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**Subject:** December 3, 2025 Works Committee

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Clerk, please add to the correspondence. I hope that this is discussed either at the meeting or following the meeting.

Chair Barton and Members of the Works Committee,

I'm writing because the 2025 Works Committee minutes show a clear and concerning pattern. Over 10 months of meetings in 2025, covering more than \$79 million in capital approvals, sole-source awards, and budget increases, the Committee did not record a single "No" vote. Not one. Every item, even those with multi-million-dollar overruns was carried unanimously.

When a committee responsible for critical infrastructure and long-term liabilities never records dissent, never sends a costly item back, and never documents a request for alternatives, it begins to look less like oversight and more like administration by acclamation. Whatever the intent, this is the pattern the minutes show.

## 1. Voting Pattern

Across all 2025 meetings:

- All motions carried unanimously
- Zero recorded "No" votes , zero abstentions, zero deferred for cost analysis
- Zero items rejected
- Zero cost overruns challenged in the final vote

This is not how healthy public-sector oversight should work.

## 2. Attendnace

Attendance was consistently strong from all members, which makes the lack of disagreement or debate even more striking.

In other words: there was no barrier to stronger scrutiny.

### 3. Cost Escalations Approved Without Pushback

These examples come directly from the minutes:

#### Whitby Water Supply Plant — AECOM Contract Increase

- Cost escalation: \$23.3M to \$37.6M or + \$14.3 million
- Passed unanimously with *no* recorded debate on causes or alternatives.

#### Bowmanville Water Supply Plant

- Budget: \$12.65M to \$19.45M or + \$6.8 million
- Sole-source amendments added
- Unanimous

#### Carruthers Creek Pumping Station

- Budget: \$1M to \$3M or + \$2 million
- No challenge or deferral for review.
- Unanimous

#### Oshawa WSP Underdrain System (AWI)

- \$2.9 million sole-source
- No alternatives documented
- Unanimous

#### Columbus Road Feedermain (Whitby)

- \$9.2M unbudgeted capital request
- Unanimous

In total, the Committee advanced or approved roughly \$79,030,144 in 2025. Every dollar was approved without dissent.

### 4. Why Residents Like Me Are Worried

Durham faces rising water/wastewater rates, growing capital pressures, and a long list of cost-heavy upgrades. In this environment, unanimous approvals on every cost overrun, every sole-source procurement, and every new capital request suggest that taxpayers are not getting the level of scrutiny they deserve, or the level the Committee is responsible for providing.

I want to end on one crucial point. I believe this Committee needs to do more than simply “receive this letter for information” or automatically “refer concerns to staff.” The minutes already show exactly where the problem is: items with major financial consequences are being approved without challenge. You must begin holding one another and staff to a higher standard of scrutiny.

When projects come in above budget, the default cannot be approval without questioning. Staff and vendors need to understand that overruns, sole-source justifications, and late-stage cost escalations will be examined, challenged, and, when appropriate, rejected. Residents need visible evidence that affordability matters, that oversight is real, and that the Works Committee is more than a rubber stamp for rising costs.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your discussion and response to me on this critical matter. .

Thank you

Doug