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NEWS
Emmerson to run for York chair, Taylor out, Jones iffy

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Susie Kockerscheidt/Metroland

One's in, one's out and the other is mulling.

A week after the provincial government introduced legislation to make York Region's chair an elected position in the next municipal election on Oct. 22, 2018, the candidates who vied for the job the last time around are declaring their intentions.

At the moment, the chair is selected by 20 mayors and regional councillors.

But it is important to turn the decision over to voters, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard said.

"It is a fundamental, democratic right that the most powerful political position, an individual who oversees a budget of \$2 billion and debt that's close to \$3 billion, is directly elected and accountable to the people of York Region," he said.

Current chair Wayne Emmerson will run for the job, with some observers saying candidates' campaigns could run in excess of \$500,000.

"It is my intention to run for regional chair in the next municipal election if the legislation passes," he said.

Newmarket Councillor John Taylor, who lost to Emmerson in 2014 and has advocated for an elected chair, said he won't seek

York Region's chair, perhaps the most powerful political job in the region, should be elected by voters, said Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard after the provincial government introduced legislation.

the job.

"I have decided to focus my energy, passion and effort primarily on the town of Newmarket," he said, adding he hasn't given much thought to his next campaign.

"There are a number of exciting opportunities and projects in the near future in Newmarket and I want to make sure that the town I grew up in continues to be one best places to live in all of Canada."

Markham Councillor Jim Jones, who pulled out of the 2014 race at the last minute, said it is too early to determine if he will run.

The provincial legis-

lation would allow voters in York, Niagara and Peel to elect their chairs. Chairs in Durham, Halton and Waterloo are already elected.

The legislation is expected to pass easily at Queen's Park, said Ballard, who along with Richmond Hill MPP Reza Moridi and Oak Ridges-Markham MPP Helena Jaczek had introduced private member's bills over the years to make York's chair elected.

The bills died when the MPPs became cabinet ministers because private member's bills must be brought forward by backbenchers.

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