

Clarington Council 2008 Report Cards

Jun 24, 2008 By: [Metroland Durham Region Media Group](#)

Name: **Jim Abernethy**

Position: Mayor

Last year's grade: B-

This year: C-

Read the grades for all Durham Region Municipalities:

<http://featuresdurhamregion.com/index.php?fid=52>

Attendance: Council 14/15; Committee 19/20

Expenses: \$40,236.34

Last year, we gave Mayor Abernethy the benefit of doubt, making allowance for the fact he was new to the job. The excuse no longer applies. The last year has been a colossal waste of council time, with procedure dominating at a time when issues should, mostly due to the mayor's lack of familiarity with municipal procedures. Pettiness in his attempts to gain control is demonstrated by demands for letters of apology from residents and media when he feels slighted. Inexperience was clear during discussions of the Green Committee chairmanship. Under the rules, he couldn't chair it; he lobbied for the job anyway. His constituents deserve to know where he stands on incineration.

Name: **Mary Novak**

Position: Ward 1 and 2 Regional Councillor

Last year's grade: C-

This year: C-

Attendance: Council 14/15; Committee 20/20

Expenses: \$21,193.22

Councillor Novak talks too much and says too little on too regular a basis. That said, she maintains her grade from last year for her politeness to the public and for some actions that make it appear she's more interested than her Clarington Regional counterparts in getting good information about the incinerator. Case in point is from a recent Durham council meeting, where she voted in favour of the Region doing baseline studies in the area surrounding the proposed incinerator, so that future studies can show any environmental change, should it occur.

Name: **Charlie Trim**

Position: Ward 3 and 4 Regional Councillor

Last year's grade: C-

This year: C-

Attendance: Council 14/15; Committee 18/20

Expenses: \$34,487.88

Councillor Trim maintains his grade from last year, despite some notable issues. He has on occasion been terse with residents making delegations to council. For example, last November, when a resident came forward to talk about water issues in her neighbourhood, Coun. Trim blustered, "Would you look at me, please." Like the mayor, he has difficulty representing Clarington's stance at the Region.

Despite these things, Coun. Trim hasn't significantly changed since last year, and for that he maintains his grade.

Name: **Adrian Foster**

Position: Ward 1 Local Councillor

Last year's grade: B

This year: B+

Attendance: Council 15/15; Committee 20/20
Expenses: \$17,634.87

Councillor Foster isn't afraid to speak his mind. Now if only he could be heard. For some reason, he's often inaudible in council chambers. That doesn't take away from the fact he's a conscientious councillor who listens to residents. He might have been late in calling for it, but he was a driving force behind Clarington's unwilling host status on the incinerator. He isn't afraid to call the mayor on antics like inviting people to give lengthy presentations on matters that aren't pertinent to the current argument. There are questions that need to be asked, and on this council, Coun. Foster has been one of the few asking them.

Name: **Ron Hooper**
Position: Ward 2 Local Councillor
Last year's grade: C
This year: C+

Attendance: Council 14/15; Committee 20/20
Expenses: \$10,386.59

Over the last few months, Coun. Hooper appears to have found his voice. He's been better able to voice his position, including a recent one on host community negotiations, which to some extent diluted Clarington's unwilling host stance. But his wishy-washiness on incineration is further exemplified through his flip-flop on whether Clarington should be a willing host. He does get full marks for attempting to right a wrong -- moving a motion calling for the mayor's term as chairman of the Green committee be shortened.

Name: **Willie Woo**
Position: Ward 3 Local Councillor
Last year's grade: C
This year: C

Attendance: Council 15/15; Committee 17/20
Expenses: \$17,814.41

Councillor Woo attempts to add some levity to proceedings but sometimes they unnecessarily lengthen council and committee meetings. Combine that with his overuse of the announcement period, going on at length for little reason, and his extensive preambles before asking questions to staff or delegations, and Coun. Woo is earning a bit of a reputation as a time-waster. A decision to plan a vacation at a time when budget was known to be coming forward was, at best, questionable. He gets strong marks for his respect and has all the makings of a very strong representative -- provided he gets over his penchant for oration.

Name: **Gord Robinson**
Position: Ward 4 Local Councillor
Last year's grade: B
This year: B-

Attendance: Council 14/15; Committee 20/20
Expenses: \$17,046.50

In general, Councillor Robinson is a strong representative of the people he represents. But lately he's shown some parochialism, like when a reasonable request to name a skatepark after a deceased skateboarder came forward. Coun. Robinson argued against it. He has demonstrated some previously unseen strengths, calling the mayor on stipulations of the procedural bylaw. But lately he seems to be wavering on formerly strongly held positions, particularly on Clarington's willingness to host the proposed incinerator.