

# Aurora Banner

## Aurora seeking way out of legal bills

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Aurora has retained legal counsel to determine its responsibility for the legal bills associated with former mayor Phyllis Morris' \$6-million legal action.

Council voted to retain lawyer **George Rust-D'Eye** after a lengthy closed session Tuesday.

Mr. Rust-D'Eye will be charged with examining the Sept. 14 council decision that led to the lawsuit and determining if the contract entered into with the law firm Aird and Berlis was valid, Mayor Geoff Dawe said.

"Quite frankly, the majority of council feels that this never should have happened in the first place," Mr. Dawe said. "The town never should have been involved and, therefore, shouldn't be paying for (the former mayor's lawsuit)."

The majority of council voted to reverse the Sept. 14 decision last month, but that still left the town on the hook for about \$43,000 in legal bills.

At this point, the tally for the former mayor's lawsuit is approaching \$70,000, Mr. Dawe said. The hope is Mr. Rust-D'Eye's findings will result in the town not having to pay any of that, he said, adding the legal costs connected to bringing him in should be a small fraction of that.

Only Councillor Wendy Gaertner voted against this week's motion.

Mrs. Morris launched the suit against Aurora residents Richard Johnson, Elizabeth Bishenden and Bill Hogg, along with other anonymous contributors, over comments made about her on a local political blog.

Mrs. Morris' lawyer, Ken Clark of Aird and Berlis, was unavailable for comment.

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