

Sousa named Finance Minister

By CHRIS CLAY

Staff
MN Feb. 13, 2013

It's a tough job, but someone has to do it.

Just ask Ontario's new Finance Minister Charles Sousa.

Sousa, who was sworn in on Monday as part of Premier Kathleen Wynne's cabinet, has moved into arguably the toughest job in Ontario politics by being responsible for overseeing the provincial treasury.

However, things are moving in the right direction, according to

See Former page .12



Charles Sousa

12 The Mississauga News - Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Former banker realizes he has a tough road ahead

Continued from page 1

to the Mississauga South MPP.

Sousa said the Province is on target for having the deficit eliminated by 2017-18. Originally predicted to be about \$14.8 billion, it was recently revealed the shortfall would be \$11.9 billion due to several factors, such as the elimination of banked sick days for teachers and tax assessment changes.

Still, the long-time Mississauga resident realizes he has a tough road ahead. Outgoing Finance Minister Dwight Duncan left a note on Sousa's desk, outlining the challenges of the position.

"He said it's tough being in this job because you have to balance all the issues and always watch the public purse," said Sousa.

But Sousa believes people will understand hard decisions will sometimes have to be made to benefit the long-term future of the province.

Sousa has a background in finance, previously working as a RBC executive. He feels Ontario has



Kathleen Wynne

to bet-

ter the lives of Ontarians. The freshly-minted minister says there are three top priorities for the finance ministry. Eliminating the deficit, which he says they're on track to do, sustaining growth and focusing on job creation.

"You have to look at the short-term (deficit reduction) and it's also important to stimulate long-term growth," said Sousa.

However, members of the Opposition and the public have questions about his lobbying to stop gas plants in Mississauga and

Oakville. The cost of moving the plants, according to the government, was \$230 million and some observers put that number much higher.

Sousa makes no apologies for his role, saying he was advocating right from the outset on behalf of the community who were strongly opposed to the plants. He's not trying to dwell on it and said he's not interested in playing politics. Instead, he would prefer to move past the issue and focus on the long-term prosperity of Ontario

and implementing measures to help its residents.

Described as affable and accommodating, will Sousa have the strength to make the hard decisions as finance minister? He says yes.

He says in his career before politics and in his roles as both labour and immigration minister, he's learned to navigate competing interests and help achieve consensus, even when the final decision isn't what people want to hear.

There have been rumblings Sousa may take a run at being the next mayor of Mississauga.

He says he's not thinking about that and is strictly focused on his role as minister.

"I love my city, I love where I live and grew up, but I am the minister of finance for the province of Ontario," said Sousa. "It's an honour for me to be part of the government and Kathleen Wynne's cabinet."

cclay@mississauga.net