

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 11-2005

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on June 20, 2005, commencing at 3:10 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Mr. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, 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; Ms. Watson, Manager, Community Services.

PRESENTATIONS

96. Ontario Works JobsNow Pilot Program
Mr. Ventresca, Acting Commissioner, Community Services, provided background information on the Ministry of Community and Social Services announcement regarding future changes to the Ontario Works employment assistance funding model and the Province's pilot project called JobsNow. The Commissioner reported that the Minister of Community and Social Services had requested that the Region of Niagara participate in the pilot program. The Commissioner commented that the Region of Niagara's participation in the Ontario Works JobsNow pilot program would be in an evaluative capacity as a comparator group for the pilot sites to measure against.
97. Niagara Newcomer Employment Strategy Group
Catherine Mindorff, on behalf of the Niagara Newcomer Employment Strategy Group, attended to provide information and concerns regarding the engagement of JobWave/JobsNow in Niagara. The group has serious concerns about the immediate and long term impact of this engagement particularly in light of the conflicting messages it will send out and the impact on community members who benefit and would benefit in the future from comprehensive work re-entry

services. Ms. Mindorff commented that the evidence to support the effectiveness of WCG International as it appears would not meet current Canadian standards for reliability and validity testing. Ms. Mindorff referred to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities report "An Investment in Prosperity: Welcoming Internationally-trained Individuals into Ontario's Workforce". This report points to increased labour market participation by newcomers as a result of programs and services intended to reduce the barriers newcomers to Ontario face in their efforts to access regulated professions and trades. Ms. Mindorff commented that the evidence for the investment in focused, early, newcomer specific employment services is strong and is the basis for the Niagara Newcomer Employment strategy. Also highlighted was information from the 2005 Federal Budget relevant to newcomers.

98. CUPE 1287

Steve Leavitt, President of CUPE Local 1287, together with Ron Wing, Job Developer, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division and member of CUPE Ontario' Social Services Committee, attended on behalf of the membership of CUPE Local 1287 which also includes the unionized employees of the John Howard Society, who operate the Job Gym facilities. Mr. Leavitt put forward their request that the Region reject the provincial proposal for implementing the JobsNow program developed by WCG International. Mr. Leavitt highlighted the achievements of the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities staff and the effective working relationships in their partnerships with not-for-profit community agencies such as the John Howard Society's Job Gym, the Employment Help Centres and community partners in education through the school boards, Niagara College and other institutions. Mr. Leavitt reiterated the concerns regarding WCG International services in British Columbia which indicated the corporation was weak on serving people with greater barriers for employment and those who had been receiving social assistance for longer periods.

99. Adult Learning and Resource Centre Niagara West

Margaret Maynard, Executive Director, Adult Learning & Resource Centres Niagara West, attended on behalf of Port Cares, Niagara Employment Centre (Niagara Falls), Dunnville Employment Centre and Literacy Link Niagara. Ms. Maynard commented that the population they serve is the experienced or mature worker in Niagara West, an area of rural and semi-rural small towns and hamlets with no mass transportation within or between the centres. Ms. Maynard advised that their agencies work with Ontario Works and their case workers to assist a vulnerable population, 45+ workers, to do what is required for them to become and remain employable and employed. Specifically, access to adult education, skills upgrading and ongoing community based support. Ms. Maynard commented that working together with Ontario Works will support this sector of the population towards sustained employment. Ms. Maynard expressed her

appreciation to the progressive community partnership approach adopted in Niagara by Ontario Works.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

100. Ontario Works JobsNow Pilot Program

Moved by Regional Chair Partington
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report COM 53-2005, June 20, 2005, respecting Ontario Works JobsNow Pilot Program, be received.

That based on the successes of Niagara's current job placement and retention programs and due to the timeline constraints of establishing a pilot program, the Minister of Community and Social Services be advised of the Region of Niagara's interest to participate as a comparator group in the Ontario Works JobsNow pilot program for purposes of evaluating job placement and retention service delivery models.

Carried.

CLOSED SESSION

101. Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Bailey

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

Carried.

102. Ontario Works JobsNow Pilot Program

Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report COM 54-2005, June 20, 2005 (HR 25-2005, June 21, 2005) respecting Ontario Works JobsNow Pilot Program, be received.

That based on the successes of Niagara's current job placement and retention programs and due to the timeline constraints of establishing a pilot program, the Minister of Community and Social Services be advised of the Region of Niagara's interest to participate as a comparator group in the Ontario Works JobsNow pilot

program for purposes of evaluating job placement and retention service delivery models.

Carried.

103. Moved by Councillor Mastroianni
Seconded by Regional Chair Partington

That this Committee do now rise with report.

Carried.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT (continued)

104. Purchase of Service Agreement with the Southridge Community Church for the Provision of Emergency Hostel Services

Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Casselman

That Report COM 55-2005, June 20, 2005, respecting Purchase of Service Agreement with the Southridge Community Church for the Provision of Emergency Hostel Services, be received.

That the Regional Chair and Clerk be authorized to execute the necessary documents to enter into a Purchase of Service Agreement with the Southridge Community Church to:

- a) Provide up to 35 emergency hostel beds for the provision of emergency hostel services until October 31, 2005.
- b) Compensate the Southridge Community Church \$19.72 per diem which will be cost shared between the Province and the Region on an 80/20 basis.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page CSC 61.)

105. Children's Services
2004 Fourth Quarter Report (Year End)

Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services, advised that the purpose of Report COM 56-2005 is to inform Committee and Council of key program and financial information pertaining to services funded and operated by Children's Services for the period January 1 to December 31, 2004. Ms. Heidebrecht distributed a brochure which highlighted the licensed child care programs in Niagara. Also distributed, was information on the Debbie Zimmerman Early Years Niagara Literary Award and the 2005 shortlist of books to vote on for the award. The award aims to draw attention to the value of reading with children in their early years and the need for quality books for this age group. Voting can be done online at www.earlyyearsniagara.org using Internet stations in Public Libraries and Ontario Early Years Centres throughout Niagara, or by phone from home. Voting closes September 30, 2005.

Moved by Councillor Mastroianni
Seconded by Councillor Bailey

That Report COM 56-2005, June 20, 2005, respecting Children's Services 2004 Fourth Quarter Report (Year End), be received for information.

Carried.

106. Oral Report
Learning, Earning and Parenting (L.E.A.P.) Graduation

Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, apprised Committee of the 6th Annual Learning, Earning and Parenting (L.E.A.P.) Graduation that is to take place on Tuesday, June 28th, 2005 at 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the St. Columba Anglican Church Hall, 7 St. Columba Drive, St. Catharines, Ontario. Regional Councillors are invited to attend.

107 Oral Report
Best Practice Initiative: Application to be a Host Agency

Mr. Hunter, Acting Director, Seniors Services, advised that Niagara's Seniors Services wishes to apply to be a Host Agency for the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care's Best Practice Guidelines Co-ordinators Initiative utilizing the Province's 100% funding. The MOHLTC Regional Best Practice Guideline Coordinators Initiative is a new initiative that will support Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes to implement evidence based nursing care guidelines.

There are two components to this initiative:

1. Funding will be issued to hire regional resource coordinators to facilitate the implementation of Best Practice guidelines in Long-Term Care Homes.
2. An open call will be held to identify host agencies in each resident.

If Niagara is selected, there would be a need to:

- Enter into a contract with the Ministry for the hiring of the Regional Coordinator position for 2 1/2 years.
- Participate in training on the Best Practice Guidelines project and have a representative on the Advisory Group to guide the implementation of this initiative.
- Participate in a joint hiring process with the Regional Office for the hiring of the candidate.
- Provide an office (which is currently available at Northland Pointe in Port Colborne).

Timeline

- Submission of the application as a host agency – June 17, 2005
- Announcement of Successful Host Agencies – July 2005

Moved by Councillor Bailey

Seconded by Regional Chair Partington

That the oral report by Tom Hunter, Acting Director, Seniors Services, regarding Best Practice Initiative: Applications to be a Host Agency, be received.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

108. Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That the following communications be received:

CSC 5-2005 Tanya Drake, Senior Manager, Human Resources, Convergys (June 7, 2005) expressing her appreciation and support for the partnership that the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division (SAEO) has developed and maintained with Convergys.

- CSC 6-2005 Jennifer Guarasci, Director of Human Resources, Niagara 21st Group Inc., expressing their support for the Niagara Falls Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division and their successful partnership with respect to the Port Colborne Pilot Program.
- CSC 7-2005 Lynn Stewart, Executive Director, Employment Help Centre (June 1, 2005) expressing concerns with respect to the JobsNow initiative.
- CSC 8-2005 David Wyllie, Vice-President, Community and Employment Services and Deanna D'Elia, Director, Employment Services, YMCA of Niagara, regarding its YMCA Employment Assistance Program.
- CSC 9-2005 Eleanor Lancaster, Board Chair and Saulis Zemaitis, C.E.O., Goodwill Niagara (June 13, 2005) requesting Regional Council reconsider implementing the JobsNow program.
- CSC 10-2005 Jocelyne Gagne, Regional Director, Ontario March of Dimes (June 7, 2005) to Dominic Ventresca with respect to the JobsNow initiative.

Carried.

CLOSED SESSION

109. Moved by Councillor Bailey
Seconded by Regional Chair Partington

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

Carried.

110. Niagara Regional Housing Shared Services Agreement
Amendment – Tenant Financial Support Services

Conflict of Interest

Councillor Bailey declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to Report COM 58-2005, June 20, 2005 (HR 26-2005, June 21, 2005) respecting Niagara Regional Housing Shared Services Agreement Amendment – Tenant Financial Support Services, as his daughter is an employee of the Niagara Regional Housing and he therefore vacated the Committee Room and took no part in the discussion of, or voting on, this matter.

Moved by Councillor Casselman
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 58-2005, June 20, 2005 (HR 26-2005, June 21, 2005) respecting Niagara Regional Housing Shared Services Agreement Amendment – Tenant Financial Support Services be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Carried.

111. Lease – Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities
Office, Town of Fort Erie

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 59-2005, June 20, 2005 (PWA 111-2005, June 21, 2005) respecting Lease – Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities Office, Town of Fort Erie, be referred to the Regional Council meeting of June 30, 2005 for consideration.

Carried.

112. Accessibility Advisory Committee Membership
Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2001

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That Report COM 57-2005, June 20, 2005, respecting Accessibility Advisory Committee Membership Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Carried.

113. Oral Report: Recruitment of Commissioner
of Community Services Department

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That the oral report from Mr. Trojan, C.A.O., regarding the Recruitment of Commissioner of Community Services Department be received and the recommendation within the oral report approved.

Carried.

114. Moved by Rigby
Seconded by Mastroianni

That this committee do now rise with report.

Carried.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Provide information with respect to the community consultation process regarding issues such as those contained in Report COM 55-2005. (Refer to minute 104.)

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 4:40 p.m. to meet again on Monday, July 11, 2005, at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters Building.

Jill Hildreth
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Anne Hepplewhite
Acting Regional Clerk