

Clifton  
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## No more perks for City Council

The time for perks is long over. Clifton can no longer afford to give Council members (or part-time attorneys) health/dental benefits (either single or family coverage).

Our chief financial officer says the cost of single coverage in 2015 is \$13,700 (up over 15 percent) and \$33,500 (up over 12 percent) for family coverage. The discrepancy between what a Council member pays and what the other city employees pay is extremely large. Taxpayers foot the difference between

what the employee pays and the actual cost is.

For single coverage, a council member pays only \$588 or 4 percent of the \$13,700 - taxpayers pay the difference of \$13,112 or 96 percent.

All other city employees (police, fire, DPW) pay a much higher amount paying anywhere from \$2,000 to \$4,800 versus the \$588 paid by the Council. So if all seven council members elect single coverage it costs taxpayers almost \$92,000 in 2015. Add another \$27,000 for the attorneys.

For family coverage, a Council member pays only \$966 or 3 percent of \$33,500. Taxpayers

pay the difference \$32,534 or 97 percent. All other city employees pay anywhere from \$4,000 to \$11,700 versus the \$966 paid by the Council. So if all seven Council members take family coverage taxpayers will pay \$227,000 with another \$65,000 for the attorneys. Doesn't seem fair or equitable does it?

Since the city is self-insured, the costs rise as claims rise. The city manager has stated health care cost in 2014 was underfunded by \$1.3 million due to six employees with catastrophic illnesses and costs will rise \$875,000 in 2015.

For the first time in 2014, the N.J.'s Best Practices Questionnaire required all municipalities to list the names and titles of each part-time elected and

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appointed official who received health care benefits. In 2014, Clifton answered with "Mayor James Anzaldi, Councilman Steven Hatala, Councilman Joseph Kolodziej, Councilman Matthew Ward, Councilman Matthew Grabowski, City Attorney Matthew Priore, City Attorney Thomas Egan, City Attorney David Bruins and Dentist Kenneth Nevard."

In 2013, eight more municipalities stopped providing health care benefits to part-time elected and appointed officials.

In the light of the 2 percent cap, rising cost of health care coverage and prospect of less state aid, it is time to say no to this perk.

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