaranteed Livable Income to ensure everyone in Canada has sufficient income to meet their basic needs.

Anyone who follows the work of this City Council and city services knows of the time, the energy and the cost that goes to the social and legal consequences of poverty. As a pastor, I have accompanied a number of people through the court process some months ago. As I sat in that provincial courtroom, I realized that for most of them facing charges their first crime was being poor. Much of their conduct and legal woes began with poverty. This is not simply a personal tragedy – it is a social one as well.

Even with the best intentions of City Council and city staff these social issues cannot adequately be addressed with the current system that is often based on a punitive model or a charity model rather than recognizing the inherent value of each person and supporting them with an adequate basic income.

While no system will be a panacea for poverty, we need a different approach. It is truly a shame that some of the pilot projects started in our province to see the effectiveness of a Guaranteed Livable Income had the plug pulled before we could learn of their effectiveness.

It is time for a new initiative. I urge you, as members of Guelph City Council to be part of starting a new conversation by supporting this motion.

Yours respectfully,

(Rev.) John Lawson

■ Talbot St.

Guelph