

Wayne Emmerson seeks re-election at York chair

By Mark Pavilons



Wayne Emmerson wants a second term as chairman of York Region.

In an unusual turn of events, Emmerson withdrew from the race in July after considering the enormity of the campaign necessary to win the post in an election.

When Premier Doug Ford decided to return to an appointed chair, the tables turned again and Emmerson is vying for the position. Emmerson said he didn't think he could run such a large and expensive campaign, estimated to cost upwards of \$400,000. Being from the northern part of York, he didn't have as big a profile as the politicians from the large urban centres.

Emmerson pointed out the position is elected, by the mayors and councillors who make up regional council. They are duly elected to represent their constituents so their vote at the regional council table is equally representative. The mayors, he pointed out, carry the power at regional council.

The chair doesn't vote. Emmerson likened it to the leader of a federal or provincial party, who is elected by the members, not the public. The public doesn't get to vote for premier or prime minister.

Emmerson believes he's proven himself over the past term in office, "trying to keep nine municipalities together as best as we can. That's what I tried to do."

Emmerson said he plans to meet with his colleagues after the October election. The vote for chair takes place Dec. 6.

Emmerson is a fifth generation resident of York and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. He is currently serving his first term as Chairman and CEO following his appointment at the Inaugural meeting of York Regional Council for the 2014-2018 term.

Emmerson has more than two decades of political experience, most recently as Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville mayor for 17 years. Focused on getting results, his experience and leadership is well-respected across York Region and all levels of government. During his 17 years on regional council, he served on various standing committees and numerous task forces that include Fire Services and Solid Waste. Chairman Emmerson was chair of the Region's Transportation Services committee for eight years between 2006 and 2014 and is committed to advancing the foundation of work being done across the Region to move people from their key destinations of choice.

In his capacity as chair and CEO of York Region, he is an ex-officio member of all regional committees. Additionally, he is a member of the York Regional Police Services Board, CEO of the York Region Rapid Transit Board and a member of the Board of Directors for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Emmerson has also served as a Board member for a number of organizations including Markham-Stouffville Hospital, GTA Mayors' Committee and the Greater Toronto Services Board.

Working with York Regional Police, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, various celebrities plus other community agencies and organizations, he was instrumental in the development of York Region's Community Safety Village, a nationally recognized interactive educational facility where children learn about fire, traffic and personal safety.

Prior to becoming Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor in 1994, he was a Town Councillor from 1988 to 1994.

Chairman Emmerson is the sixth chairman and CEO in the 44-year history of The Regional Municipality of York.

Married for more than 40 years to his wife Debra, Wayne is the proud father of two grown sons and a grandfather of one grandson.