

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 12-2007

Minutes of a meeting of the Public Health and Social Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, 2201 St. David's Road, Thorold, Ontario, on Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 2:05 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Baty, Co-Chair; Partington, Regional Chair; Collins; Cordiner; Forster; Greenwood; Henderson; Marshall; Rigby.

Staff: Mr. Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Pilon, Acting Regional Clerk; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Community Services Dept.: Ms. Cousins, Director, Operational Support Services.

Public Health Dept.: Mr. Christensen, Director, Environmental Health; Dr. Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Mr. Hudgin, Manager, Environmental Health; Mr. Jones, Director, Administrative Services; Ms. St. John, Chief Nursing Officer/Director, Clinical Services.

Staff -Others: Ms. Rae, Legal Counsel.

Others: Councillor Goulbourne; Bill Auchterlonie, United Way South Niagara; Frances Hallworth, United Way St. Catharines and District; Peter Papp and Michelle Sault-White, Opportunities Niagara; Gord Roddy, Grimsby Benevolent Fund.

PRESENTATION

190. Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region

Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services, provided an overview of the research work completed for Niagara Region staff, titled "A Legacy of Poverty" which addresses cycles of poverty and the impact on Child Health in the Niagara Region.

The research was completed by Susan Arai, Associate Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, Brock University and Rishia Burke, Consultant, Community Health research, Planning & Evaluation Services.

Mr. Hutchings advised of the methods used to measure Poverty as follows:

- The Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs)
- The Market Basket Measure
- Social Detriments of Health
- The persistence of Poverty

The Commissioner highlighted how poverty is a key cause and product of powerlessness and social exclusion and bears a strong relationship to an individual's health and mental health.

A comparison of "Indicators of Poverty in Canada (2003)" and "Indicators of Poverty in Niagara" was presented. Poverty areas that need to be focused on include experiences and needs of women; female lead single parent homes; victims of violence; Aboriginal families; new immigrants; people with disabilities; people with mental illness and the low income family gap.

A chart explaining the prevalence of low income across the Niagara Region, and the differences across municipalities in the Region was presented. Niagara's median employment income was \$23,400 in 2004, the lowest median employment income in Ontario. The overall prevalence for the Region was at 12.7% in 2003, with the lowest prevalence found in Niagara-on-the-Lake (4.2%) and the highest in St. Catharines (15.5%).

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation developed an indicator of housing affordability within communities. Based on that indicator, Niagara residents would need to work 171 hours a month to purchase an averaged price home in their community. The standard number of full time hours in a month is 168.

Mr. Hutchings advised that in looking at poverty from a community perspective, we see the impact on: community health; stability and safety; family mobility; oppression; limited choices and the erosion of democracy.

Reasons for reducing Poverty were highlighted as follows:

- Sweeping effects quality of life of individuals, families and communities
- Is a key cause and product of powerlessness and social exclusion
- Children living in lower socio-economic status are more vulnerable to their healthy environment – issues such as speech and language development to high school completion
- Poverty highly associated with diminished access to determinants of health (housing, education, social supports)
- Bears a strong relationship to an individual's health and mental health
- If we focus only on supports to individuals, we may slip into victim blaming and leave systemic issues unaddressed.

Mr. Hutchings highlighted the following recommendations derived from the report:

- Decrease poverty through advocacy
- Appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty
- Mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth through programs and services
- Monitor our progress

Staff from Public Health and Community Services will be collaborating with community stakeholders to review the researcher's findings and recommendations to arrive at a possible action plan to be presented to the Public Health and Social Services Committee and Regional Council later this Fall.

Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That the oral presentation from Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services, regarding Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in the Niagara Region, be received.

Carried.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

191. 2006 Data Analysis Coordinator Annual Program
Expenditure Reconciliation Report (APER)
PHD 53-2007

Moved by Councillor Forster
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That Report PHD 53-2007, August 28, 2007, respecting 2006 Data Analysis Coordinator Annual Program Expenditure Reconciliation Report (APER), be received.

That the 2006 Annual Program Expenditure Reconciliation Report (APER) for the Data Analysis Coordinator Program be approved, and signed by the Chairman of the Board of Health.

Carried.

Conflict of Interest

Councillor Forster declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to Report PHD 55-2007, respecting the Community Mental Health Program Homeless Initiative Staff Enhancement as she is the staff representative on ONA and she therefore took no part in the discussion of, or voting on, this matter.

192. Community Mental Health Program
Homelessness Initiative Staff Enhancement
PHD 55-2007

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Collins

That Report PHD 55-2007, August 28, 2007, respecting Community Mental Health Program – Homelessness Initiative Staff Enhancement, be received.

That a revised Agency Service Agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Niagara Branch, be accepted and signed by the Regional Chair to allow the Community Mental Health Program to receive additional funding to enhance the funding complement for this agreement by 0.5 FTE's.

Carried.

ITEMS FOR DEBATE

193. Amendments to Procedural Bylaw No. 120-2005 – Updated
CSD 142-2007

Moved by Councillor Collins
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report CSD 142-2007, August 28 & 29, 2007, respecting Amendments to Procedural By-law No. 120-2005 – Updated, be referred to staff for further revisions as discussed at Committee.

Carried.

(A list of revisions as recommended by Committee was provided to Legal for their reference.)

(Please note that Report CSD 142-2007 can be found behind the CSC Blue Book Tab.)

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

194. Four Year Upload of Ontario Drug Benefits (ODB)
And Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services and Ms. Cousins, Director, Operational Support Services, provided an oral report on the plans for the “Four Year Upload of ODB and ODSP as recently announced by the Ministry. A chart was provided indicating the total levy impact and the total potential upload over a four year period. It was noted that all levy reductions do not reflect the potential impact of the uploading on the Ontario Municipal Partnership fund grant, which at this time remains unconfirmed. All increases to costs are based on continued trends used to create 2008 budget increase.

(A copy of this chart is attached to the minutes for information.)

Moved by Councillor Forster
Seconded by Councillor Henderson

That the oral reports from Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services and Ms. Cousins, Director, Operational Support Services, with respect to the "Four Year Upload of ODB and ODSP, be received.

Carried.

195. Implementation of the Niagara Water Strategy
Beach Monitoring, Risk Assessment and Remediation Study
PHD 56-2007 (PWP 59-2007)

Moved by Regional Chair Partington
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report PHD 56-2007, August 28, 2007 (PWP 59-2007, August 29, 2007), respecting Implementation of the Niagara Water Strategy – Beach Monitoring, Risk Assessment and Remediation Study, be received for information.

Carried.

(Please note that Report PHD 56-2007 (PWP 59-2007)) can be found behind the JNT RPTS Blue Book Tab)

196. Restaurant Facility, Merriton

Mr. Young, Manager, Environmental Health, provided an oral report on the status of the restaurant facility in Merriton which had been closed due to an E-coli Outbreak. Mr. Young advised that the restaurant opened Wednesday, August 22, 2007, following the owner's participation in food handling, food preparation, cleaning and sanitization processes. Two inspections have taken place since the restaurant opened to ensure adherence to the regulations.

Mr. Christensen, Director, Environmental Health, apprised Committee of the status of the charges to be laid under the Provincial legislation, commenting that staff has been working diligently with legal services to ensure paperwork is in order and charges are pending.

Moved by Councillor Collins
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That the oral report from Messrs. Young and Christensen, Environmental Health Division, regarding the restaurant facility in Merriton, be received.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

197. Moved by Councillor Forster
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Communication PHSS 28-2007, memorandum from Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services (August 15, 2007) regarding Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region, be received.

Carried.

198. Moved by Councillor Forster
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Communication PHSS 29-2007, memorandum from Dr. Andrea Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health (August 23, 2007) respecting World Record Walk and International Charter for Walking, be received; and

That Regional Chair Partington be authorized to sign an International Charter for Walking, in conjunction with the World Record Walk.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 3:55 p.m., to meet again in Committee Room 4 on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

Brian Baty
Co-Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Janet Pilon
Acting Regional Clerk