

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 17-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Public Health Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on October 18, 2004, commencing at 12:40 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Timms, Chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Almas; Angelone; Baty; Brock; Casselman; Harry.

Staff: Dr. Sider, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Mr. Cunnane, Director, Emergency Services; Mr. Jones, Director, Administrative Services; Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health; Ms. Loewen, Manager, Sexual Health Program; Mr. Lucas, Manager of Operations, Paramedics Services; Ms. Rix, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention; Mr. Roberts, Associate Director, EMS Paramedics Service; Mr. Spencer, Manager, Sexual Health Program; Ms. St. Johns, Director, Clinical Services;

Others: Al Doneff, Richard Greenwood, Michael Neuman, Greg Soto, Emergency Medical Services.

PRESENTATION

177. Governor General's Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal Recipients from Niagara

Councillor Timms, Committee Chair, together with John Cunnane, Director, Emergency Services and Neal Roberts, Associate Director, EMS Paramedics Service, recognized the recipients of the Governor General's Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal. Councillor Timms apprised Committee of the Governor General's award which is available to eligible members of the pre-hospital emergency medical service who have performed their duties in an exemplary manner, characterized by the highest standards of good conduct, industry and efficiency. The recipients are Al Doneff, Richard Greenwood, Michael Neumann and Greg Soto. Councillor Timms provided a brief background of the recipients' careers and personal achievements to which those in attendance warmly responded.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

178. Public Health Department Accreditation

Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health, provided a brief overview of the accreditation process for the Regional Niagara Public Health Department. The accreditation process provides for an independent, voluntary, peer evaluation of the structural, administrative and management aspects of local and regional public health departments. The Regional Niagara Public Health Department is one of seven of the existing 35 provincial Public Health Departments to receive the Seal of Excellence from the Ontario Council on Community Health Accreditation, recognizing the commitment of the Public Health Department to continuous quality improvement. Dr. Klooz commented that to ensure a successful accreditation process, it is essential that the members of Regional Council and the Public Health Services Committee support and participate in the process as members of the Board of Health.

Moved by Regional Chair Partington
Seconded by Councillor Casselman

That Report PHD 73-2004, October 18, 2004, respecting Public Health Department Accreditation, be received for information; and

That this report, due to budgetary implications for 2005, be forwarded to the Budget Review Committee for consideration during the 2005 budget process.

Carried.

179. Oral Report: Linda Rix, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention
Re: Update on Bingo Hall Compliance with Regional Smoking By-law

Ms. Rix, provided an update on Bingo Hall compliance with the Region's Smoking By-law, noting that all bingo halls are now in full compliance. Ms. Rix also apprised Committee of the department's partnership with the Greater Niagara General Hospital, Hotel Dieu, Niagara Health System and West Lincoln Memorial Hospital to develop an educational campaign, consisting of posters and relevant materials, to apprise hospital employees and visitors of how the smoking by-law impacts them. The intent of the poster "Know the Law and Protect Yourself" and other signage is to educate and send out warnings to smokers of the by-law so that they will not be subject to future fines.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Ontario Medical Association's suggestion that legislation should be put in place to prevent smoking in cars with children. Dr. Sider commented that it unlikely that the Ministry would incorporate this legislation into the Tobacco Enforcement Act at this time.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That the oral report from Ms. Rix, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention, regarding Bingo Hall compliance with the smoking by-law and other smoking by-law matters, be received.

Carried.

180. Oral Report, Marilyn St. John, Director, Clinical Services
Health Bus Schedule

Ms. St. John, together with Irene Lowen and Alan Spencer, apprised committee of the revised Health Bus Winter Schedule beginning November 1, 2004. The schedule now allows for alternating weeks for Thorold, Grimsby and Niagara Falls for Monday afternoons and Niagara Falls for Monday evening. The schedule will be reviewed and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure the service is provided in an efficient and supportive manner.

Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That the Public Health Department Health Bus Winter Schedule, beginning November 1, 2004, be supported.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 85.)

181. Oral Report: Adrienne Jugley, Manager, Community Mental Health
Re: Temporary Closure of St. Catharines Detox Centre

Ms. Jugley, apprised Committee of the Ministry's plan to close the Niagara Regional Men's and Women's Withdrawal Management Program for the period February 17, 2005 to April 1, 2005. The six week closure is the result of a projected financial shortfall which is attributable to the retroactive portion of an arbitrated salary award paid out in 2004. Ms. Jugley advised that discussion has taken place with community partners

to determine how to deal with the negative impact that the closure will have on the community, noting increased pressures on hospital emergency rooms, clinics, physicians, pharmacies and Out of the Cold programs and other shelters.

Committee members reiterated the above concerns as well as the negative impact of the closure on those seeking help during this time and the potential for increased mental and physical abuse. Committee also expressed their concern that temporary closures may become an occurring event given the financial pressures on the program.

Moved by Councillor Angelone
Seconded by Councillor Brock

That the Regional Chair forward a letter to the Minister of Health outlining the concerns related to the temporary closure of the St. Catharines Detox Centre, including a copy of the letter from the Hotel Dieu Hospital; and

That a copy of the letter be forwarded to local M.P.P.s.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

182. Moved by Councillor Harry
Seconded by Councillor Almas

That Communication PHSC 26-2004 from Siobhan Kearns-Shannon, President, ASPHIO and Ingrid Parks, President, aPHa (October 1, 2004) regarding Comments on the "Report of the Meat Regulatory and Inspection Review: Farm to Fork – A Strategy for Meat Safety in Ontario", be received.

Carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

183. Globe and Mail Article: Re: "Canada Shuts Out Vaccine Seekers

A copy of an article from the Globe and Mail was distributed regarding the shortage of the flu vaccine and the Ministry of Health's direction that public health officers demand proof of Ontario residency before giving anyone the shot. Dr. Sider was commended for his comments quoted in the article related to the sharing of vaccines with the most needy.

Following discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Angelone

That the Regional Chair forward a letter to the Ministry of Health requesting consideration be given to some form of assistance, taking into consideration Ontario's situation, for the sharing of vaccine with the most needy of people in the United States.

Carried.

184. Public Health Mandatory/Non-mandatory
Listing of Departmental Programs

Councillor Timms asked that Committee review the Public Health Department list of programs and prepare questions for clarification at the next Public Health Services Committee meeting. Dr. Klooz advised that a comprehensive report on the Regional Niagara Public Health Department's compliance with Mandatory Program requirements and standards from 2002 to 2004 will be presented. Recommendations contained in the report will be considered by the Budget Review Committee during the 2005 Budget Process. The report will also outline staffing and resource requirements to allow the department to move to full compliance with the minimum standards as required under the Mandatory Programs and to address the Council Business Plan goals and directions.

Committee suggested that the next Public Health Services Committee meeting start at 11:00 a.m. to ensure enough time to review the Budget document. A light lunch will be provided.

CLOSED SESSION

185. Moved by Councillor Baty
Seconded by Councillor Brock

That this Committee do now meet in Closed Session for purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature relating to property matters.

Carried.

186. Public Health Accommodation
573 Glenridge Avenue
City of St. Catharines

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That Report PHD 71-2004, October 18, 2004 (PWA 181-2004, October 12, 2004) regarding Public Health Accommodation, 573 Glenridge Avenue, City of St. Catharines, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Carried.

187. Report CSD 131-2004
2003 Final Management Letter – Health Program

Mr. Jones, Director, Administration Services, provided information on Report CSD 131-2004, regarding the 2003 Final Management Letter – Health Program.

188. Hotel Dieu Ambulance Site

Chair Partington provided a brief update on the Hotel Dieu Ambulance Site matter.

189. Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Angelone

That this Committee do now rise with report.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Provide background information and reports on the Health Bus Program. (Refer to minute 180.)

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 2:25 p.m. to meet again on Monday, October 25, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters.

Bruce Timms
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk/
Associate Director of Corporate Strategy