

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 15-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on October 25, 2004, commencing at 3:10 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Marshall, Vice-Chair presiding; Almas; Angelone; Bailey; Baty; Casselman.

Staff: Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner of Community Services; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Mr. Bacchus, Commissioner, Corporate Services; Mr. Bakewell, Director, Operational support Services; Mr. Bousfield, Manager, Property & Facilities Management; Ms. Chamberlain, Fixed Assets Analyst; Ms. Crane, Manager, Education & Quality Improvement; Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services; Mr. Hunter, Acting Director, Seniors Services; Ms. Murphy, Manager, Current and Capital Budgets; Mr. Roach, Manager, Financial Services, P.W.; Ms. Shantz, Administrator, Northland Pointe.

QUORUM

There being a lack of ordinary quorum at the meeting, the Committee Chair determined that the ordinary quorum for the meeting be reduced to six members, pursuant to Part 11, Section 11.7 of the Procedural By-law 7174-93.

PRESENTATION

132. **Centre for Community Leadership**

Brenda Herchmer, Manager, and Alison Burgoyne, Acting Manager, Centre for Community Leadership, attended to provide a history and background of their organization. The Centre's mission is to contribute to strong, healthier and more vibrant communities by serving as a one-stop resource centre for the voluntary sector. Ms. Herchmer advised that volunteers are an important component of any community, contributing to our prosperity, quality of life and humanity. There are 2000 plus groups in the Niagara Region and an estimated 75,000 in Ontario providing 2 billion volunteer hours (equivalent of 2 million full time jobs). Ms.

Herchmer outlined the role of the Centre, highlighting the main services it provides such as: Dissemination of Information & Resources; Technology Resources; Celebrating and Profiling the Sector; Consulting & Research and Training & Skill Development. The Manager also presented sample capacity building outcomes delivered by the Centre and highlighted the issues and challenges in Niagara. Ms. Herchmer apprised Committee of the implications of not supporting Niagara's only central delivery mechanism for supporting the voluntary or third sector as follows: a voluntary sector unable to adapt to demographic changes, a knowledge based economy, increased immigration, labour shortages, poverty; reduced capacity to respond to changing social needs; increased demands on Community Services Department, unstable delivery partners; significant reduction in available services and quality of life indicators; increased demands on taxpayers and reduced placements for Ontario Works candidates. Committee was asked to support the request for an investment of \$150,000 in Centre for Community Leadership services noting that the investment will potentially impact approximately 60,000 Niagara stakeholders. Ms. Herchmer commented that a failure to invest proactively in the issues raised by the VS Labour Market Study will have major financial implications for the Community Services Department, Regional Niagara and every citizen of Niagara.

(Refer to Other Business.)

133. Niagara Centre for Community Leadership:
A Status Report

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Almas

That Report COM 74-2004, October 25, 2004, respecting Niagara Centre for Community Leadership: a Status Report, be received for information.

Carried.

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

134. Proposed 2005 Capital Program

Mr. Bacchus, Commissioner, Corporate Services, provided an explanation to the recommended reduction in the 2005 proposed project summary as shown in Amended Appendix 1. These changes result in a reduction in the proposed projects of \$7.86 million gross and \$8.686 million net. This reduction has been used in part to recommend funding for five new projects totaling \$1.2 million for a total overall program reduction of \$5.985 million gross and \$7.486 net.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Almas

That Report CSD 136-2004, October 7, 2004, respecting Proposed 2005 Capital Program and the memorandum from Shafee Bacchus, Commissioner of Corporate services, respecting Water and Wastewater Budget Changes, be received.

Carried.

(Report CSD 136-2004 and the memorandum regarding the Water and Wastewater Budget Changes is attached to Corporate and Financial Services Committee Report 22-2004.)

135. Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report
Second and Third Quarter – April 1 to September 30, 2004

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Almas

That Report COM 75-2004, October 25, 2004, respecting Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report Second and Third Quarter – April 1 to September 30, 2004, be received for information.

Carried.

136. Canadian Council on Health Services
Accreditation (CCHSA) Survey

Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, Community Services, provided an oral report on the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation Survey. The Canadian Council on Health Services is a non-profit national organization that for decades has established standards for hospitals, long-term care homes, and other health service organizations and surveyed organizations across Canada for compliance with these standards. Mr. Ventresca highlighted the Accreditation Process which is to take place October 31 to November 4, 2004. The Commissioner also highlighted the preparation involving many staff that has been on-going for the past 18 months by Niagara's Seniors Services. The Regional Chairman, Chair and Vice-chair of Community Services Committee and the CAO are invited to attend the surveyors debriefing on November 4, 2004 at 10:30 a.m. at the Woodlands of Sunset in Welland. All members of Community Services Committee are welcome to attend this debriefing session.

137. Globe and Mail Article
Child Care in Canada

Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services, apprised Committee of an article in the Globe and Mail by the Paris based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Canada's Day Care System which paints a picture of a child-care system adrift, with no overarching vision and not much more than a babysitting service. The report, obtained from the OECD, was produced after four European investigators interviewed bureaucrats and child-care experts and toured dozens of programs in Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the only four provinces that agreed to be in the review. The report stated that Canada invests less than half of what other developed nations devote on average, in terms of economic output, to early-childhood education. The report calls on the federal and provincial governments to draft a coherent vision for a publicly funded, universal system of early-childhood learning and care, based on the latest social science, with hard and fast steps, benchmarks, time frames and budgets for putting into place a program in every province that would be the cornerstone of Canadian family policy.

The provincial social-service ministers are meeting in Ottawa with federal Social Development Minister Ken Dryden on Nov. 1, with early-childhood education at the top of the agenda.

(Refer to staff direction on page CSC 76.)

138. Children's Services 2004 Financial Update

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That Report COM 76-2004, October 25, 2004, respecting Children's Services 2004 Financial Update, be received.

That any surplus arising in 2004 be considered, along with any requirements to cover deficits for transfer to the Children's Services reserve in the Year End Transfer report prepared by the Corporate Services Department.

Carried.

139. Sale of Surplus Property
Former Sunset Haven
Long Term Care Facility
In the City of Welland

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That the unconditional Offer, in the amount of \$800,000.00, as received from Hectares Properties Inc. for the purchase of the Region's surplus property known as the former Sunset Haven property, described as being Parts 1 to 7 on Plan 59R-9842, be accepted; and

That the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk be authorized to execute the transfer documents required to effect this property conveyance; and

That all funds received and all expenses incurred are to be credited/charged to account PR 0301.

Carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

140. Volunteer Sector
Centre for Community Leadership

Councillor Casselman commented on the significant contribution the voluntary sector makes to Niagara and expressed her concerns regarding the crisis facing the volunteer sector most specifically as it relates to declining funding. Committee members, in discussing the matter of the Centre for Community Leadership, and recognizing that the Region no longer has a Permissive Grant Policy, concurred that they would like to assist them in some way. It was suggested that Regional Council support them in lobbying the upper tier governments for financial support and contacting the agencies that benefit from their services to seek letters of support and endorsement.

Following discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That staff contact the Centre for Community Leadership to determine how Regional Council can support the Centre in their efforts to continue providing their services to the voluntary sector.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Provide information on how Ontario's Child Care System compares with other Provinces in Canada. (Refer to minute 137.)

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 4:25 p.m. to meet again on Monday, November 8, 2004, at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters Building.

George Marshall
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk
/Associate Director of Corporate Strategy