



**The Corporation of The Town of Cobourg**  
**Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
**MINUTES**

**December 16, 2020, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Electronic Participation**

Members Present: Jerry Ford  
Susan Caron  
Elizabeth Sheffield  
Aaron Burchat  
Kathryn Richards  
Troy Mills

Staff Present: Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works  
Jamie Kramer

Staff Absent: Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services  
Krystal Christopher

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sue Carron called the Meeting to Order at 10:01 A.M.

**2. APPROVAL/ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

**Moved by** Elizabeth Sheffield

THAT the Agenda dated December 16, 2020 be approved as presented.

**Carried**

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

There were no Declarations of Interest Declared by Committee Members.

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**Moved by** Jerry Ford

THAT the minutes dated November 25, 2020 be adopted as presented.

**Carried**

**5. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**6. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE**

**6.1 Email from Ted Williams, Cobourg resident, regarding the accessibility of the Town of Cobourg's website.**

J. Kramer read the letter aloud for the Committee. It was discussed about what changes could be made and how the website could be updated by members. J. Kramer noted she would forward the concerns to the Manager of Communications and work with her and eSCRIBE to find a solution.

**Moved by** Troy Mills

Motion to accept the letter for information purposes.

**Carried**

**Moved by** Elizabeth Sheffield

Motion to provide this letter to Council for information purposes.

**Carried**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, regarding the Town of Cobourg's application to the Inclusive Community Grant through the Province of Ontario.**

J. Kramer outlined the Grant application for the Inclusive Community Grant through the Government of Ontario that the Town of Cobourg will be submitting.

The Government is providing funding for seniors and/or Persons with Disabilities up to \$60,000 under the [Inclusive Community Grant](#). The Town of Cobourg is making a quasi-joint application with Allison Greer, the Recreation Coordinator for Seniors Programming, the Cobourg Public Library, and Community Living-West and would include the Accessibility Advisory Committee as well.

The project overview is to educate all persons, especially seniors and persons with disabilities, on how to engage and interact with the municipality through the tools that the Town of Cobourg is currently using (Bang The Table) as well as understanding other ways to reach these communities. From here, the Town will pilot the information into creating a public engagement process for accessibility in the downtown area of Cobourg to ensure that all persons are able to access and use the downtown area including the shops and parks.

**Moved by** Elizabeth Sheffield

Motion to support the application for the Inclusive Communities Grant for the citizens of Cobourg and Northumberland county.

**Carried**

**7.2 Jamie Kramer, Accessibility Coordinator, regarding the 2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule.**

J. Kramer outlined the meeting schedule for 2021, including all months and the option for special or extra meetings as necessary.

Aaron Burchat joined the meeting at 10:00 am.

**7.3 Laurie Wills, Director of Public Works, regarding Cobourg Transit Options.**

- L. Wills provided an overview of the report:
  - Met with transit suppliers and what On-Demand and micro transit moving forward.
  - Talked to half a dozen different companies that provide either the software or transportation themselves.

- PWT is the parent company of Century and has their own department of On-Demand transit and L. Wills and R. Champagne met with them to see how this could be done in Cobourg.
- RideCo provides this in smaller communities and Via who provides software and both provided quotes but RideCo was the pilot option because of their work with smaller communities.
- Recommendation is a 12 month pilot project to see information and data for the entire year because of how seasonal the ridership is.
  - Throughout the 12 month period, there are several phases to roll this pilot out.
  - First, need Town Council approval to do something like this and provide funding.
- Expect that it will be small increments at the beginning and then once it starts to grow and there is an uptake in On-Demand calls, we will proceed with Phases as needed.
- The Wheels service will stay the same throughout the pilot (as much as it needs to be for booking in advance) but as it rolls out, you will have both options: Wheels and On-Demand.
  - The call-in service will still be available, even with the roll out of an app.
- Still use the fixed route stop locations, even though they will not be following that route. People will have to call and be picked up from those stops.
- For areas outside the fixed route, there will be "virtual" stops that will be mapped out in advance.
  - For example, New Amherst will have a virtual stop about 400 m from where they are, typically at bigger intersections.
- Planning to use the Wheels and Conventional buses, which means no new buses need to be purchased to run the pilot.
- Once the pilot is complete, it will be possible to get smaller vehicles for a cheaper amount of money than replacing the bus.
- Following Council approval, it will take approximately 2 months to roll out the process with the programming of software and marketing of this to get the information out there.

- S. Carron: Will the bus continue to do the regular route?
  - L. Wills: It will continue to do the regular route and we'll use it when it's not booked. The beginning of the pilot, the fixed route will continue but by the end of the pilot we are hoping to not use that fixed route service anymore.
- E. Sheffield: Can we have an in-person contact if someone doesn't have a phone?
  - L. Wills: Yes, there could be times when it is only on demand using technology but during office hours there will be someone to answer the phone. This is another detail to work through and identify this need as it comes up.
  - E. Sheffield: Clarifying, could someone at the Town book for them if they don't have a phone.
  - L. Wills: That would be a challenge because we are closed right now and have someone who could do this as part of their job, but it would be unreliable to offer this. The Library is always available to book something.
  - E. Sheffield: Are there some dedicated spots for people to know where they can get to in order to get home? The more high-tech we get, the more we leave people behind.
- S. Carron: If we don't have a fixed route, and I have an emergency appointment, how can I get the bus to get me there in the right time frame?
  - L. Wills: On Demand will be faster than the fixed route, you will be picked up within 10 minutes. But sometimes there is an emergency and the on-demand will be more convenient than the fixed route.
- E. Sheffield: Considered about the people who have developmental issues because they currently know the bus route and this will be a barrier for them. They don't have technology or cell phones. People will be able to learn but it will be longer than typical.
  - S. Carron: Hold special program of training for those persons who need it, which can be a part of the grant?
- Councillor Burchat: How is the Wheels going to operate in the system?

- L. Wills: It will be incorporated as well without diminishing the service we already have, with the On-Demand you'll be able to call and get a ride.
- Councillor Burchat: Have there been discussions with the app developer about the technology that can be placed at the bus stops that can be a "hailing" system?
  - L. Wills: I don't know and might cause vandalism.
  - E. Sheffield: That would work incredibly well for persons with developmental issues.
  - L. Wills: We can look for these special locations to assist with this. Technically down the road we won't have stops, but within 250 to 400 m from your home to be picked up.
- L. Wills: This will be coming back to Council and open up to public input after that.
- S. Carron: Want to make sure that the transit system is accessible and safe for all. If I'm going to do an On-Demand bus, will they be able to accommodate me from Point A to Point B.
- T. Mills: Having an issue with the buses now to make sure these vehicles are ready when they are needed?
  - L. Wills: The buses are ready for replacement and want to get through the pilot before purchasing new vehicles to see what the best option moving forward is for the purchase of new buses.
- T. Mills: Has Jamie looked into size of the vehicles?
  - J. Kramer: Not to the extent to provide commentary on this.
  - T. Mills: Could we purchase accessible vans?
  - L. Wills: We could look into that once the pilot is done to see how many we need to purchase and it could be smaller vans or up to 12 passengers. The biggest we would ever get is 12 passengers.
- S. Carron: Will they be COVID safe?
  - L. Wills: They won't be purchased until 2022 at the earliest but we can determine the precautions at the time when necessary.
- E. Sheffield: When is the pilot proposed to start? Is it when the pandemic is over and people feel safe to travel?

- L. Wills: It is slated for next year and the data we can collect about calls. So even if we don't have the On-Demand at that time during the pilot, it will show how many vehicles we need, when we need them, and how we can move forward after this.
- E. Sheffield: As we open up, we may show an increase but it might be skewed at the beginning.
- L. Wills: Can ask the software if there is a way to aggregate other data but as we grow, we can add more vehicles.
- T. Mills: Is this just in the Cobourg area or are there other destinations?
  - L. Wills: Only within the town of Cobourg.
  - E. Sheffield: Could this be integrated with a County-wide option?
  - L. Wills: Likely not because this is a tax-based cost, it has to be in the town of Cobourg limits. The County could take it on but they would have to pay for it. We don't want to double pay the County for the service.
  - E. Sheffield: What responsibility does Cobourg bear being the County seat? Maybe the County will take it over for all of us.
  - L. Wills: Community Care does a great job with bringing people from the rural area into Cobourg but transit is very expensive to provide service outside of an urban area.
- E. Sheffield: Will there be more people cost with more buses?
  - L. Wills: We are not sure, there could be a change in the future but having one extra driver would trade-off with having to pay the maintenance costs.
- T. Mills: When we will have to pay for transit again?
  - L. Wills: Currently preparing a report to Council and haven't talked to members about reimplementing fees or not but will discuss again on January 4th. If they do, we will give plenty of notice and help people get their passes again.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

## **9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **9.1 Discussion Re: Accessible Transportation in the Town of Cobourg**

- L. Wills discuss the letter from Legion Village and provide a brief summary:
  - A booking was made for a return trip on a Saturday and we checked the GPS for the bus to see what happened.
  - The bus was at the pick up location from an hour before to 15 minutes after their pick up time.
  - Advised the Legion Village how this works and they received the response and how it works.
  - Will provide handouts or posters for their residents to make sure this doesn't happen again.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Kathy at 11:03 a.m.

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Municipal Clerk B. Larmer

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Mayor J. Henderson