Township of Scugog Staff Report

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Report Number: CAO-2025-008

Prepared by: Warren Mar, Chief Administrative Officer

Department: Administration

Report To: Council

Date: July 9, 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 Refrigeration Plant Replacement – Update**

Recommendations:

1. **THAT** Report CAO-2025-008, Blackstock Arena Refrigeration Plant Replacement – Update, be received.

1. Background:

Following Council's consideration of Report COMS-2025-013 on June 23, 2025, the matter was referred back to staff investigate the cost of a potential permanent refrigeration plant solution, including installation dates, and a possible backup plan if the existing Freon-based refrigeration plant fails during the upcoming ice season.

2. Discussion:

Refrigeration Plant

During the Council-staff discussion on June 23, 2025, staff confirmed (based on updated information from CIMCO) that the proposed stand-alone, portable, ammonia-based

refrigeration plant was the largest portable system available from CIMCO. While the unit could be moved to accommodate a future renovation of the Blackstock Arena, the unit would not be able to service a regular, NHL-sized ice pad. As such, it would not be usable if the size of the Blackstock Arena ice pad was ever expanded within the expected 20-25 year life-span of the new refrigeration plant, nor could it be used for a third NHL-sized ice pad at the Scugog Community Recreation Complex if one was ever constructed.

As noted in Report COMS-2025-013, based on long chiller construction lead times, CIMCO's schedule for replacement of the existing refrigeration plant would be mid-February 2026. This means that any new refrigeration solution would be installed after the upcoming ice-season is over. As such, for the 2025-2026 season, the Township will need to rely on the existing refrigeration plant and attempt to remedy the ongoing deficiencies throughout the season, while hoping that the unit starts in October and can operate throughout that time.

Neither staff nor CIMCO can guarantee that the existing 60+ year old refrigeration plant, which was already used when originally purchased, will perform sufficiently for the rest of the season. Given the age of the system, should the planned preventative repairs fail, recharges of Freon continue to leak, or the system's internal components seize permanently, there will be no ice and the Arena will be closed. User groups will be warned of the possibility for the upcoming season.

Following the previous Council meeting, staff have spoken with CIMCO regarding a quote for the replacement of the refrigeration plant at Blackstock Arena to a permanent, ammonia-based system with the capacity to accommodate a full-sized NHL ice surface. Unfortunately, due to CIMCO staff's planned vacations, this quote will not be available until late July, after the July 9, 2025 Special Council meeting. CIMCO will need to visit the Blackstock Arena to assist in preparing a full quote for Council's consideration. CIMCO will also need to consider if an upgrade to the existing electrical panel will be required, and if the square footage of the refrigeration plant area would need to be enlarged to accommodate the new system. These items will likely increase the estimated installation cost.

Another option – a full tender process to other bidders – will require the preparation, advertisement, and evaluation of tenders, together with budget allocation, which will extend the process by several months.

Considering that no replacement refrigeration plant is available to be installed prior to the start of the 2025-2026 season, staff will use the upcoming time to obtain the full CIMCO quote and provide a full report to Council on the future of the Blackstock Arena once Council resumes in the fall.

Blackstock Arena and Blackstock Community Hall Building Repairs

Following Council's approval of the 2024 Capital Budget, two projects were approved to remedy building deficiencies at the Blackstock Community Hall (Project # 924043 for $360,000) and the Blackstock Arena (Project # 924044 for $90,000). The largest portion of the budgeted costs dealt with roof repairs to the existing structure.

Staff planned to conduct much of this work prior to the 2025-2026 ice season, in order to minimize any disruption to operations on the site. However, considering the possibility that the refrigeration plant may not be useable for the entire season and that the future of the Blackstock Arena thereafter is unknown, staff will be focusing the contracted work on repairs to the Blackstock Community Hall roof and building (Project # 924043). Only urgent items in the Blackstock Arena capital project will be addressed, which includes repairing any failing cooling tower supports and removing mould growth on plumbing fixtures, which could pose a health hazard to users. Any unused budget will be held pending Council's consideration of the upcoming staff report on the future of the Blackstock Arena.

3. Financial Implications:

As outlined above regarding previously approved 2024 Capital Projects 924043 and 924044. No funds have been allocated or will be spent on the refrigeration plant replacement for the Blackstock Arena until a further staff report addresses the future of the Arena.

4. Communication Considerations:

Ice user groups of the Blackstock Arena will be informed of the potential for refrigeration plant failure for the upcoming season, which could impact ice bookings during their 2025-2026 season.

5. Conclusion:

Following Council's consideration of Report COMS-2025-013, staff have prepared this report to update Council on the status of investigations into a permanent refrigeration solution for the Blackstock Arena, as well as the plan for upcoming building repairs to the Arena and Community Hall. A staff report in the fall of 2025 will discuss options for the future of the Blackstock Arena building.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Warren Mar
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Blackstock Community Hall – 2024 Capital Project Sheet
Attachment 2: Blackstock Arena – 2024 Capital Project Sheet