

Bus altercation "under investigation"

By Brock Weir

An altercation between a young woman and a senior on a York Region Transit (YRT) bus at Yonge and Wellington last week is now under investigation.

Over the weekend, a cell phone video of a young woman preparing to get off the YRT's Route 99 showing a young woman preparing to get off the bus in Aurora's downtown core while hurling strings of insults at a female senior sitting on a nearby seat went viral, prompting the local transit authority to delve deeper into the situation.

With many individuals on social media questioning why the driver did not remove the young woman from the bus as the altercation unfolded, Ann-Marie Carroll, General Manager of the YRT, tells The Auroran, intervention from the driver could have escalated the situation.

"All new drivers are required to do a certain number of hours of training and each year they get refresher training," says Ms. Carroll. "Part of the training is also dealing with incidents such as this, on de-escalating situations. There is not any one method that you can apply to every situation and I think in this case the outcome was as good an outcome as we could get because it didn't escalate beyond yelling back and forth and some of the verbal abuse the senior took."

"I think, for the driver's reaction, if he had gotten out of the seat and tried to intervene more so than he did, I think it could have potentially turned into a physical altercation. The young lady who was yelling planned to get off the bus and she was working her way off the bus. The whole idea was just to get her out of the bus in that particular situation."

The altercation, she adds, left YRT "surprised" and unhappy with the situation, noting the investigation includes pulling security videos to see what transpired before the argument took place, what took place afterwards, the response of the driver, and if there is any support that can be provided.

In situations like this, Ms. Carroll said the YRT works closely with the York Regional Police.

"It would be absurd for us to say we never have altercations; we do, but we have very few," she says, encouraging people to report such incidents by contacting the YRP, even through their email and social media channels, so security can be dispatched. "Filming it and putting it on Facebook is not the answer. I think they need to reach out either to the York Regional Police in the case of a true emergency, or contact YRT right away."