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Aldermen reject fair wage policy

CALGARY HERALD

Calgary abandoned its efforts to become the first Canadian city to adopt a living wage policy when city council voted down two options, including one that would not have cost a penny.

Council backed away Tuesday from a proposal to pay a living wage to temporary and casual staff, a move that would have cost an estimated \$450,000 a year.

That would have brought about 1,000 city employees earning less than \$13.25 an hour up to that standard.

But in a move that surprised some on council, aldermen then opted not to adopt a living wage for regular staff.

Because the city's 14,000 full-time employees already

earn that much or more, the second option would have changed nothing.

Yet that proposal lost out as well, drawing the ire of Ald. Brian Pincott, who had championed both living wage suggestions.

"It's disappointing that we don't value our employees enough to pay them a living wage," he said.

"It's not an extravagant thing, a living wage is just enough to get them to the poverty line."

Pincott said the proposal to raise the salaries of temporary and casual workers would have translated into financial benefits for Calgary.

He noted a city report that estimated the city would get three times the return on every new dollar it paid out.