

## **THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **REPORT 1-2005**

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on January 10, 2005, 2004, commencing at 3:00 p.m.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Committee: Councillors Hildreth, Chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Almas; Bailey; Baty; Casselman; Katzman; Marshall; Mastroianni; Rigby.

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

#### **Staff**

Part-time: Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services; Mr. Hunter, Acting Director, Seniors Services; Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Mr. Nicol, Commissioner, Human Resources; Ms. Stevenson, Manager, Community Services; Ms. Stewart, Manager, Community Services.

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

1. **Federal Tripartite Safe Third Country Agreement:  
Impact on the Region of Niagara**

Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner of Community Services, apprised Committee of the collaborative community efforts that took place to meet the challenges facing the Border in Fort Erie and the Niagara Region due to refugees arriving in Niagara as a result of the Canadian Agreement called the Safe Third Country Agreement. Mr. Ventresca congratulated the Community Services and Public Health Departments, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Niagara Regional Police, Welland Multicultural Centre, Peace Bridge Newcomer Centre and other community and emergency response agencies and citizens of Niagara for their humanitarian spirit and collaborative efforts in dealing with this difficult situation. The Commissioner also commended Dr. Williams, Dr. Sider, Catherine Bianco, Trish Vidler and Kimberlee Lambe in Communications, Dave Pelette, as well as the Regional Chair and the Mayor of Welland and its citizens for their support and efforts and specifically Brian Hutchings for his leadership.

Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, introduced Denise Stone, Canadian Red Cross; Major Gordon Armstrong,

Salvation Army and Theresa Anzovino, Fort Erie Multicultural Centre. The Director thanked them for their invaluable assistance in meeting the challenges created by the surge of refugees at the Fort Erie crossing. Mr. Hutchings outlined the chronology of events and emergency actions taken for the period December 6<sup>th</sup> through to January 3<sup>rd</sup> and highlighted the impact on the Region of Niagara's services and costs. Staff is recommending that the Regional Chair continue to correspond with the respective Federal and Provincial ministers responsible for immigration to request full reimbursement of all extraordinary municipal costs associated with this emergency response effort. Information was distributed on the Refugee Daily Intake Report and the Region of Niagara's estimated extraordinary costs as a result of Safe Third Country Agreement.

Moved by Councillor Marshall  
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That **Report COM 01-2005, January 10, 2005**, respecting Federal Tripartite Safe Third Country Federal Agreement, be received; and

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council that as a direct result of the Safe Third Country Federal Agreement that:

1. The Regional Chair continue to correspond with the Honourable Judy Sgro, the Federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration requesting full reimbursement for all extraordinary municipal costs attributed to the Region dealing with the influx of refugees and outlining the resultant significant strain placed on non-profit service agencies and the Niagara community.
2. The Regional Chair continue to correspond with the Honourable Sandra Pupatello, Provincial Minister of Community and Social Services and the Honourable Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration requesting full reimbursement for all extraordinary costs associated with the provision of provincially mandated services related to the influx of refugees through Niagara.
3. Appreciation letters be submitted to acknowledge the numerous individuals, businesses, community groups and non-profit agencies for their contributions to this initiative.
4. The actions taken to date by Regional staff be endorsed as appropriate and necessary as responding to the extraordinary circumstances arising from the recent influx of refugees to Niagara.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page CSC 7.)

## **PRESENTATION**

### 2. Funeral and Burial Service Delivery Model

George Darte, George Darte Funeral Home and associates, attended to express their concerns related to **Report COM 03-2005**, January 10, 2005 regarding Funeral and Burial Service Delivery Model. He commented that the Funeral and Burial Service Delivery Model proposed is inequitable, wherein Funeral Homes are absorbing costs while cemeteries are not prepared to take the same discounts. It was suggested that this report be deferred to review the proposal prepared by the Funeral Service Association and for further negotiations with cemeteries.

Moved by Councillor Marshall  
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

**That Report COM 03-2005**, January 10, 2005, respecting Funeral and Burial Service Delivery Model, be referred to staff for review of the proposal by the Funeral Services Association and a further report to Committee.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page CSC 7.)

### 3. Provincial Announcement to Change the Social Assistance Program

Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That **Report COM 02-2005**, January 10, 2005, respecting Provincial Announcement to Change the Social Assistance Program, be received for information; and

That this report be reviewed to provide further program, policy and fiscal analysis to Committee and Council.

Carried.

4. Nutritious Food Basket Survey and Social Assistance Rates

Moved by Councillor Marshall  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That **Report COM 04-2004**, January 10, 2005, respecting Nutritious Food Basket Survey and Social Assistance Rates, be received for information; and

That this report be forwarded to M.P.P.s and M.P.s for information.

Carried.

5. Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Katzman

That **Report COM 02-2005**, respecting Provincial Announcement to Change the Social Assistance Program and **Report COM 04-2005**, respecting Nutritious Food Basket Survey and Social Assistance Rates be forwarded to the appropriate ministries advising that while these changes in the Social Assistance Program are welcomed, more has to be done to meet the essential needs of individuals and families in Niagara and specifically, as it relates to affordable housing.

Carried.

6. The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association's (OMSSA)  
Pre-Budget Submission to the Federal Finance Committee

Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That **Report COM 05-2005**, January 10, 2005, respecting The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association's (OMSSA) Pre-Budget Submission to the Federal Finance Committee, be received.

That a letter be sent to Federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, supporting Ontario Municipal Social Services Association's (OMSSA) presentation to the Finance Committee and copies to the local Niagara members of Parliament.

That a copy of this report be sent to Niagara Regional Housing for their Board's endorsement to item # three.

Carried.

7. Oral Report – Senior Services Accreditation Status 2004-2007

Mr. Ventresca provided an oral report on the Seniors Services “3 Year” Accreditation Award and information on the survey process. The Board of Directors of the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation (CCHSA) advised that by participating in the Accreditation process, Niagara’s Seniors Services demonstrated its commitment to providing quality care and service in the community. The survey report summary comments on achievements included:

- There is an outstanding volunteer program in each home.
- An exemplary wound care program has developed pride within the nursing group and excellent clinical results. The organization is commended for its work in wound care.
- The organization has established outstanding community services, including respite, special dementia management and day programs throughout the region.

Also identified were a few areas for improvement. Seniors Services staff continues to examine feedback in the report and formalize follow-up plan for areas of improvement. Congratulations to staff and recognition of Accreditation team members will be made at a future Council meeting.

**ACCOUNTS**

8. Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That the Accounts Payable Expense Summary for the Period Ending November 30, 2004 in the amount of \$3,080,981.08 be approved.

Carried.

**CLOSED SESSION**

9. Moved by Councillor Bailey  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

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

Carried.

10. Ratification of Collective Agreement – IUOE Local 772  
Community Services Department

Moved by Councillor Marshall  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That **Report COM 06-2005**, January 10, 2005 (HR 02-2005, January 11, 2005) respecting Ratification of Collective Agreement – IUOE Local 772 – Community Services Department, be received and referred to Council for decision.

Carried.

11. Extension of Closing Sunset Haven Property  
City of Welland

Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That **Report COM 07-2005**, January 10, 2005, (PWA 04-005, January 11, 2005) respecting Extension of Closing sunset Haven Property, City of Welland, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved and referred to Council for decision; and

That the Federal and Provincial Governments be requested to provide full reimbursement of all extraordinary municipal costs associated with the provision of service resultant from the implementation of the federal government's Safe Third Country Agreement.

Carried.

12. Lease Renewal – 469 Central Avenue  
Community Services Office, Town of Fort Erie

Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Bailey

That **Report COM 08-2005**, January 11, 2005 (PWA 01-2005, January 12, 2005) respecting Lease Renewal – 469 Central Avenue, Community Services Office, Town of Fort Erie, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved and referred to Council for decision.

Carried.

13. Moved by Councillor Mastroianni  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That this Committee do now rise with report.

Carried.

### **STAFF DIRECTION**

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Arrange a meeting with M.P.P.s and M.P.s regarding the Federal Tripartite Safe Third Country Agreement and its impact on the Region of Niagara and seek support for reimbursement for all extraordinary costs related to the influx of refugees through Niagara. (Refer to minute 1.)
- (ii) Prepare a comparative historical analysis of how costs have been allocated for cemeteries versus funeral homes. (Refer to minute 2.)

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Committee adjourned at 4:55 p.m. to meet again on Monday, January 24, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters Building.

Jill Hildreth  
Chair

Gail Reilly  
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy  
Regional Clerk  
/Associate Director of Corporate Strategy