

Another payout

Written by BRIAN LOCKHART

You take a look out over your property and realize it's time to hire a gardener.

Buying ten acres of country property with a giant lawn seemed like a good idea at the time, but after your first eight hour day of just cutting the grass, you realize you need some help.

After posting a few ads and asking around, you are referred to a local guy with a good reputation. He has his own equipment and seems to know a lot about grass and landscaping.

When you interview him he tells you he is the "best in the business."

So you put him on the payroll. Because he's an expert, he doesn't come cheap.

You agree on a decent pay rate.

For the first couple of months everything goes great. He cuts the trees and plants some bushes.

Then one day you come home early from work and are surprised to find your gardener in the house emptying a jar of coins you have collected into his pocket - he's stealing from you.

Or maybe your neighbour comes over one day and tells you that when you leave in the morning, the gardener routinely leaves and spends time cutting the grass at other properties in the neighbourhood where he collects cash, and also bills you for the time he wasn't at your house.

Either way, he hasn't done the job and has to go.

You give him an envelope with his final pay and tell him he's fired.

But wait a minute. On top of the \$150 you own him, he wants another \$1000 for his trouble.

He produces a contract you signed when you hired him. Unfortunately you assumed it was a standard contract agreeing to pay him a certain amount every week while he was employed by you.

But when you read the fine print, it clearly states, that for if ANY reason you choose not to use his services, you will pay him \$1000 just to get rid of him.

You would probably be pretty angry about having to pay a guy that kind of money for doing nothing, especially after he caused his own problems on the job.

Well, it happens all the time in Ontario and we, the public, are paying for it.

For some reason government bureaucrats are incapable of drawing up a contract that makes any sense, and we the taxpayers are always on the hook.

It happened again last week.

The doctor who was fired from the Hamilton Health Care Network will receive a payment of over \$1 million ? for not doing his job properly. The doctor, who warned people not to travel in his official capacity, hopped on a jet and flew to the Dominican Republic for the holidays.

There was a lot of controversy over this, and deservedly so. And that goes for all the politicians who got caught doing the very same thing.

The St. Josephs Health System says it has to pay him the \$1 million because it fired him ?without cause.?

You read that right ? WITHOUT cause. If they didn't have a cause, why was he fired?

To make matters worse, this is not the first time he's done something stupid. He had to resign from his position as chief of staff at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital in 2012, after some dirty dealings there as well.

What irks Ontario taxpayers is this only happens with public money ? OUR money.

In the private sector if you are fired for incompetence or other bad behaviour, you aren't rewarded for your lacklustre performance.

This is not the first time this has happened in government related affairs and it won't be the last time.

And it doesn't just happen at the provincial level. Municipal governments offer equally ridiculous contracts as well.

Maybe it's time the governments stopped using lawyers to draw up employment contracts and instead relied on people with some common sense.

I'm pretty sure many local business people, retired people, truck drivers, or a local handyman would be able put together an employment contract based on the job and performance that doesn't require a huge payment of OUR tax dollars when the employee is caught with his pants down.

There is little doubt that after this guy stays quiet for a while, he will again find employment with an outrageous salary, again on our dime.

If he keeps getting government funded jobs and getting fired, he'll retire wealthy before the rest of us even come close after doing a decent job.