

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT COTW 9-2010

The Municipal Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara met in Committee of the Whole in the Council Chamber, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on Wednesday, June 23, 2010 commencing at 4:13 p.m.

These are the individuals who were in attendance during the Open Session of the Committee of the Whole meeting:

ATTENDANCE

Council: Regional Chair Partington; Councillors; Augustyn; Badawey; Baty; Burroughs; Bylsma; Casselman; Cordiner; D'Angela; Forster; Gabriel; Garcia; Goulbourne; Greenwood; Heit, Henderson; Hodgson; Marshall; McMullan; Puttick; Rigby; Salci; Saracino; Timms; Trombetta; Zimmerman.

Staff: Messrs. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Brothers, Commissioner, Public Works; Robson, Commissioner, Integrated Community Planning; Bergsma, Commissioner, Corporate Services; Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services; Cousins, Director, Transportation Services; Flora, Associate Director, Transportation Systems; Weir, Director, Administration; Kyne, Director, Legal Services; Bain, Regional Clerk; Roberts, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair; Ranjan, Transportation Engineer; Pilon, Associate Director, Service Quality & Improvement; Ms. Koz, Manager, Fleet Services; Ms. Rae, Legal Counsel-Real Estate; Ms. Pilon, Deputy Regional Clerk.

Others: Councillors Alexander; Fertich, Noyes, Papp members of the Transportation Strategy Steering Committee; Councillor Maves, Niagara Falls; Councillor Foster, Lincoln; Councillor Neale, Thorold; Councillor Andrewes, Lincoln; Ms. Bird, Ms. MacKenzie, members of the Regional Niagara Accessibility Advisory Committee; Mr. Wood, Coach Canada; Mr. Stockwell, Welland Transit; Mr. Sherlock, St. Catharines Transit Commission; Mr. Stuart, Niagara Falls Transit; Ms. Stout, Administrative Supervisor, Fort Erie; Mr. Vilella, Town of Fort; Mr. Huppenen, City of Port Colborne.

CALL TO ORDER

66. Regional Chair Partington called the meeting to order at 4:13 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

67. Regional Chair Partington noted that Regional Council has spent considerable time on inter-municipal transit this past year. This is the third special Council session on inter-municipal transit in 2010, and he hoped that the Committee of the Whole could consider the report before them and undertake a position of Regional Council on this matter.

Report PWA 46-2010, respecting the Authority to Implement Inter-Municipal Transit, Phase 2 Work Plan Report and Recommendations, was presented to the Committee of the Whole on May 12, 2010. This report has been tabled for your consideration at this meeting. However, we have a revised report, PWA 60-2010, which is the subject of this Committee of the Whole meeting.

This meeting of the Committee of the Whole arises from a vote to defer the consideration of Report PWA 46-2010, a report by staff regarding inter-municipal transit, to consider an alternative submission respecting inter-municipal transit from the municipalities of St. Catharines, Welland, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Port Colborne. Staff have completed discussions with the proponents of this alternative proposal and the Committee of the Whole is in receipt of staff report PWA 60-2010, Inter-Municipal Transit Proposal, based upon the submission by the local transit operations for the Niagara Region to fund an inter-municipal transit pilot project over a three-year timeframe.

The Regional Chair referenced the alternate pilot proposal in his opening remarks and Mr. Trojan commented on the broad range of benefits to the Niagara Region, as a whole. From a senior management perspective, commissioners recognize the value in providing a transportation alternative in the Niagara Region and the benefits that accrue with enhanced transportation to get people to work, for medical and health-related appointments across the Region, along with facilitating growth of businesses, tourism and economic growth starting in five of the key population and growth areas in Niagara.

It comes with added cost; however the value of inter-municipal transit really is "bigger than buses". It has social benefits, will advance increased employment opportunities, attract new businesses, as well as improve access to education that many may find too difficult with the current transit service model.

The alternative proposal coming from the current transit service operators in the Niagara Region provides an alternative for Council to consider through a pilot to really assess the enhanced service delivery, increased ridership potential as a basis for future discussions for an enhanced transit service delivery model.

This pilot project can serve as the first step in assessing the viability of a broader integrated inter-municipal transportation system in Niagara.

At one of our recent Corporate Management Team meetings, improved inter-municipal transit was not only a top priority in Public Works, but also a top priority in Community Services and Public Health as cross-cutting benefits in these key service delivery areas can be supported and enhanced with improved inter-municipal transit services.

So the Corporate Management Team asks for the Committee of the Whole's consideration on the proposal before them and the value that can be achieved from assessing improved inter-municipal transit as a stepping stone to future transit services in Niagara.

PRESENTATION

68. Local Municipal Inter-Municipal Transit (IMT)
Pilot Project Proposal

Mr. Joe Cousins, Director, Transportation Services provided the Committee of the Whole with a presentation on the Inter-Municipal Transit Proposal on Proposal #1, which proposes hourly service, Monday to Saturday (7 am to 9 pm) between the downtown terminals; improved service between Fort Erie / Niagara Falls [seven (7) round trips daily] & Port Colborne / Welland [six (6) round trips daily]; Brock University / Niagara College service would continue unchanged; six (6) to seven (7) stops per trip; may require later evening service to Niagara Falls in summer; would require eight (8) buses [six (6) plus two (2) spares]; the first year's cost summary includes Initial Capital of \$3.7 million for eight (8) buses; Annual Operating expense of \$2.7 million; estimated Operating revenue of \$0.8 million totaling an Annual Operating Loss of \$1.9 million (R/C ratio - .28) and maps depicting Proposal #1: Triangle Service, Recommended Bus Routes.

Mr. Cousins also provided the Committee of the Whole with a presentation on the Inter-Municipal Transit Proposal on Proposal #2, which increases the frequency on some of the existing routes through the Brock Hub with increased service to Fort Erie and Port Colborne; three new buses (\$1.4 million) and estimated annual operating loss of \$0.61 million; does not improve connections to downtown business areas for employment, business, medical, shopping trips and does not improve connections to other transit services (GO bus or future GO rail etc.).

The advantages to Proposal #1 are improved transit connections between downtown hubs; the Triple Majority approval process is not required; it utilizes existing resources and expertise; evaluate potential and need for inter-municipal transit service without major commitment or significant investment in infrastructure or resources (three (3) year pilot project); better connections to local transit, GO bus etc.; no impact on existing Brock/Niagara student service and it's a good first step towards Council's "Transit Vision".

The concerns regarding Proposal #1 are the level of service is not quite as good as ENTRA's proposal (although the proposal could be modified to meet the needs); the service would be funded by all twelve local municipalities through the levy (based on assessment) and ENTRA recommended that those receiving "direct benefit" pay more than those receiving "indirect benefit"; the proposal addresses "Triangle Service" only (with feeders to Port Colborne and Fort Erie) so other services need to be addressed in future (additional feeders and rural demand service).

Through discussions with the Transit providers a three (3) year "Pilot Project" is necessary to allow all the stakeholders sufficient time to market and monitor the service to determine long term feasibility; quarterly reporting provided regarding costs and ridership to determine if "Performance Standards" are being met (service utilization of at least fifteen (15) passengers per vehicle-hour and anticipated cost recovery ratio); there are operational details that still need to be finalized: routes, schedules, hubs, stops, extended service; grant details....paid to?, how often?, fare revenue? and reporting requirements and service standards.

Mr. Cousins provided the Committee of the Whole with an overview of Report PWA 60-2010, which Includes \$1.35 million (gross) in the 2011 Operating Budget to fund Proposal #1 for last half of next year; a transfer up to \$3.7 million capital funding to the transit operator(s) to purchase up to eight (8) buses; continued discussions with the three local transit providers to finalize operational details; the service to commence in third quarter of 2011 and a further report for Council approval to initiate capital project and specify source of funding.

Mr. Ken Brothers, Commissioner, Public Works provided the Committee of the Whole with a brief overview of the report noting that by proceeding as recommended in Report PWA 60-2010, Niagara Region is taking an interim step and moving forward with Inter-Municipal Transit Services.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

69. **Inter-Municipal Transit Proposal**
PWA 60-2010

Following a lengthy discussion, it was therefore:

Moved by Councillor Zimmerman
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report PWA 60-2010, June 23, 2010, respecting the Inter-Municipal Transit Proposal, be received ***as amended***;

That the local transit operators be advised that it is the Region's intent to include a net allocation of \$1.35 million in the proposed 2011 Operating Budget, in order to provide them with a grant to carry out a pilot project to improve inter-municipal transit in Niagara, in accordance with their Proposal #1.

That the Region agrees to transfer up to \$3.7 million from capital funding, as part of the grant, contingent upon the Commissioner of Public Works' approval of satisfactory arrangements with the local transit providers, consistent with the service and operating levels proposed in this report.

That staff be authorized to continue discussions with the three local transit providers in order to finalize the operational details for introducing improved inter-municipal transit, in accordance with their Proposal #1, commencing in the third quarter of 2011.

That signage in recognition of Niagara Region's funding of Inter-Municipal Transit Service, be implemented;

That an oversight committee be established to oversee the agreement respecting Inter-Municipal Transit Service.

Upon a recorded vote being requested the Committee of the Whole was divided as follows on the aforementioned motion:

Voting for the Motion:

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Councillor Augustyn | Councillor Goulbourne |
| Councillor Badawey | Councillor Marshall |
| Councillor Baty | Councillor McMullan |
| Councillor Casselman | Councillor Puttick |
| Councillor Cordiner | Councillor Rigby |
| Councillor D'Angela | Councillor Salci |
| Councillor Forster | Councillor Saracino |
| Councillor Gabriel | Councillor Timms |
| Councillor Garcia | Councillor Zimmerman (18) |

Voting Against the Motion:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Councillor Bylsma | Councillor Henderson |
| Councillor Greenwood | Councillor Hodgson |
| Councillor Heit | Councillor Trombetta (6) |

Upon the recorded vote being taken, the Regional Chair declared the motion carried.

70. Authority to Implement Inter-Municipal Transit
Phase 2 Work Plan Report and Recommendations
PWA 46-2010

Moved by Councillor McMullan
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report PWA 46-2010, May 12, 2010, respecting the Authority to Implement Inter-Municipal Transit Phase 2 Work Plan Report and Recommendations, be received.

Carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

71. Moved by Councillor Saracino
Seconded by Councillor Trombetta

That the following communications be received:

- C7534 An email from Mike Tomaino a resident of Welland, respecting Inter-Municipal Transit.
- C7535 An email from Sean Polden, a resident of St. Catharines respecting Inter-Municipal Transit
- C7539 An email from George Jardine, a resident of Fort Erie, respecting Inter-Municipal Transit.
- C7540 An article entitled "Don't rush into regional transit: Hodgson", St. Catharines Standard, June 9, 2010.
- C7541 An article entitled "Region has to stop spinning its wheels on transit; pointofview", St. Catharines Standard, May 21, 2010.
- C7542 An article entitled "Regional Transit Delayed Again", The View, May 20, 2010.
- C7543 An article entitled "Counter-proposal delays regional transit decision", Niagara This Week, May 18, 2010.
- C7544 An article entitled "No decision on regional transit", St. Catharines Standard, May 13, 2010.
- C7545 An article entitled "Transit System needs careful planning", Niagara This Week, June 15, 2010.

- C7546 An article entitled "Hodgson: Regional transit doesn't have to be rushed", Niagara This Week, June 15, 2010.
- C7547 An article entitled "Why is This Session of Regional Council Holding Another Meeting on Inter-Municipal Transit? Might Just As Well Wait For A New Council That May Care More About Moving Niagara Into The 21st Century", Niagara At Large, June 14, 2010.
- C7548 Comments from the Brock University Students' Union (BUSU) respecting Inter-Municipal Transit in Niagara Region and the Five Pillars that represent an ideal model for the BUSU and their partners.
- C7549 Comments from Nicholas Kocsis a resident of the City of St. Catharines respecting Inter-Municipal Transit and the case for consideration of the return of light rail service as part of a long range objective of connected communities in the Welland Canal Corridor.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Peter Partington
Regional Chair

Janet Pilon
Deputy Regional Clerk

Kevin Bain
Regional Clerk