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## The Express-Times

# Stockertown tax collector's pay on chopping block

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By **TONY NAUROTH**

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STOCKERTOWN | Borough council on Tuesday approved cutting the tax collector's salary, but it's unclear whether the mayor will act on that decision.

Council's 4-2 vote to slash the tax collector's 2010 pay rate from 4 percent per bill to 0.5 percent per bill now rests with Mayor Sherman Metzgar.

That would be a savings of about \$11,000 per year, according to borough officials, but it would also mean tax collector Connie Marakovits would earn far less than the \$35 per bill she had been getting for 15 years.

Metzgar did not immediately sign the resolution, choosing instead to think about it.

Because this is an election year and Marakovits' seat is up for grabs, any change in compensation must be made before Sunday. So, unless Metzgar signs by then, Marakovits will continue to receive the 4 percent.

Council Vice President Amy Richard, who voted for the decrease, said Friday, "Four percent? That's absurd. With the economy as it is and with the garbage contract about to expire, we're looking for a way to cut expenses."

Richard wrote a letter to Metzgar urging him to sign the resolution but said she has not heard back from him.

Metzgar could not be reached for comment Friday.

Richard said there's no way Stockertown can raise any more money, "so if we can save another \$10,000, we should do this."

Marakovits said she feels hurt because all the other borough employees received a 2 percent pay raise while she's getting a cut.

"If they would have said everyone has to take a cut, that would have been all right. That would have been fair," she said.

Council President Robin Davis, among those who voted to cut the rate, said many of those employees are on call 365 days a year, adding, "It's not like council is heartless. I'd feel the same way, but we're not taking the job away, we're just lowering the pay."

Davis, Richard, and Councilmen Jack Fatzinger and Paul Zaboy voted for the reduction. Councilwomen Cynthia Hower and Rosemarie Wenzelberger voted to keep the higher rate. Councilwoman Susan Sklodowsky is on extended medical leave.

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