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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION TRANSIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

A regular meeting of the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, March 6, 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 Carter* attended the meeting at 3:00 PM
Commissioner Garrod
Commissioner Roy
Commissioner Wotten
Regional Chair Henry
***denotes Commissioners participating electronically**

Absent: None

Also

Present: Commissioner Jubb*
***denotes visiting Commissioners participating electronically**

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
S. Ciani, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
A. Harras, Regional Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services*
W. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
K. Hornburg, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Kilgour, Acting Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
D. Margiotta, Manager, Operations Conventional East, Durham Region Transit*
A. Naeem, Solicitor, Chief Administrative Office - Legal Services*
Z. Osime-Fakolade, Program Manager, Community Engagement and Change Management, Durham Region Transit

N. Pincombe, Director, Business Planning and Budgeting, Finance
Department
T. Steffler, Supervisor, Transit Durham West, Durham Region Transit
N. Taylor, Treasurer, Durham Region Transit, and Commissioner of Finance
P. Uthayakumar, Program Manager, Sustainability and Strategic Initiatives,
Durham Region Transit*

* **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 Wotten,
(8) That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Executive
Committee meeting held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, be adopted.
CARRIED

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Commissioner Wotten,
(9) That the agenda be altered to consider Delegation Items 5.1 through 5.7
next.

CARRIED

5. Delegations

5.1 Joell Vanderwagen, Oshawa Resident (In Person Attendance), re: General Policies regarding Route Plans and Service Levels

Joell Vanderwagen, Oshawa resident, appeared before the committee with
respect to the general policies regarding Route Plans and Service Levels.

J. Vanderwagen expressed concerns regarding a need for direct routes and
continuous bus service on the major arterial roads in the Region of Durham; and
the impact of a reported shortage of Durham Region Transit (DRT) drivers
affecting service levels. J. Vanderwagen provided the committee with examples of
specific trips where the lack of two-way service has impacted commuting time.

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
(10) That the rules of procedure be suspended to extend the time for the
delegation by two minutes.

CARRIED ON A 2/3rds VOTE

J. Vanderwagen expressed concerns regarding funding being allocated for new
capital projects compared to the operating expenses of DRT. She stated that
construction projects may provide for faster express services on main routes for
those who live nearby, but the lack of a grid of connecting routes will hinder riders

being able to easily access these express routes. She stated there is a need for higher subsidies of operating costs.

J. Vanderwagen provided the Committee with strategies to change the DRT bus service grid and funding possibilities.

J. Vanderwagen responded to questions from the Committee.

5.2 Patrick Ferguson, Durham Resident, re: Bus Cancellation without Advisory

P. Ferguson, Durham resident, did not appear.

5.3 Tega Ubor, Vice President, Ontario Tech Student Union (In Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Tega Ubor, Vice President, Ontario Tech Student Union, appeared before the committee regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget.

T. Ubor expressed concerns regarding the affect that this year's DRT budget will have on Ontario Tech University (OTU) students; the current issues that OTU students have when commuting on DRT buses, specifically over crowding on buses and buses reaching capacity limits; the possibility of increased walking distances and overcrowded buses, and the affect these impacts will have on a person with accessibility issues.

5.4 Samantha Brown, President, Ontario Tech Student Union (In Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Samantha Brown, President, Ontario Tech Student Union, appeared before the committee regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget, particularly as it relates to service enhancements and how they impact students.

S. Brown stated customer expectations of transit services are rising, and with the increase in students attending post secondary institutions she expressed concerns regarding the affect Durham Region Transit (DRT) service changes can have on Ontario Tech University students who rely on DRT to commute to school.

S. Brown stated DRT is struggling to accomplish its goal of getting riders to and from their destinations, specifically students who have accessibility issues. She expressed concerns regarding DRT's ability to meet the current demands of riders She questioned, how DRT will achieve their goal of getting people to their destinations and how budget allocations will help the community members, and if that will put more strain on things that DRT is already trying to accomplish.

5.5 Angelique Dack, Ontario Tech Student (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham

Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Angelique Dack, Ontario Tech Student, appeared before the committee regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget.

A. Dack expressed concerns regarding the feedback from Ontario Tech University (OTU) students regarding lack of prioritization of student priorities not being reflected in previous years budgets and in the current year's DRT budget..

A. Dack expressed concerns regarding transit costs, especially for student's ineligible for the U-Pass; the need for significant improvements in reliability and attempts to address overcrowding on buses; the value of the U-Pass in light of the introduction of the One Fare Program; and residents of the Durham Region seeking alternative job options due to rising prices in the Region. A. Dack stated these are not just student concerns, but also community concerns. She stated that this is the opportune moment to prioritize investment, increase service hours and deploy larger buses to meet rising demands.

A. Dack responded to questions from the Committee.

5.6 Tien Huynh, Whitby Resident (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Tien Huynh, Whitby resident, appeared before the committee regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget.

T. Huynh expressed concerns regarding the frequency and reliability of DRT buses, specifically the 302 Route from Brooklin to the Ontario Tech campus; the proposed budget not accounting for the increase in ridership due to the insufficient funding being allocated to DRT; and the need for DRT services to keep pace with population growth in the Region of Durham.

T. Huynh stated the proposed service enhancements appear promising, however they aren't enough in the face of increased ridership; and providing new service to fast growing areas, improvements to routes that are chronically late, and more operators to drive the buses are being pushed back due to the lack of funding in the proposed budget.

T. Huynh stated that deferring funding to the transit system only means Durham Region will continue to fall behind if there is not a real and lasting change to the transit system; and public transit is an essential service that needs to be able to keep up with rising population in Durham Region.

5.7 Lorraine Hogg, Pickering Resident (In-Person Attendance), re Business Plans and Budget Issues (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Lorraine Hogg, Pickering Resident, appeared before the committee regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget.

L. Hogg expressed concerns regarding the financial burden on DRT riders; the challenges posed by the distance between bus stops; and DRT not meeting their own service proximity guidelines as some areas receive no off-peak service which means that DRT is not meeting these guidelines.

L. Hogg stated that under the Ontario Rights Commission, every citizen has the right to equal treatment in receiving public services, including public transit services, and that access to public transit is a necessity. She also expressed concerns with the fare increase for the level of service being provided.

L. Hogg questioned how many DRT staff use transit regularly to travel from neighbourhoods that have low or non-existent service levels.

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:

- March General Manager Information Highlights
- Updates
 - One Fare Program Announcement
 - Engagement with Specialized transit customers
 - New data for Demand Response Services
 - First six electric buses and infrastructure/equipment
 - Transit Operator and Worker Appreciation Day – March 18, 2024

B. Holmes responded to questions from the Committee regarding providing the breakdown of the On Demand unaccommodated rate statistic into more granular categories such as rural and urban, and the factors influencing capacity; the availability of statistics focusing on reliability of public transit within a specific local municipality; and the allocation and intended use of the additional 60,000 service hours for DRT.

4.2 Kris Hornburg, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit and Nicole Pincombe, Director, Business Planning and Budgets, re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

Kris Hornburg, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, DRT and Nicole Pincombe, Director, Business Planning and Budgets provided a PowerPoint

presentation regarding the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Overview
- 2023 Accomplishments
 - Service Improvements
 - Community Capacity Building
- 2024 Proposed Expenditures and Financing
- 2024 Strategic Investments
- 2024 Business Plans and Budgets
 - Reductions and Deferrals
 - Risks and Uncertainties
- Beyond the 2024 Business Plans and Budget
 - Forecasted Pressures and Strategic Considerations

Staff responded to questions from the Committee regarding the projected impact of lost funding from Development Charges due to Provincial legislation with respect to Transit over the next few years; the expected increase in ridership from the introduction of the One Fare program; the distinction between a local route and a non-local route and how many local routes were lost or changed in January; clarification on what is meant by reduced innovation capacity and other challenges; the present levy increase assigned to supporting DRT in the future; limitations faced by DRT due to the 2024 budget guideline; the initiatives expected to be delivered in 2024 and beyond to facilitate connectivity for DRT riders in northern municipalities to access services provided in the southern municipalities of the Region of Durham; and the contingency plan in place if the Federal Government do not approve DRT's funding application through the Zero Emissions Transit Fund secured.

Moved by Commissioner Garrod, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
(11) That the agenda be altered to consider Items 7.1 through 7.3 next.
CARRIED

7. Reports

A) General Manager's Report – March 2024 (2024-DRT-04)

Report #2024-DRT-04 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Garrod, Seconded by Commissioner Wotten,
(12) That Report #2024-DRT-04 of the General Manager, Durham Region Transit, be received for information.
CARRIED

B) 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05)

Report #2024-DRT-05 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the Federal carbon pricing program applied to diesel fuel and the 5 percent increase that comes into effect April 1, 2024; the increase of staff complement in the DRT budget to met the needs of growth in the Region of Durham; the implications of Bill 23 on the DRT budget and residents of the Region of Durham; the implications of the 2024 DRT budget for DRT riders, who depend on transit for their daily activities; the Regions process for classification and prioritization to determine necessary positions in the 2024 budget; and the need for financial support from the upper levels of government to support the transit infrastructure required to accommodate increased density along transit corridors.

Moved by Commissioner Garrod, Seconded by Commissioner Wotten,
(13) That the Transit Executive Committee recommends to the Finance and Administration Committee for subsequent recommendation to Regional Council:

That the 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget be approved.

CARRIED ON THE FOLLOWING
RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

Commissioner Carter
Commissioner Crawford
Commissioner Garrod
Regional Chair Henry
Commissioner Roy
Commissioner Schummer
Commissioner Wotten

No

Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Brenner

Members Absent: None

Declarations of Interest: None

This matter will be considered by the Finance and Administration Committee on March 19, 2024 and presented to Regional Council on March 27, 2024.

C) Appointment of Member to the Durham Region Transit Advisory Committee (2024-DRT-06)

Report #2024-DRT-06 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Garrod, Seconded by Commissioner Wotten,
(14) That the Transit Executive Committee appoint nominee Jan Westerman,
City of Oshawa, to the Transit Advisory Committee for the remainder of
the current term of Council.

CARRIED

5. Delegations

- 5.1 Joell Vanderwagen, Oshawa Resident (In-Person Attendance), re: General Policies regarding Route Plans and Service Levels

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 2 of these minutes.]

- 5.2 Patrick Ferguson Durham Resident, re: Bus Cancellation without Advisory

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 3 of these minutes.]

- 5.3 Tega Ubor, Vice President, Ontario Tech Student Union (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 3 of these minutes.]

- 5.4 Samantha Brown, President, Ontario Tech Student Union (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 3 of these minutes.]

- 5.5 Angelique Dack, Ontario Tech Student (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See pages 3 and 4 of these minutes.]

- 5.6 Tien Huynh, Whitby Resident (In-Person Attendance), re: 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 4 of these minutes.]

- 5.7 Lorraine Hogg, Pickering Resident (In-Person Attendance), re Business Plans and Budget Issues (2024-DRT-05) [Item 7.2]

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 4 of these minutes.]

6. Correspondence

- 6.1 Correspondence received from the City of Pickering, dated March 1, 2024, re:

Resolution passed at their Council meeting held on February 26, 2024, regarding Report CS-02-24 Durham Region Transit Service Changes

Discussion ensued regarding local area Accessibility Advisory Committees within the Region of Durham expressing concern over the absence of consultation regarding the transit services implemented January 2024.

B. Holmes provided clarification on two points contained in the correspondence: the first in regards to the statement that the 95% proximity standard within 800 metres was newly put in place in January 2024, and advised that the standard is has been in place since September 2021 when TEC approved Report #2021-DRT-20: The Route Ahead, Durham Region Transit 2022-2025 Service Strategy; and the second with respect to the inference that DRT was refusing to implement audible bus stop announcements, and advised that there are pre-boarding announcements and on-boarding visual and auditory announcements, as required by Sections 51 and 52 of the Integrated Standards Act of the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Moved by Commissioner Brenner, Seconded by Commissioner Anderson,
(15) That correspondence from the City of Pickering, dated March 1, 2024, re: Resolution passed at their Council meeting held on February 26, 2024, regarding Report CS-02-24 Durham Region Transit Service Changes, be received for information.

CARRIED

7. Reports

A) General Manager's Report – March 2024 (2024-DRT-04)

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 6 of these minutes.]

B) 2024 Durham Region Transit Business Plan and Budget (2024-DRT-05)

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See pages 6 and 7 of these minutes.]

C) Appointment of member to the Durham Region Transit Advisory Committee (2024-DRT-06)

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. [See page 7 of these minutes.]

8. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions considered.

9. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters considered.

10. Other Business

There was no other business considered.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Transit Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 1:30 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

12. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Wotten, Seconded by Commissioner Roy,
(16) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM

Respectfully submitted,

M. Crawford, Chair

S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk