Township of Scugog Staff Report

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Report Number: PWR-2025-009

Prepared by: Shawna Cornish, Manager of Parks and Recreation

Department: Public Works and Recreation

Report To: General Purpose and Administration Committee

Date: November 10, 2025

Reference: Strategic Direction 1: Infrastructure: Leverage and improve roads, transportation, infrastructure, facilities, equipment and assets

SD1 Objective 2: Enhance recreation facilities

Report Title: **Blackstock Arena Remediation Options – Follow Up Report**

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** Report PWR-2025-009, Blackstock Arena Remediation Options – Follow Up Report, be received; and
2. **THAT** Council approve Option #2, Purchase and Install a Portable Ammonia Refrigeration Plant to replace the existing Freon Refrigeration Plant at the Blackstock Arena; and
3. **THAT** funding, not to exceed $606,800 for the new portable unit be funded from the Major Facilities Reserve Fund; and
4. **THAT** the project for the Portable Ammonia Refrigeration Plant, in the amount of $532,645, excluding HST, be awarded to CIMCO.

1. Background:

At the September 8, 2025, GP&A meeting, the Committee recommendation was to refer Report PWR-2025-001 to the Blackstock Recreation Advisory Committee (BRAC) for comments at their September 18, 2025, meeting.

The following are the previous reports advising Council of the refrigeration plant deficiencies:

- Report PWR-2025-001 – Blackstock Arena Remediation Options
- Report CAO-2025-008 – Blackstock Arena Refrigeration Plant Replacement Update
- Report COMS-2025-013 – Blackstock Arena Refrigeration Plant Replacement

2. Discussion:

Prior to the BRAC meeting, members reviewed Report PWR-2025-001 and the video from the GP&A September 8th meeting. At the BRAC meeting of September 18th, there were more than ten (10) people from the community with four (4) making delegations to the committee.

The following comments were received from the committee for each option listed in Report PWR-2025-001:

Option #1 – Do Nothing

The Township can continue to operate the existing refrigeration plant until it fails while applying for grant opportunities as intakes become available. The vision would be to apply for a grant to increase the ice surface from its current size (150’ x 53’) to an NHL size rink (200’ x 85’) with new change rooms.

Option #1 would continue to require Operating budget in 2026.

> **BRAC Comments:**
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> Members reviewed this option suggesting that the Township continue to operate the existing refrigeration plant until it fails while pursuing grant opportunities for future upgrades. This approach was deemed **not viable**.
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> The arena is a critical facility for community engagement, youth development and recreation and members urge Council to immediately invest in the facility.

Option #2 – Purchase a Portable Ammonia Refrigeration Plant

At the June 23, 2025, Council meeting, Report COMS-2025-013 discussed the purchase of an ammonia portable refrigeration plant that would only support the existing size ice pad and would replace the need to repair the existing cooling tower and heat exchangers. This unit consists of a plate and frame chiller, condenser, brine pump, mounted brine expansion tank and is a turn-key solution. The portable unit could be re-purposed or sold at auction if the Township were successful in securing grant funding for a re-build of the arena and ice pad to regulation size.

The portable unit would be ordered upon Council approval and be scheduled for installation in April 2026 after the upcoming winter season has concluded and would be ready for opening in October 2026.

Option #2 would cost approximately $606,800 and commence as a Capital project.

BRAC Comments:

Members reviewed this option and identified this as their **preferred option**. The proposed investment is a practical and necessary solution that ensures continued operation of the facility without requiring immediate major reconstruction. This approach meets the current needs of the community, supports youth and recreational programming without risking service disruption.

The following motion was carried:

THAT the Blackstock Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that Council approve Option 2 – the purchase of a portable ammonia refrigeration plant for the Blackstock Arena.

Moved by: Melanie Wright
Carried.

Option #3 – Supply and Install a Permanent Ammonia Refrigeration Plant

At the June 23, 2025, meeting, staff were requested to obtain a quote for a permanent refrigeration plant solution at the Blackstock Arena. The permanent refrigeration plant consists of a plate and frame chiller, compressor, condenser, pumps, expansion tanks, new exhaust ventilation and exhaust system, unit heater and insulation. This refrigeration plant is sized for an NHL ice pad (200’ x 85”) and could be used if we were successful in obtaining a grant for the increased sized arena and ice pad.

Grants have been submitted twice for the reduced scope project in the past and both were unsuccessful.

Installation of the permanent refrigeration plant would commence in April 2026 and be completed prior to October 2026.

Option #3 would cost approximately $1,097,000 and commence as a Capital project.

BRAC Comments:

Members reviewed this option and identified it as their **second preferred** option, acknowledging the long-term value of a permanent system but expressing concern over the financial feasibility given current Township funding limitations.

Option #4 – Purchase a Tensioned Fabric (“Sprung”) Structure

At the July 9, 2025, Special Council meeting there was mention of a “Sprung Structure” for the Blackstock Arena. Staff have investigated with Town of Collingwood staff regarding their Central Park Arena that was constructed in 2012.

The facility consists of a sand-floor NHL size ice pad, a “skid-plant” for ice making, a pre-assembled unit to connect to the glycol system, in addition to bleacher seating for approximately 390 people, dressing rooms, offices, restrooms and meeting rooms at a cost of $7.5 million dollars.

The tensioned fabric structure option could be built beside the existing BRC arena, which could be repurposed or removed. Construction is turn-key and would take approximately six months. This option would require grant or debenture funding to address its cost.

Option #4 would require more research with the sprung industry to obtain a more current quote, however based on the information gathered by staff, the approximate cost of $7,500,000 based on current pricing, which contemplates a reduced scope for the Blackstock Arena compared to the Central Park Arena.

> **BRAC Comments:**
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> Members reviewed this option and identified this as a future option, contingent on the availability of grant funding. While the option is appealing, the estimated cost places it outside the Township’s current financial capacity without substantial external support.

Option #5 – Purchase of Used Refrigeration Plant from Luther Vipond Memorial Arena

At the BRAC committee meeting, an option to purchase the refrigeration plant from the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena (LVMA) that will be decommissioned in the spring of 2026 due to the opening of the new Whitby Sports Complex in Brooklin was discussed.

Staff contacted the Town of Whitby to discuss the potential purchase of the refrigeration plant from LVMA, however, at the time of authoring this report, we were unable to discuss the purchase price.

The original refrigeration plant at LVMA was installed circa 1973; however, the main components have been replaced and are 3-5 years old. CIMCO has provided a cost estimate to decommission the LVMA refrigeration plant, transport it to Blackstock, decommission the existing Blackstock Arena refrigeration plant and install the LVMA plant in Blackstock at an estimated cost of $475,000.

Additional requirements include the design, supply and installation of an evaporative condenser structural stand ($15,000 - $30,000); the design, review and modification of electrical feeders to a new 575V motor starter panel; supply and installation of 120V electrical power to a NH3 leak detector; modifications to the refrigeration room to meet Class T requirements; and TSSA registration of plant/vessels to be completed by the Township. These additional costs plus the purchase price of the LVMA ice plant from the Town of Whitby and contingencies are unknown at this time.

As this potential option arose after the BRAC meeting, Township staff emailed the committee members to inform them that this option was being investigated.

Considering the above costs for this option, some of which remain unknown (including the purchase price for the LVMA refrigeration plant from Whitby), obtaining and installing the used LVMA ice plant could cost the Township an amount close to, or greater than, the cost of the new portable refrigeration plant in Option #2.

3. Financial Implications:

The following table summarizes the financial implications for each of the options.

Options	Cost	Funding Source	Operating Budget Implications
Option #1 – Do Nothing	N/A	N/A	Operating Budget Status Quo
Option #2 – Purchase Portable Ammonia Refrigeration Plant	$606,800	Major Facilities Reserve	Reduction of approximately $12,000 in annual repairs
Option #3 – Supply and Install Permanent Refrigeration Plant	$1,097,000	Major Facilities Reserve and Debenture balance	Reduction of approximately $12,000 in annual repairs
Option #4 – Tensioned Fabric (Sprung) Structure	~$7,500,000	Major Facilities Reserve, Development Charge Reserve, Grants, and Debenture balance	Reduction of approximately $25,000 in annual repairs
Option #5 – Used LVMA Refrigeration Equipment	$475,000+ (excludes the purchase price of the LVMA ice plant and several contingencies)	Major Facilities Reserve	Reduction of approximately $12,000 in annual repairs

Sole Source Purchase

Section 6.6 of Procurement By-Law #42-22 provides a number of justifications for a non-competitive procurement. Subsection (c) deals with only one supplier being used to ensure compatibility with existing goods. The Township has contracted with CIMCO for over 40 years. They are the vendor of record responsible for the maintenance, inspection and installation of all refrigeration, dehumidifiers and desiccant equipment in both arenas. Further, the Township has a preventative maintenance agreement with CIMCO.

To maintain compatibility with the other equipment and installation requirements, staff are recommending that the project to install the stand-alone ammonia refrigeration package be awarded to CIMCO in the amount of $542,020 (net of HST rebate).

There is currently no capital budget for this project as it was not anticipated when the 2025 budget was drafted. If approved, a new Capital Account Number for the Blackstock Refrigeration Plant Replacement will be created.

The following chart identifies the estimated breakdown of costs:

Approved Capital Budget	N/A
Contractor (net of HST rebate)	$542,000
Other (Decommission, Concrete Pad)	$10,000
Contingency	$54,800
Total Unbudgeted Cost	**$606,800**

Funding for this project in the amount of $606,800 has not been previously approved. It is recommended that these funds be drawn from the Major Facilities Reserve Fund. Utilizing the funds for this project would mean they are no longer available to offset the BRC replacement design project planned for 2027 in the Capital Forecast.

4. Communication Considerations:

The project timelines will be communicated to the ice user groups at the BRC. This will provide the groups with an update on major improvements within the facility. Further, we will inform them of the delivery and installation timelines, along with the potential for a critical failure in the interim, which could impact ice use bookings during the 2025-26 season.

A news release and social media will be arranged to highlight the investment in the Blackstock facility, ensuring continued use and enjoyment for the community.

5. Conclusion:

With the comments received from the Blackstock Recreation Advisory Committee, staff recommend that Council approve Option #2 to facilitate a sustainable ice surface at the Blackstock Arena for the 2026-2027 winter season.

Respectfully Submitted by:	Reviewed By:
Shawna Cornish	Grant Taylor
Manager of Parks & Recreation	Director of Public Works & Recreation