



TOWN OF DIDSBURY AGENDA  
Regular Council Meeting

Monday, January 6, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Hosted via Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82920354023?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82920354023?pwd=hLOjyjfaQySIGODEfnCvQI92u9cX4n.1)

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**Pages**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. BUSINESS

2.1 Didsbury Arena - Temporary Ice Plant

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3. RECONVENE

4. ADJOURNMENT



## REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING Request for Decision (RFD)

*Vision: The Place to Grow.*

*Mission: Creating the Place to Grow.*

MEETING DATE: January 6, 2025  
SUBJECT: Didsbury Arena – Temporary Ice Plant  
ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Community Services

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### BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

On December 19, 2024, the condenser unit that operates as part of the ice plant system at the Didsbury Memorial Complex experienced an ammonia leak. After investigation into the leak, it was advised by our refrigeration contractor that the plant be shut down due to failure of the condenser unit and risk to public safety. The leak was irreparable, according to our contractor, and as a result the system was shut down and the condenser was drained to remove the risk of any further ammonia leaks. The condenser is a key component in the ice plant operations and unfortunately, the plant cannot run with it. This unit was planned for replacement in 2027, as it was nearing the end of its useful life. At start-up in August 2024, there was no indication of issues with this unit.

As a result of the ice plant being shut down, we could not maintain our ice surfaces and on Friday, December 20, we lost our two arena surfaces, as well as the curling rink surface. The loss of the ice has had a devastating impact on our local user groups, and the public in general. In the days following this incident, our users began seeking ice availability in other communities. Our neighbouring communities have gratefully worked to accommodate our groups, however for many arenas, it has been at the expense of their own users through shared ice times, schedule changes and extended hours.

Since then, Administration has been working to seek information on a temporary solution for the remainder of our ice season, which typically comes to a close in late March. Through this research, we have found that a temporary chiller unit can be utilized to operate as a self-contained ice plant that would allow for the safe installation and maintaining of ice surfaces. This chiller unit would be tied into our arena floor and essentially by-pass the ice plant to allow us to install and maintain our ice.

It has been established, after an on-site meeting, that such a unit is available to us immediately. However, due to the facility power supply available for this external unit, we could safely install *only* our main ice surface. Attempting to install the leisure ice and/or the curling rink surface may result in the need for additional power supply that would come at a significant cost from our energy provider. As such, Council is provided with information below on a temporary chiller unit to install our main ice surface for the remainder of our 2024/25 season.

The timeline proposed is as follows, if Council decides to proceed:

1. Delivery and connection of temporary unit – 5-8 days
2. Cooling of arena floor – 7 days
3. Installation of ice surface – Maximum 10 days

Based on this estimated timeline, we could anticipate being operational again by the end of January.



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### DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES

Due to the emergent nature of this situation, combined with difficulty gathering information due to the recent holiday season, Administration is presenting one option for Council's consideration.

Trane Technologies, a Canadian-based company specializing in a wide-variety of heating, cooling and energy services, is proposing the rental, installation and demobilization of a temporary chiller unit for a total cost of \$67,500, however it speaking to their representative, it is anticipated that this cost may be further reduced once work commences. Due to the timeliness of the request for pricing, we have been provided with a quote that allows for some contingency.

Additionally, we will require \$1,360 to purchase ice paint supplies for a re-install of this surface. This would be funded from the Arena R&M budget for 2025, and could be absorbed within the existing 2025 proposed budget.

### **Total anticipated expenses - \$68,860**

In preparation for Council's decision on a temporary solution, Administration has been in contact with our contracted arena user groups to determine what ice usage would look like if the main ice surface were reinstalled. We have received confirmation that the following groups would resume their ice use as planned for the remainder of the season: Didsbury Minor Hockey Association, Didsbury Figure Skating Association, Mountain View Colts and Renegades Minor Hockey. One difference we would experience would be use by the Didsbury Rec Hockey Association, who have understandably had to commit and pay for ice elsewhere. They would utilize some ice from Didsbury, including their planned March tournament, however it would not be to the same extent as what was contracted for this season. During this information gathering, Administration did receive a letter for Town Council from the Didsbury Figure Skating Club, which is attached to this RFD.

The estimated revenues associated with the above information is \$25,000 for February and March. This does not include revenues from public programs, private rentals or other users of the main ice surface. This figure is only for those contracted users listed above. We estimate that an additional \$3,000 would be realized through our public programs and rentals during that same time period.

Council could consider the following options for funding the rental unit:

1. Utilize the Strategic Initiatives and Contingency reserve, with a current approximate availability of \$600,000. The purpose of this reserve is "to provide a funding source for strategic operations/projects and unbudgeted emergent needs" – Reserve Policy FIN 007-24
2. Utilize the Didsbury Memorial Complex reserve, with a current approximate availability of \$690,000. This would not be Administration's recommendation, as this fund will be required to replace the condenser unit this spring.
3. Add the cost to the 2025 Proposed Operating Budget



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### ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

#### 1. Strategically Managed Infrastructure

### RECOMMENDATION

To approve Administration entering into a contract with Trane Technologies for a temporary chiller unit at a value of up to \$67,500, to be funded from \_\_\_\_\_.

Dear Town of Didsbury Council Members,

On behalf of the Didsbury Figure Skating Club (DFSC), we are writing to express how vital the Didsbury Arena is to our skaters, their families, and the community at large. As an organization that has served local skaters for 62 years, we strongly urge the Town to proceed with the proposed temporary solution to restore ice at the arena as soon as possible. Access to home ice is essential to ensuring the continuation of our programs, fostering community spirit, and delivering the high-quality experiences our skaters and families depend on.

The Didsbury Arena is more than just a facility for our club—it is the heart of our operations and a gathering place for families and community members. Our club offers classes and programs for skaters of all ages and skill levels, from beginners to advanced athletes preparing for competitions. The sudden closure of the arena has created significant challenges, forcing us to consider alternate locations, which involve increased travel time, higher costs, and the loss of a familiar and supportive environment. This disruption threatens not only the continuity of our current season but also the future of our programs, as families may choose to step away due to the logistical burdens.

Of particular importance is our year-end Carnival event, a cherished tradition for skaters and the community alike. The Carnival is the highlight of our season, showcasing the hard work and dedication of our athletes in a celebration that brings joy to participants and spectators. Without access to home ice, this event is no longer feasible for us, depriving our skaters of a meaningful opportunity to shine and the community of a beloved annual experience.

We understand that installing a temporary solution involves a significant financial commitment. However, we believe that the benefits of restoring the ice far outweigh the costs. Reopening the arena would not only support our club but also benefit other user groups and local organizations that rely on this vital facility. The return on investment in terms of community well-being, engagement, and economic activity would be substantial.

We respectfully ask the Town of Didsbury to prioritize this temporary solution to ensure that the Didsbury Arena can once again serve as a hub for skating, recreation, and community connection. We are confident that, with your support, we can overcome this challenge and continue to provide opportunities that inspire and uplift our skaters and families.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to our community. We would be happy to provide further details about the impact of the closure on our club and discuss how we can work together to restore ice at the Didsbury Arena.

Sincerely,

The Didsbury Figure Skating Club Board  
didsburyfsc@gmail.com