

Private security hired for council meeting

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By: By Jennifer Stone

BOWMANVILLE -- A private firm hired to provide security at Monday night's Clarington council meeting charged about \$300 for its services.

The price tag for the unusual move worked out to be "cheaper than having staff on overtime," said Clarington clerk Patti Barrie.

The security guards were brought in when it became clear there were likely to be capacity issues for the meeting.

"I made the decision (to bring in private security) because of the potential overflow," said Clarington CAO Franklin Wu. "We needed crowd control."

Two issues were at play: first, an anti-incineration protest was planned, with more than 20 delegations having stated their intentions to speak to council. The anti-incineration group has been regularly in attendance at Clarington council over the past several months.

The protest brought out about 100 people, but not all attended the subsequent council meeting.

As well, a Facebook page aimed at bringing supporters out as council held a final vote on the naming of Courtice's new skateboard park indicated there could be upwards of 300 people attending for that reason. An estimated 70 people turned out to see that decision made.

Chambers were filled to capacity. So were two boardrooms used to house overflow. They were set up with televisions broadcasting the meeting.

Council recently received a report from Fire Chief Gord Weir, indicating the importance of meeting fire code requirements in council chambers. To ensure all requirements were met, it was necessary to have the additional security, said Ms. Barrie.

"We will do it every time we anticipate we will exceed capacity in chambers," she said.