

Community Centre arena to get new roof this fall

By Brock Weir

The Aurora Community Centre should be good for at least another 40 years after a new roof is installed this fall.

Council approved a new metal roof for Arena 1 (ACC1) to the tune of \$524,000 this month, which clocked in at more than \$120,000 over budget.

The new roof for ACC1 was previously approved for \$400,000 with one third of that bill being covered through a Federal grant program. The total bill, however, came in at \$523,916.83.

While the Federal Government is going to cover one third funding, their grant program has put Aurora's lawmakers in a tight spot. If they cancelled the tender and called for new bids on the project, they would have to forfeit the Federal boost.

Councillors, however, questioned why this issue wasn't brought up sooner when they could revise the scope of the project and find something within budget without having to lose the Federal dollars.

'[This year] we have had well over 100 tenders to put out on the street and this is a challenging process,' explained Iimar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. 'We prioritized that list of projects to ensure we could move all our projects through the system as quickly as possible and achieve those projects in an order that made sense.'

'This one here, with regards to the timing, was based on that prioritization. I totally agree it would have been great if it was done six months earlier, but there were other priorities that took precedence.'

This explanation, however, did not fully wash with Council.

This was not, after all the first time bids had come back over budget. When that happened in the spring, the project scope was scaled back. A significant factor in this was changing the way the roof would be constructed. They came back with a different configuration that would be 'easier to assemble' with lower cost material, as well as a secondary option for a PVC membrane roof.

The metal roof, however, won the day for cost and durability.

But, if the federal dollars weren't a factor, the project could have been scrubbed altogether, said Mr. Simanovskis.

'With every project we deal with, the probability of being right on [cost target] is low,' he said. 'If I was to say to you, should we have put more money in?' Looking back, yes.

'Frankly if there was no funding for this project, I would have recommended cancelling it again this year and going back to Council to have that conversation. It is because we have this funding available we decided it was worth bringing this forward.'

While Councillors ultimately approved the new roof, Councillor Michael Thompson said he believed a new roof for ACC1 was a long time coming but questioned the ballooning price tag.

'I am struggling with all those sudden increases and twice we have gone out to tender for this roof and twice we have underestimated,' he said.

Councillor Buck, on the other hand, said she would have preferred the cheaper PVC option to re-roof the ageing arena. Semple Gooder Roofing, the winning bidder, put costs for a metal roof at \$481,718 and a PVC system at \$288,824. While a metal roof would last in the neighbourhood of 40 years, a PVC roof's lifespan would be about half, according to Mr. Simanovskis' report.

‘We have had to do various things inside that building and replace that roof because an expansive roof like that is problematic,’ said Councillor Buck. ‘We can’t just take it automatically for granted [a metal roof] will be better. It is better to be able to replace a roof that is less expensive.’

Asked by Councillors whether they would get their money’s worth out of the roof, whether ACC1 would last another 40 years, Mr. Simanovskis said it depends how much Council wants to invest in it to keep it going. An additional 40 years out of ACC1 would not be ‘unreasonable’ but whether it will meet the needs of the community down the road will be the big question.

‘These are decisions that influence that, but practically as long as the building meets the intents of the community, it can have quite an extensive life,’ he said.