

From: Chiarelli, Rick <Rick.Chiarelli@ottawa.ca>
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To: Kanellakos, Steve <Steve.Kanellakos@ottawa.ca>
Subject: CIO and IT Sub-committee

I think it is important to tell you when things go right. And the way Saad Bashir has handled the CIO position so far is an excellent example of things going right.

We began the latest IT regime with Committee (a committee that is stalked with Councillors who have strong backgrounds in tech) feeling very uneasy about the organization and direction of our frontline services, daily operations, cloud transition abilities and security. Committee was also not comfortable with the direction of the human element of our IT function.

Today Saad presented the 2018 work plan which we have been building toward for quite some time. His presentation was absolutely fantastic. He took Committee, the media and public through each element of our IT operation. At each, he foregrounded the lead individuals. They came forward and were visibly proud of the role they play and the way they are valued by the City. Each one, in turn, described their 2018 plans, explained their reasoning and answered questions. It was clear that we finally have the team operating as, well, a real team. A team with goals and focus.

Things progressed to a clear fact-based presentation of our IT security management system and its threats - there was no spin and no dodging the hard facts. Saad presented some of the difficult challenges we face and then explained how we are handling them. The entire presentation included approximately 40 slides, but it held the attention of the room throughout.

At the end of the meeting Committee endorsed the plan unanimously and several members of the Committee, including me, expressed their happiness and, more importantly, their full confidence in the plan, the team and Mr. Bashir's leadership. The challenges we now face internally, but especially externally, are real. But Saad Bashir and his team are more than ready to meet those challenges.

I have been here for many iterations of this municipal function and, as you know, I do not spray compliments around indiscriminately. But I am very happy to tell you today that, with respect to your outside-the-box decision to put Saad Bashir in this position, you really nailed it.

Rick Chiarelli
City Councillor,
College Ward.