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Tuesday, December 21, 2010 |  

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Tenant gravy train: Levy

Handouts, rent banks, sole-sourced deals galore drive industry watchers crazy

By **SUE-ANN LEVY**, TORONTO SUN

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Story

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For more than 10 years a tenant group — with strong ties to left-wing city bureaucrats — has seen its sole-source contract not only renewed, no questions asked, but its funding has more than quadrupled as well.

In 1999, when I first reported on the "purchase of service" contract given to the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association (FMTA), the

group got \$97,510 to run a hotline service.

This year, the group got \$446,760 to operate the hotline, educate tenants and provide outreach.

The FMTA money comes out of the shelter, support and housing budget — the same people who brought us the \$11.5-million Peter St. shelter boondoggle.

In 1999, FMTA had 5,000 members. Interim executive director Geordie Dent told me Thursday they have anywhere from 1,000-3,000 members at the moment.

In 1999, the hotline took nearly 7,500 calls.

According to statistics provided by city spokesman Pat Anderson, the hotline responded to 7,566 calls and e-mails to Sept. 30.

The tenant gravy train doesn't end there.

For at least eight years, tenant uberlord Coun. Michael Walker has presided over a special fund that gives grants to tenants disputing above-guideline rent increases.

Walker's vote-buying pet project has a budget of \$75,000 this year.

This year the city also has access to \$1.9 million in provincial rent bank money, which gives loans to people in danger of being evicted from their apartments for rent arrears. Some \$570,000 of that goes to administration, the rest for no-interest loans averaging \$1,725 each. Anderson reports the repayment rate of those loans is a mere 40%.

Then there's Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA), which got \$80,705 in city money to help "extremely vulnerable" tenants at risk of being evicted.

All of this drives paralegal Harry Fine crazy for one simple reason.

He feels precious taxpayer money is being used to fund "cronies and organizations" duplicating what the province does very ably.

Fine, a former Landlord Tenant Board adjudicator who now operates his own business advocating for landlords, says there are about 80 community legal clinics — 13 alone in Toronto — that deal largely with landlord and tenant matters.

In addition, he says, at every LTB office in Toronto, there are lawyers paid for by the Advocacy Centre for Tenants (another provincially-funded organization) to give advice to and represent tenants at their hearings.

The LTB also has its own hotline, he says, which provides "far better advice" than the FMTA.

Fine feels both CERA and the city's Tenant Defence Fund are no longer necessary, either. He says a policy document on the rights of tenants issued by Barbara Hall of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in 2009 makes it "near impossible" for a landlord to evict a tenant.

He doesn't understand why the city would be dishing out grants to fight rent increases when "fair" provincial adjudication is there for tenants.

"Considering the duplication and almost obscene support for tenants provincially, the city has no place providing duplication of services," he says.

Fine and others have also expressed concern with FMTA's secrecy and the radical left affiliations of several of its 10 full and part-time staff.

Dent, who writes on a website called MediaCoop (among others), has openly expressed anti-Israel sentiments and advocated for the G20 protesters in his blog.

Sarah Vance, listed as one of FMTA's hotline counsellors, was a former spokesman and employee of OCAP. Kelly Bentley, one of FMTA's outreach organizers, is also a former OCAP member.

When asked about the musings on his blog, Dent contended his writing is in no way "related" to FMTA.

He also insisted their work does not duplicate that done by the province, noting the LTB does not have a good handle on city bylaws or how a variety of legislation related to tenants fits together.

But a tenant activist, who did not want to be named, said sole-sourced contracts like that given to FMTA must be stopped and a full audit done of whether they've delivered good value for the millions they've received in the past 10 years.

"What's really needed is an independent review by somebody outside of shelter, support and housing who has no vested interest," the activist said.

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Only a vicious bitch like Sue-ann would attack Sarah Vance knowing she has breast cancer.

And only the 2 misogynists who have been stalking her Bob Levitt and Tim Rourke push a fascist zionist sow like levy to write these lies.

Everybody knows Levitt's and Rourke's fake tenant websites are funding by the slumlords to hurt tenants and get rid of rent controls the only protection tenants have.

I sure hope nobody gets the idea to destroy hundreds of Toronto Scum newspapers boxes again because of Levy's lies.

[Brou Haha](#), December 20th 2010, 9:19pm