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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION TRANSIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

A regular meeting of the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 1:30 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Crawford, Chair
Commissioner Schummer, Vice-Chair*
Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Brenner
Commissioner Garrod*
Commissioner Roy, left meeting at 2:28 PM
Commissioner Wotten
Regional Chair Henry
***denotes Commissioners participating electronically**

Absent: Commissioner Carter

Also

Present: Commissioner Jubb*
Commissioner Kerr*
Commissioner McDougall*
Commissioner Pickles*
***denotes visiting Commissioners participating electronically**

Present: S. Ciani, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
A. Chung, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
W. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
K. Hornburg, Deputy General Manager, Business Services
J. Kilgour, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
N. Lysaght, Manager, Policy and Planning, Durham Region Transit
A. Naeem, Solicitor, Legal Services*
Z. Osime-Fakolade, Program Manager, Community Engagement and Change Management, Durham Region Transit
N. Taylor, Treasurer, Durham Region Transit, and Commissioner of Finance*
V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by Commissioner Brenner, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(1) That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Executive
Committee meeting held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. **Presentations**

4.1 Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, re: General Manager's Verbal Update

Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit (DRT) provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the General Manager's Update.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- February General Manager (GM) Information Highlights
 - 2023 Performance Outcomes
- Updates
 - Fare Integration – On-Fare Program
 - Service Model Transition
- Network performance, January Service Change
 - Reliability – Early January 2024
 - Capacity – Early January 2024
 - 3 Route Adjustments Planned

B. Holmes responded to questions from the Committee regarding the volume of customer feedback not included in the presentation; the type of engagement that took place in Durham Region to determine the service changes to Durham Region Transit (DRT); the promotion currently taking place to encourage riders to use the new 605 Route and when can statistics be expected related to this route; and the length of time it takes students from the Municipality of Clarington who are using transit to get to the North Oshawa post-secondary campus.

4.2 Kris Hornburg, Deputy General Manager Business Services, Durham Region Transit, re: 2024 Transit Fares (2024-DRT-03) [Item 7.3]

Kris Hornburg, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2024 Transit Fares.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- DRT Fare Strategy, 2019
 - Key Principles
- Discounted fares
 - Discounts to base fare (percent)
 - Additional discount/loyalty programs
- Proposed 2024 fare increase
- Fare system modernization
 - PRESTO fare payment system

5. Delegations

5.1 Jeff Gray, President, Unifor Local 222, re: Transit Long-Term Service and Financing Strategy

Jeff Gray, President, Unifor Local 222, appeared before the committee regarding the Transit Long-Term Service and Financing Strategy.

J. Gray expressed concerns regarding members of Unifor Local 222 needing to use alternative and expensive ride-hailing services as a means of transportation to and from work opposed to Durham Region Transit due to lack of access and services to workplaces; and asked the committee to relocate funds in the budget to invest in Transit.

J. Gray responded to questions from the Committee.

5.2 Ian Sinnott, Chair, Unifor Local 222, re: Transit Long-Term Service and Financing Strategy

Ian Sinnott, Chair, Unifor Local 222, appeared before the committee regarding the Transit Long-Term Service and Financing Strategy.

I. Sinnott expressed concerns regarding DRT's ability to meet the demand of the growing population in Durham Region; the removal of routes in established areas in the Region to accommodate the demand of new growth areas; the future demands on DRT associated with the Lakeshore East GO transit expansion; the additional strains that DRT employees face including over crowded buses, by-passing members of the public due to capacity limits and running behind schedule; the level of transit service in Durham Region compared to surrounding municipalities and cities; and the need for Council's continued support and investment into the transit strategy to contribute to the success of the Region.

I. Sinnott responded to questions from the Committee.

5.3 Tega Ubor, Ontario Tech Student Union, re: Service Levels to Ontario Tech University

Tega Ubor, Ontario Tech Student Union, appeared before the committee regarding service levels to Ontario Tech University.

T. Ubor expressed concerns regarding unreliability and inaccessibility of DRT for Ontario Tech University (OTU) students, especially for students who use mobility devices during peak times. T. Ubor acknowledged the recent effort of DRT to engage directly with OTU students to understand the diverse needs of the students using transit and asked that DRT continue to host sessions once a semester to gather and address feedback. T. Ubor also expressed concerns with respect to DRT only providing a general survey and not specifically creating a survey for OTU students to address concerns specific to the students who use transit.

T. Ubor responded to questions from the Committee.

5.4 Tien Huynh, Durham Region resident (In-Person Attendance), re: Changes to Service Levels

Tien Huynh, Durham Region Resident, appeared before the committee regarding changes to service levels.

T. Huynh expressed concerns regarding DRT's ability to accommodate the population growth in Durham Region; the network changes in January and how it is affecting residents who rely on transit; and how the lack of funding for DRT has contributed to the changes of the network and the possibility of more negative changes in the future.

5.5 Lorraine Hogg, Pickering Resident, re: General Manager's Report as it relates to issues of accessing transit for people who don't live along Highway 2 (2024-DRT-01) [Item 7.1]

Lorraine Hogg, Pickering resident, appeared before the committee regarding General Manager's Report #2024-DRT-01 as it relates to issues of accessing transit for people who don't live along Highway 2.

L. Hogg expressed concerns with respect to insufficient improvements to DRT, specifically in the City of Pickering; the challenges that are caused by the limited bus stops, including the distance to walk to the bus stop. L. Hogg provided the committee with examples of specific trips using Google maps to show the length of time each trip would take at different times of the day to illustrate the how far a person would have to walk to get to the bus stop, and how long it would take to arrive at a destination travelling by bus.

6. Correspondence

There were no communication items considered.

7. Reports

A) General Manager's Report – February 2024 (2024-DRT-01)

Report #2024-DRT-01 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding reintroducing DRT services that were suspended in January through network optimization and reconsideration in the 2024 DRT budget. B. Holmes advised that in the absence of additional resources, if the changes that have been made are reversed it would mean many DRT riders would be without services on core routes and continued degradation of the network. He recommended that this discussion would be more appropriate at the March Transit Executive Committee (TEC) meeting during consideration of the DRT budget.

Moved by Commissioner Wotten, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(2) That Report #2024-DRT-01 of the General Manager, Durham Region Transit, be received for information.

CARRIED AS AMENDED ON A
RECORDED VOTE LATER IN THE
MEETING
(See Following Motions)

Moved by Commissioner Wotten, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(3) That the Committee recess for 5 minutes.

CARRIED

The Committee recessed at 2:56 PM and reconvened at 3:01 PM

The Clerk conducted a roll call following the recess and all members of Committee were present with the exception of Commissioners Carter and Roy.

Further discussion ensued regarding the decision to reallocate DRT services in January and reconsidering the changes as it relates to the budget. N. Taylor, Treasurer, DRT and Commissioner of Finance, advised that there is a Council approved guideline that staff have been directed to meet, and staff will provide a budget that complies with that guideline at the March TEC meeting and other committee meetings. N. Taylor advised that each committee will receive their recommended budget reports and at the March meetings will have the opportunity to make an alternate recommendation to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Discussion also ensued regarding the carbon tax charged on diesel fuel for public transportation and the possibility of bringing forward a future motion requesting that the application of the carbon tax be removed for public transit across Ontario.

Moved by Commissioner Brenner, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(4) That the main motion (2) of Commissioners Wotten and Anderson be amended by adding the following as a new Part B):

“B) That staff be directed to report back as part of the budget discussions at the next Transit Executive Committee meeting the cost of reinstating the lost service through the January optimization without reducing the positive changes made.”

CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

No

Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Brenner
Commissioner Crawford
Commissioner Garrod
Regional Chair Henry
Commissioner Schummer
Commissioner Wotten

None

Members Absent: Commissioner Carter
Commissioner Roy

Declarations of Interest: None

The main motion (2) of Commissioners Wotten and Anderson was then put to a vote and CARRIED AS AMENDED.

B) Revisions to Terms of Reference for the Specialized Services Eligibility Appeal Process (2024-DRT-02)

Report #2024-DRT-02 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Wotten, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(5) That the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Durham Region Transit Specialized Services Eligibility Appeal Process, as set out in Attachment #2 to Report #2024-DRT-02.

CARRIED

C) 2024 Transit Fares (2024-DRT-03)

Report #2024-DRT-03 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Wotten, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(6) That the Transit Executive Committee recommends to Regional Council
that the proposed transit fares in Attachment #1 be approved and
implemented July 1, 2024.

CARRIED

8. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions considered.

9. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters considered.

10. Other Business

10.1 Maintenance Apprentice Program

James Kilgour, Deputy General Manager of Maintenance, Durham Region Transit, announced that in partnership with Unifor Local 222 and the maintenance team at Durham Region Transit a letter of understanding has been completed with respect to an apprentice program.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Transit Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 1:30 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

12. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Brenner, Seconded by Commissioner Wotten,
(7) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,

M. Crawford, Chair

S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk