

To view related Council minutes, click on the link below.
<http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/government/council/minutes/2004/cl/cl05-2004.pdf>

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 4-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held at the Niagara Regional Housing Boardroom, 3340 Schmon Parkway, St. Catharines, Ontario, on Monday, February 23, 2004 commencing at 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Marshall, Vice-Chair presiding; Partington, Regional Chair; Bailey; Baty; Casselman; Gabriel; Katzman; Mastroianni.

Staff: Mr. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Community Services: Mr. Bakewell, Director, Operational Support Services; Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services; Mr. Pelette, Manager, Housing, Hostels & Homelessness; Mr. Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services.
Niagara Regional Housing: Ms. Beckwith, General Manager, Niagara Regional Housing.

Other: Councillor Timms.

PRESENTATIONS

25. Niagara Regional Housing

Ms. Beckwith, General Manager, Niagara Regional Housing, provided an overview of the Niagara Regional Housing, highlighting the composition of the Board that includes 5 Regional Councillors; 5 Housing Providers; 2 Public at Large and 1 Tenant. Ms. Beckwith advised that the NRH Comprehensive Housing Services consists of the Board of Directors, Housing Access (Central Waiting List for over 3,800 households); Housing Initiatives (new housing opportunities); Housing Programs (Legislative oversight of 68 Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Providers); Community Programs (Program supports for households in need) and Property Ownership & Management (Tenant, maintenance and asset management services for 2,636 owned units).

Ms. Beckwith spoke to the Affordable Housing Program "Opening Doors Together". An Expression of Interest has been sent to the province for funding approval of 150 units. In anticipation of that approval a Municipal Housing Facility By-law will be presented to Council for approval on March 4th. The Province allowed local discretion in 10 areas of program design which have been approved by the NRH Board based on recommendations from the Housing Initiatives Committee.

Areas of Local Discretion:

- Program Length
 - 20 year program plus 5 year phase-out
- Project Standards
 - Bachelor units are ineligible under the program
 - Program will target 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units
 - Preference will be given to non-senior households with or without dependents
- Minimum Number of Units
 - Minimum number of units allowed per project remain at the Provincial requirement of 3

Ms. Beckwith detailed the maximum and minimum unit sizes, the CMHC maximum rents, and Income. Other area of local discretion highlighted were Supportive Housing; Accessible Units; Rent Supplement; and Project Design (Green Space, Urban Boundaries and Schools and Amenities).

26. Hostels & Homelessness Issues

Mr. Brian Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities, together with Mr. Dave Pelette, Manager, Housing, Hostels & Homelessness, presented the Hostels/Homelessness Portfolio. The 2003 Budget for Hostels/Homelessness consists of four areas: Supports to Daily Living (100% provincially funded); Community Partners Program (100% provincially funded); Provincial Homelessness Initiative Fund (100% provincially funded) and Hostels (in SAEO Budget). Messrs. Hutchings and Pelette provided detailed information on these four program areas.

Mr. Bob Barkman, Coordinator, Homelessness Initiative Outreach Program, attended to apprise Committee of the types and condition of clients served in Niagara. He advised that they provide outreach services for those that are on the street or at risk of being so. He commented that there are approximately 3,000 cases each year, most of which are mentally ill, addicted to drugs or alcohol and the working poor (youths and seniors). Others may have been released from incarceration and they

work as mediators with local support agencies to provide assistance to those clients. Mr. Barkman commented that Niagara has a major shortage of Mental Health Program supports.

(Refer to staff direction on page CSC 19.)

27. The Environment of Hostel Service Operations in Niagara

Mr. Hutchings highlighted Report COM 13-2004 outlining the status of hostel service operations in Niagara and the current environment in which they operate. He advised that service demands have increased as well as the need to provide these services throughout Niagara. The current level of funding needs to be reviewed in order to meet current demand for services and to prepare for the future.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 13-2004, February 23, 2004, respecting The Environment of Hostel Service Operations in Niagara, be received.

That staff examine business cases submitted by Hostel providers seeking increases in per diem rates and bring forth to Committee the final recommendations.

That the eligibility standards outlined in this report be adopted; and

That the Regional Chairman be authorized to write the Minister of Community and Social Services to outline the inefficiencies in the provincial baseline funding of Hostel Service Operations per diem and endorse OMSSA resolutions 10 and 11 which address emergency shelters and homeless funding (attached as appendix A).

Carried.

28. YWCA Services

Ms. Cathie Pead, Acting Executive Director, YWCA, introduced Ms. Notwell, V.P. Board and Ms. Lawson and Ms. Campbell, Board Members and Ms. Marino and Ms. Saczkowski, YWCA staff.

Ms. Pead briefly described the services and programs that the YWCA provides to give support and shelter for women and children in crisis. Committee was apprised of the changes the YWCA made during the period of June 2003 to January 2004 with respect to Financial

Management; Financial Transparency/Accountability; Program Standards; Fundraising/Revenue Generating and Collaborations/Partnerships. Ms. Pead commended the board, staff and volunteers of the YWCA St. Catharines for restoring financial stability and opportunities to grow.

Ms. Marino highlighted some personal success stories of women who were able to improve the quality of their lives with the assistance of the YWCA and its support agencies.

29. Per Diem Rate for the YWCA of St. Catharines

Mr. Hutchings outlined the per diem funding needs of the YWCA and the recommended changes to Regional protocols and practices related to emergency hostel operations. He commented that staff will continue to work with the YWCA and other emergency shelter providers to implement changes and provide improved services. The Director advised that a letter will be sent to the province to request an increase in fees and the report will be forwarded to the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Moved by Regional Chair Partington
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 14-2004, February 23, 2004, respecting Per Diem Rate for the YWCA of St. Catharines, be received.

That the per diem for the YWCA hostel operation be increased from \$38.00 to \$49.00.

That the costs associated with the per diem increase for the YWCA of St. Catharines be managed within the 2004 operating budget; and

That retroactive per diem allowances to March 2003 be authorized for the YWCA Hostel operation.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

30. Moved by Councillor Mastroianni
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

That Communication CSC 1-2004 from Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Community and Social Services, regarding dental programs for low-income families, including social assistance recipients, be received.

Carried.

ACCOUNTS

31. Moved by Regional Chair Partington
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That the Accounts Payable Expense Summary for the period ending January 31, 2004 in the amount of \$2,995,381.06, be approved.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Prepare a report recommending strategies on how to get funding for Mental Health Programs and identify programs and needs required in Niagara - Investigate what other Regions are doing. (Minute item 26.)

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 4:55 p.m. to meet again on Monday, March 8, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at The Meadows of Dorchester, 6623 Kalar Road, Niagara Falls. (Directions to facility will be provided.)

George Marshall
Vice-Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Acting Regional Clerk