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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

A regular meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Ashe, Chair
Councillor Garrod, Vice-Chair
Councillor Crawford
Councillor Leahy
Councillor McDougall
Councillor Schummer*
Councillor Yamada*
Regional Chair Henry
***denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also
Present: Councillor Collier*
Councillor Kerr attended for part of the meeting
Councillor Wotten*
***denotes visiting Councillors participating electronically**

Staff
Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
A. Burgess, Director, Communications & Engagement
S. Ciani, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
L. Fleury, Deputy Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
A. Harras, Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services
A. Hector-Alexander, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
W. Holmes, General Manager, DRT
J. Hunt, Regional Solicitor/Director of Legal Services, CAO's Office – Legal
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Kilgour*, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, DRT
N. Pincombe, Director, Business Planning & Budgets
N. Taylor, 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 made.

3. Election of the Finance & Administration Committee Vice-Chair

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Administration Committee.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Crawford,

- (1) That Councillor Garrod be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Administration Committee.

Moved by Councillor Yamada, Seconded by Councillor Schummer,

- (2) That Councillor Leahy be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Finance & Administration Committee.

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,

- (3) That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

The Chair asked Councillor Garrod and Councillor Leahy if they wished to stand and both indicated that they wished to stand.

A vote was taken and Councillor Garrod was elected as the Vice-Chair for the Finance & Administration Committee.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor Garrod,

- (4) That the minutes of the regular Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

5. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

6. Presentations

There were no presentations.

7. Delegations

- 7.1 James Bountrogiannis, Durham resident (In-Person Attendance), re: The Exorbitant Costs of "Net Zero" and Durham Region's acquiescence through its declaration of a "Climate Emergency" in 2018
-

J. Bountrogiannis withdrew their delegation request for this meeting.

- 7.2 Vijay Jain, Founder & President, Vishwa Jain Sangathan Canada (Virtual Attendance), re: Request to amend prior motion presented to the Committee of the Whole on February 12, 2025 to ban the Nazi Swastika to remove the word "Swastika" from the motion and replace it with Hakenkreuz, or hooked cross or Nazi symbol of hatred
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Vijay Jain, Founder & President of Vishwa Jain Sangathan Canada, appeared before the Committee with respect to a request to amend the motion presented to the Committee of the Whole on February 12, 2025 and adopted by Council on February 26, 2025, to Ban the Nazi Swastika in Canada, to remove the word "Swastika" from the motion and replace it with "Hakenkreuz", or "hooked cross" or "Nazi symbol of hate". Highlights of the delegation included:

- Reference to the motions adopted by Regional Council and Whitby Town Council
- Swastika – Extensively used in Jain and Hindu prayers
- Swastika – Is there relationship to Nazi/Anti-Semitism?
- Impact of Using Swastika word in Hate Context or Associating Swastika with Nazi

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,
(5) That Vijay Jain's delegation be extended by an additional two minutes.

CARRIED on a 2/3rds VOTE

- Corrections Made in the West
- Requests

V. Jain asked that the previous motion be amended to remove the word swastika; that a press release be issued about the amended motion; and that a notification be issued to the Durham Regional Police Service requesting they update their earlier communications with reference to "swastika".

In response to questions, staff advised that the request to amend the motion previously adopted by Council would require a motion to reconsider.

Councillor Leahy spoke in support of making the amendment at Regional Council and at the Town of Whitby.

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,
(6) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That subject to a 2/3rds majority vote, the resolution with respect to Banning the Nazi Swastika in Canada, adopted at the February 26, 2025 Regional Council meeting, be reconsidered; and

- B) That subject to Part A) being approved, the resolution be amended to replace all references to Nazi swastika(s) with the words “Nazi symbols of hate”, and to make any necessary associated grammatical revisions.

CARRIED

Comments were made with respect to conferring with other groups to ensure all relevant information is being captured in the resolution.

Staff were asked to research the content of the resolution and provide any additional relevant information before the March 26th Regional Council meeting.

Moved by Councillor McDougall, Seconded by Councillor Leahy,

- (7) That Vijay Jain be permitted to delegate at the March 26, 2025 Regional Council meeting.

CARRIED

8. Administration

8.1 Correspondence

- A) Correspondence from the City of Pickering. re: Resolution adopted at their Council meeting held on February 24, 2025 with regards to Supporting Hidden Disabilities - Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program
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Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,

- (8) That the correspondence from the City of Pickering, regarding Resolution adopted at their Council meeting held on February 24, 2025 with regards to Supporting Hidden Disabilities - Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program, be received for information.

CARRIED

Comments were made with respect to the importance of recognizing invisible disabilities.

In response to a question, staff advised that they are exploring opportunities to bring this program to the Region.

8.2 Reports

- A) Appointment of New Members to the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) (2025-A-1)
-

Report #2025-A-1 from Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer, was received.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Crawford,

- (9) That we recommend to Council:

That the following persons be appointed to the Durham Region Accessibility Advisory Committee:

- i) Julia Stevenson – Community member living with a disability;
- ii) Mubina Jaffer- Community member caregiver to a person with a disability; and
- iii) Laura Saumur – Community member living with a disability.

CARRIED

9. Finance

9.1 Correspondence

- A) Correspondence from the Municipality of Clarington, re: Resolution approved at their Council meeting held on January 27, 2025 with regards to Alternative Revenue Source (FSD-002-25)

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor Garrod,

- (10) That the Correspondence from the Municipality of Clarington, regarding Resolution approved at their Council meeting held on January 27, 2025 with regards to Alternative Revenue Source (FSD-002-25), be referred to the consideration of the 2026 Strategic Property Tax Study.

CARRIED

- B) Correspondence from the Town of Ajax, re: Resolution passed at their Council meeting held on February 18, 2025 with regards to Impacts of the International Student Program Changes to Local Post Secondary Programs

Moved by Councillor Crawford, Seconded by Councillor Leahy,

- (11) That the Correspondence from the Town of Ajax, regarding the Resolution passed at their Council meeting held on February 18, 2025 with regards to Impacts of the International Student Program Changes to Local Post Secondary Programs, be received for information.

CARRIED AS AMENDED

(See Following Motion)

Councillor Collier spoke to the recent changes made to the International Student Program and the unintended negative impacts to post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Leahy,

- (12) That the main motion (11) of Councillors Crawford and Leahy be amended to delete the words, “be received for information” and replace them with the words, “be endorsed” and to recommend that Regional Council endorse the correspondence.

CARRIED

9.2 Reports

- A) The Remuneration and Expenses in 2024 of Members of Regional Council and Regional Council Appointees to Local Boards, as Required by Section 284(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 (2025-F-1)
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Report #2025-F-1 from Nancy Taylor, Commissioner of Finance, was received.

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor McDougall,
(13) That we recommend to Council:

That Report #2025-F-1 of the Commissioner of Finance, be received for information.

CARRIED

- B) Approval for the Purchase of Nine Leased Buses – Durham Region Transit (2025-F-2)
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Report #2025-F-2 from Nancy Taylor, Commissioner of Finance and Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Staff responded to questions with respect to the rationale for purchasing rather than extending the lease on the buses; whether the buses are coming from a U.S. or a Canadian based company; is there a way to shift to all Canadian bus contracts; and whether Nova Buses were used for previous bus contracts.

Further questions were asked with respect to whether the buses that have been ordered are already being manufactured and what the cost would be to end the contract; if there would be an impact on service levels; whether Metrolinx is doing anything to ensure Canadian procurement going forward; and whether consideration can be given to exiting existing joint procurement partnerships when they are not putting Canadian companies first.

E. Baxter-Trahair advised that a presentation will be provided at the Committee of the Whole meeting on Wednesday, March 19 on what the Region is doing in response to tariff threats.

Moved by Councillor Crawford, Seconded by Councillor Leahy,
(14) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That an unbudgeted capital project for the purchase of nine diesel buses at a total cost not to exceed \$540,000 be approved with financing to be provided from a reallocation of provincial gas tax funding in the Mini Van Replacement project (H2211) that has been cancelled;

- B) That staff be authorized to award a sole source agreement with Damera Bus Sales Canada Corp. for the purchase of the nine diesel buses that Durham Region Transit (DRT) currently leases; and
- C) That the Commissioner of Finance be authorized to execute the necessary agreements.

CARRIED

C) 2024/2025 Annual Risk Management and Insurance Update (2025-F-3)

Report #2025-F-3 from Nancy Taylor, Commissioner of Finance, was received.

Staff responded to questions with respect to securing cyber insurance; increases in some insurance premiums; if the overall increase is in-line with the industry average; and the amount of the deductible.

Moved by Councillor Leahy, Seconded by Councillor Garrod,
(15) That we recommend to Council:

That Report #2025-F-3 of the Commissioner of Finance, be received for information.

CARRIED

10. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

11. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

12. Other Business

There was no other business to be considered.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Finance & Administration Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 9:30 AM in Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

14. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Crawford, Seconded by Councillor Leahy,
(16) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:18 AM

Respectfully submitted,

K. Ashe, Chair

L. Fleury, Deputy Clerk