

Town Council sticks to plan to purchase fourth new bus

By Mike Pickford

Orangeville Council agreed to fund the purchase of a fourth new Orangeville Transit bus for a second time on Tuesday, despite several issues having been reported with the municipality's new fleet.

The purchase order for another 30-foot, low-floor bus was brought to Council as something of a formality on Monday, with councillors already having approved the buy during 2018 budget deliberations. Because the cost of the new vehicle didn't exactly match what Council had previously agreed to ? it came in \$2,000 under the municipality's \$425,000 estimate ? it had to come back for approval.

Councillor Sylvia Bradley, who voted against the purchase of a fourth bus in November, questioned why the municipality would splash the cash on a system riddled with issues over the past few months.

?I can't tell you how many times I've seen a small yellow school bus out covering our municipal bus routes. The big buses seem to be off the road an awful lot. Certainly a lot for something we've paid half a million dollars for,? Ms. Bradley said.

John Lackey, Orangeville Public Works' Manager of Operations and Development, informed Coun. Bradley that staff is aware of the issues with the current bus fleet, advising her that they have since been corrected. He stated the municipal transit system was up and running in full force.

There are currently three bus routes in Orangeville, running from 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. Monday to Friday and 7:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. on Saturday. There is no service on Sunday. Monthly passes are available for \$55 for adults, \$45 for seniors and students, with regular fare costing \$2 for adults and \$1.50 for seniors and students.

After hearing from Coun. Bradley and Mr. Lackey, Mayor Jeremy Williams noted his disdain for ?spending a ton of money on something that doesn't work. I get really angry whenever I see a yellow bus on one of our routes, because we've paid for these big beautiful buses.?

Doug Jones, Orangeville's Director of Public Works, said this fourth bus the municipality was looking to buy is a different model produced by a different manufacturer.

?It's still a 30-foot low-floor bus, but it's made by a different company. We followed the work Metrolinx did recently to find the best bus (on the market). We identified this bus thanks to that Metrolinx program,? Mr. Jones said.

In the end Council voted 5-2 in favour of purchasing the bus, with Coun. Don Kidd joining Coun. Bradley in opposing the purchase.