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**GREATER TORONTO POLITICS**

# Board employees need paycheque: Tonks

BY LISA QUEEN  
 STAFF WRITER

While the first six months' costs will be picked up by the province, GTA property owners will be on the hook for any expenses after that.

The province has agreed to a budget of \$499,000 from January to June, but some councillors are worried that sets a precedent that will see the board's costs spiral out of control.

Toronto Councillor Tom Jacobek said it's unfair to adopt an interim budget without knowing exactly what expenses the board faces.

"I am not going to support a \$499,000 budget for six months," he said. "\$499,000 translates into \$1 million (annually), for what? It might be justified but at this point, I don't know."

However, chairperson Alan Tonks said board employees — including East Gwillimbury clerk-administrator Denis Kelly, who has been appointed interim secretary — have been working for a month without a paycheque.

"They're acting on faith that they will get paid for their work," Tonks said. The board agreed to pay him \$110,000

a year plus benefits, including a leased car.

Councillors agreed to an interim three-month budget, which allows them to pay staff while the budget committee hammers out a more detailed temporary budget.

At the first business meeting of the board held Friday at Black Creek Pioneer Village, there was little discussion of issues or the provision of services. Most of the debate centred on procedural matters.

A proposal by Markham Mayor Don Cousens and Toronto Councillor Howard Moscoe to have the services board run ambulances was referred to a committee.

A Newmarket recommendation to demand the province devote a portion of fuel taxes to fund GO and municipal transit systems was also referred to a committee.

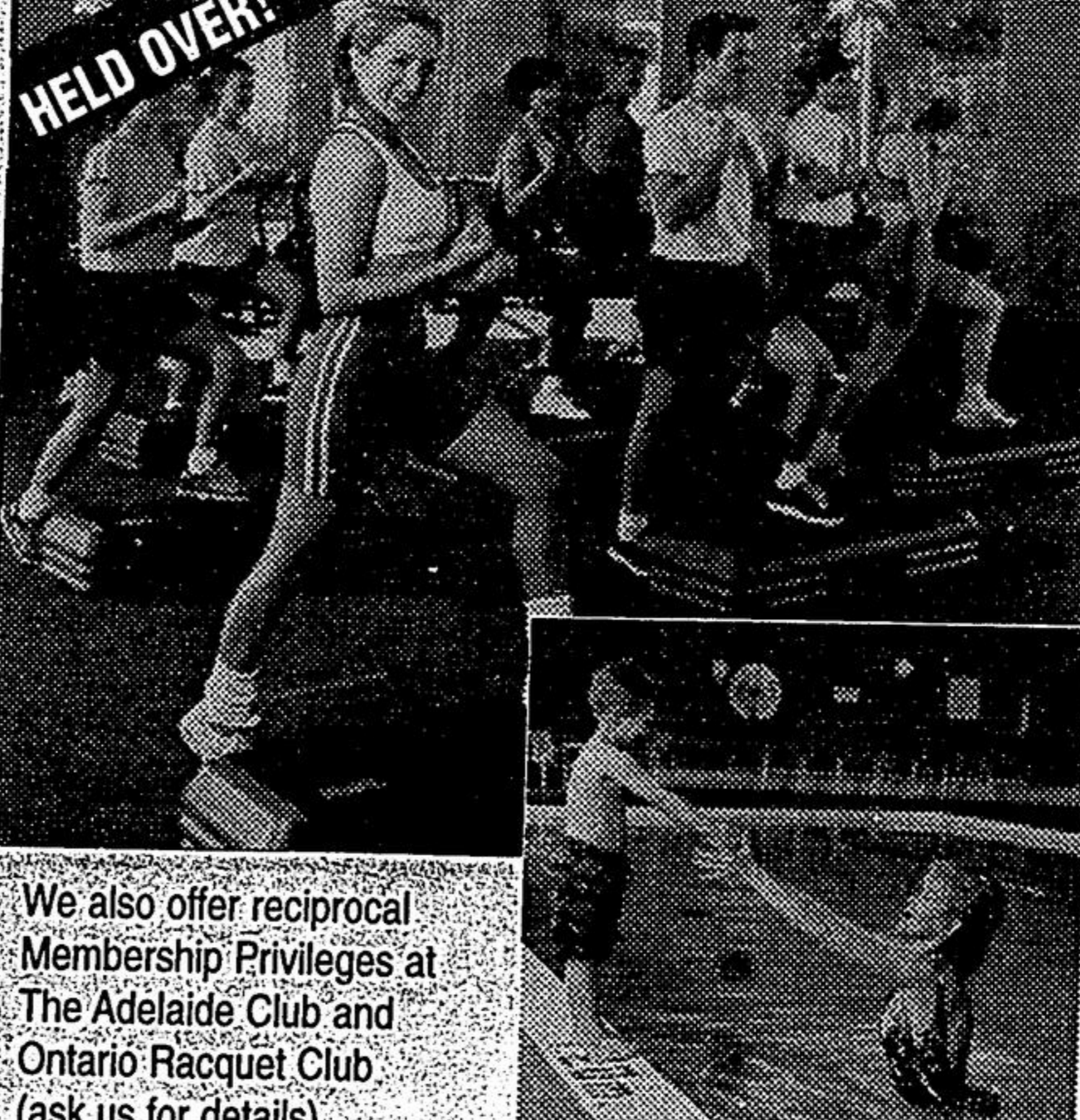
GO chairperson Eldred King, the former York Region chairperson, and managing director Rick Ducharme warned that GO won't be able to keep up with growth unless the provincial and federal governments commit more funding. They predicted gridlock without significantly more funding over the next 20 years.

## THE NEWS

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