

Pirri hopes to be a local voice at Federation of Canadian Municipalities

By Brock Weir

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the national body which speaks up on behalf of Canada's municipalities at the Federal level, is meeting this week and, if Aurora has its way, Councillor Paul Pirri will be their voice at the table.

Council recently endorsed a motion from Mayor Geoffrey Dawe backing Councillor Pirri's nomination to the Federation (FCM) board. If duly appointed, Councillor Pirri says he sees this both as an opportunity to advocate and learn.

"I believe very strongly in what the FCM does," says Councillor Pirri. "From a provincial standpoint, there is a ministry that is a direct link to the municipalities. There is a minister we can approach with any problems or concerns and there is a direct and identifiable link. When it comes to the Federal government, there is not. From an organizational standpoint, having one organization that leads interactions with the Federal Government I think is important and I would be honoured to serve on that board.

"The FCM board and organization as a whole was a very strong advocate for a fair portion of the gas tax going back to municipalities and over the last few years, Aurora has received about \$1.4 million a year in transfers through that work. We saw a report within the last month showing that those numbers are going to go upwards of 1.5 million and continue that way a little bit per year. For me, that is one huge benefit that the FCM organization has advocated for over the years."

The conference begins Friday in Niagara Falls. If Councillor Pirri is appointed, Aurora Council has set an upset funding limit of \$8,000 for conferences and other costs associated with the term.