

MIRANET Annual General Meeting: March 2, 2011

Remarks by **Janice Baker**, Mississauga CAO and City Manager
(Following the Remarks made by David Szwarc, CAO, Region of Peel)

David has done a great job with the background.

You are aware of our key services: Fire, Recreation and Parks, Transit, Roads, Storm water management, Libraries, Culture, Planning and development approvals, Enforcement are the primary ones.

Question we've been asked to address is the complexities in working in a two tier system and what does it take to optimize that structure, and ensure that we do not trip over each other on our way to the taxpayer's pocket.

There is no doubt a single tier structure has advantages, both from a governance and a management perspective. All the services are in one basket, so you can move pieces around in that basket, you can put things in or take them out.

We have two baskets and they are operated as separate entities. So if I am asked to adjust the budget, as CAO of the City I can only move the pieces in my own basket. I have no authority to tell David what to do with the pieces in his basket.

That role of reconciling the two baskets then really falls to Council. As David has illustrated in his comments, we have many successes to point to where we have operated in close collaboration. We ensure that this is planned, and not ad hoc.

Our Leadership Team meets with the Region's LT 3 times a year. That was set up specifically to share work plans and strategies so opportunities to work together in the most effective way don't get missed. Members of our staff sit on regional stakeholder or advisory teams, and the same happens at the City level.

There is regular communication at the work group level, doing everything from coordinating construction schedules so we don't pave a road only to have it ripped up for water works a year later, to documenting the planning approval process in a matrix that clearly assigns roles and responsibilities for approvals that do not have work being done twice by the two organizations. The bottom line is that as long as we are communicating, and learning from any mistakes we do make, we can do a great job of making the system work.

There are some inherent costs built into the two tier structure that cannot be avoided. There are two CAOs for example. Our job is to work together to try and make us function as much like one organization as we can. The reality is, this is the structure we have had for 35 years, and will continue to have for the foreseeable future. We can't change it, so we work hard to make the best of it. I think the relationship between the Region and the City is probably as good as it has ever been, but we are both committed to continue to look for ways to make it even better.