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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 8-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Public Health Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on April 26, 2004, commencing at 12:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Timms, Chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Baty; Casselman; Harry; Trombetta.

Staff: Mr. Trojan, C.A.O.; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Mr. Banting, Director, Legal Services; Mr. Bowles, Executive Assistant; Mr. Christensen, Director, Health Protection & Promotion; Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health; Mr. Laflamme, Manager, Health Protection & Promotion; Mr. McQueen, Project Manager, Public Safety Division; Ms. Rix, Manager, Tobacco Program; Dr. Sider, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Wodchis, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention.

Others: Mr. Wultchyn, Quality Assurance Coordinator, Niagara Region Base Hospital.

INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL CHAIR'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

83. Mr. Trojan, C.A.O., introduced Andrew Bowles, the Regional Chair's new Executive Assistant. Mr. Bowles will be working directly with the Regional Chair on many important political and regional issues. The Regional Chair was not in attendance at Committee, due to meetings being held with respect to the Trade Corridors.

PRESENTATIONS

84. Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) Training

Dr. Doug Munkley, Medical Director, Niagara Regional Base Hospital Paramedic Program and Emergency Physician, Niagara Health Systems,

together with Cheryl Taylor, Coordinator, Niagara College Paramedic Program and Advanced Care Paramedic, Niagara EMS, attended to provide information on Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) Training. Dr. Munkley advised that Niagara is a leader in the Province in ACP training and in partnering with the Niagara Health System Niagara Region Base Hospital Paramedic Program and Niagara College Training Program, this would be another step towards excellence.

Dr. Munkley highlighted the milestones in pre-hospital care in Niagara:

- Paramedic (PCP) Defibrillation Program (1987)
- Firefighter Defibrillation Program (1993)
- Symptom Relief Program (1997)
- Ontario Pre-hospital Advanced Life support Program (OPALS) (1997-1999) Training of 58 ACPS
- UTM's assume funding for Ambulance Programs (2000)
- Region of Niagara – Niagara EMS: training of 10 ACPs (2001-2002)

Dr. Munkley highlighted the training and skill requirements for the Primary Care Paramedic and the Advanced Care Paramedic.

The Niagara EMS, as of April 2004, includes 71 full time and 47 part time Primary Care Paramedics (PCPs) and 56 full time and 15 part time Advance Care Paramedics (ACPs) for a total of 141 FTEs.

The goal is to have an Advanced Care Paramedic in every ambulance in the Region of Niagara. This goal has not yet been met, as 90 FTEs Advanced Care Paramedics are required.

Niagara College has partnered with the Niagara Health System and its Base Hospital Program to offer ACP Training in Niagara. This was approved by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in April 2004 and pending approval by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. The start date is September 2004.

Dr. Munkley advised that this is a great opportunity for the Region of Niagara to partner with a strong Niagara team in providing needed Advanced Care Paramedic Training.

Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Trombetta

That the presentation regarding Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) Training be received and referred to staff for report.

Carried.

(A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.)

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

85. Rabies Awareness Month

Andre Laflamme, Manager, provided a brief overview of the activities in which the Health Protection and Promotion Division is involved with respect to the rabies program and to promote May as Rabies Awareness Month.

A copy of the Province's Rabies Control Mandate was circulated for information (attached to report).

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That Report PHD 35-2004, April 26, 2004, respecting Rabies Awareness Month, be received for information.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 37.)

OTHER BUSINESS

86. City of Peterborough Resolution

Committee was advised that the City of Peterborough resolution regarding the petition to the Province of Ontario to cover 75% of the funding costs for its Health Unit was referred at the Regional Council meeting of April 22, 2004 to staff for report.

87. Smog Alert Workshop

Dr. Sider provided an oral report on the Smog Alert Workshop that was held at White Oaks on Tuesday, April 20, 2004. The workshop was well attended by regional and municipal politicians, management and staff. A presentation on Toronto's experiences with its Smog Alert Plan was received as well as information regarding the Niagara Parks Commission's consultant's report titled "Spare the Air". Dr. Sider commented that in discussions regarding the respective roles of the Region and the local municipalities, it was indicated that most would be satisfied to see the Region take the lead in a Smog Alert Plan for Niagara. A report on this matter will be forthcoming to the Public Health Services Committee.

88. Testing of Air Quality

Councillor Baty commented that due to the diverse weather patterns in Niagara, he would like the Region to request the Ministry of the Environment to place their portable testing equipment in various locations throughout Niagara to get a more accurate reading of the air quality.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Trombetta

That the Region, through its Public Health Department, request the Ministry of Environment to undertake testing by using portable air testing equipment to monitor the quality of air throughout Niagara and compare those results to the St. Catharines monitoring station data.

Carried.

89. Economic Impact on Businesses in Niagara
Due to the Implementation of the Smoking By-law

Councillor Baty commented on the concerns expressed by businesses in Niagara who state that the implementation of the Smoking by-law has had a negative and continuing impact on their establishments. Data received from some municipalities indicate that, while they have had an initial loss of business, that in time, they are experiencing a rebound. Councillor Baty requested information on why that does not appear to be happening in Niagara and what strategies might other communities have in place to assist businesses.

Staff commented that there could be challenges in pulling together this information if Committee is looking for a more detailed economic analysis as data received to date indicates that other factors have assisted in the downtrend including SARS, Terrorism, and Cross Border issues and not specifically to the Smoking by-law.

Mr. Trojan suggested that there may be some evidence that Niagara is slower to recover no matter what the impact and there may be some general information through NETCorp. to determine what the underlying factors are.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 37.)

90. Newspaper Article – Pesticides
Committee was apprised of newspaper articles regarding the use of pesticides and the College of Family Physicians' document on the issue. Dr. Sider advised that this information will be reviewed and incorporated into a staff report that will be coming forward to Committee on this matter.
91. Increase in 911 Calls
Committee was apprised of the Fire Chiefs of Niagara's concerns on the number of 911 calls that are not an emergency and how to get the information out to the public on the proper use of dialing 911. It was concluded that should the Region take over ambulance dispatch, the Region will be able to work more closely with ambulance protocols and Fire Departments to better educate the public. Mr. Trojan advised that discussions have taken place with Police on this matter and staff will bring information to Committee on this matter.

CORRESPONDENCE

92. Councillor Timms distributed the following correspondence items to Committee for information:
- PHSC 11-2004 Email from Janice Wing, Alderman, City of Niagara Falls (Apr. 22, 2004) to Regional Councillors regarding the Smoking By-law
- PHSC 12-2004 Fair Air Association of Canada regarding Smoking By-law, advising their organization is not pro-smoking but pro-choice.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Provide budget estimates for the cost of the Rabies Program. (Refer to minute item 85.)
- (ii) Contact NETCorp. to gather information on what the factors may be to explain why Niagara businesses (hospitality industry) are slower to rebound economically due to the negative impacts of such issues as the Smoking By-law, SARS, Terrorism, etc. as compared to other municipalities within the Province. (Refer to minute item 89.)

CLOSED SESSION

93. Moved by Councillor Trombetta
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That this Committee do now meet in Closed Session for purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature relating to legal issues relating to Smoking By-law Enforcement.

Carried.

94. Legal Issues Relating to Smoking By-law Enforcement

Mr. Bruce Banting, Director, Legal Services, provided an oral report on legal issues relating to Smoking By-law Enforcement.

95. Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That this Committee do now rise without report.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 2:20 p.m. to meet again on Monday, May 10, 2004, at 12:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters.

D. Bruce Timms
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Acting Regional Clerk