

# Polytechnic gets stalled

*Continued from front page*

"We have growing pains. We're bulging right now," she said of Polytechnic's current facilities on Fourth Line Road.

"It's time to make a commitment."

That urgency was echoed by District 1 Councillor David Hill, who noted council had previously agreed to make a decision on funding a new complex once a business plan had been submitted by Six Nations Polytechnic.

"I think we should give them that \$4 million tonight," said Hill.

"I think it's about time we back up what we said."

District 6 councillor Ken Hill also spoke in support of an immediate financial commitment to Six Nations Polytechnic.

"We got the plan tonight...They have done their work. I'd be prepared to deal with this tonight also."

District 5 Councillor David General said that while he supported the project, the decision to fund the facility with Rama dollars should be made through a Rama Trust board, which council is currently in the process of establishing. He added Polytechnic might have been in a position to bring its proposal to the board already had council not delayed in establishing the trust.

"We're sort of caught here. We needed the support of this council for the Rama Trust three months ago. This council has chosen to let it drag on. It puts us in a very, very, very awkward position."

General added that although he was confident Six Nations Polytechnic would eventually receive funding for a new facility, he couldn't vote in favour of the request without first exercising "due diligence."

"Maybe we're going to have to bring the community in on this — I don't know."

Opposition to approving the \$4.5 million in funding went beyond the mechanics of how and when the money should be distributed. District 4 Councillor Alton VanEvery said he was opposed to funding any project using the principle of the community's Rama fund.

"I would be totally opposed to spending Rama dollars. I'm a firm believer if we ever want to make use of these Rama dollars in the future...we've got to stay at \$15 million, and we're almost there now," said VanEvery.

"If we go and spend everything we've got, three years from now somebody will say 'Well, you had \$20 million.' Sadly we'll have to say we gave it all away."

He said Rama dollars should be used for the benefit of the entire community, a condition he says the construction of a new Six Nations Polytechnic facility wouldn't meet.

"I think it's for the benefit of a lot of people, but it's not for the benefit of everybody," he said.

He told his colleagues a vote to provide immediate funding for the project might win them some popularity, but that the decision wouldn't be right in the end.

"If it buys you votes, that's fine. At least it's doing something," he quipped.

Councillor Ken Hill countered the construction of a new facility would be for the benefit of the whole reserve.

"I disagree with him when he says we're throwing our money away. I think our people's education is the future," said Hill.

Councillor David Hill put forward a motion to that council approve the funding that night, but did so reluctantly for fear the motion would be voted down and sent back to committee.

"I don't want it to be defeated, and I don't want it to be shot down."

Councillor Burnham added an amendment to Hill's motion requiring council to meet on the issue on Oct. 30 before making a decision. The amendment was approved in a six-to-five vote.