

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 2-2008

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, February 19, 2008 at 2:05 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Baty, Co-Chair; Casselman, Co-Chair; Cordiner; Forster; Goulbourne; Greenwood; Marshall; Timms.

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

Staff

Part-time: Community Services Dept.: Ms. Heidebrecht, Director, Children's Services; Mr. Laugher, Quality Assurance Evaluation Development; Ms. Pennisi, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Mr. Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services.
Public Health Dept.: Ms. Burgi, Manager, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children; Dr. Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health; Ms. Rix, Manager, Tobacco Control; Ms. St. John, Chief Nursing Officer/Director, Clinical Division.

Others: Frances Hallworth, Executive Director, St. Catharines United Way; Betty-Lou Souter, Executive Director, Community Care, St. Catharines.

OTHER BUSINESS

11. PRO Kids Night of Stars
Councillor Baty advised that Councillors are being invited to attend a reception celebrating the many successes of the PRO Kids Program. The event called "PRO Kids Night of Stars" is being held on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at Niagara Region Headquarters in the Atrium in Campbell East at 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

12. Business Education Council
Annual Partners Breakfast
Committee was apprised of the Business Education Council Annual Partners Breakfast which was held on February 15, 2008 at 7:30 a.m. at the Sheraton Fallsview in Niagara Falls. The keynote speaker, from Saint Jean's, New Brunswick, spoke on the issue of "Child Poverty" and how their communities through various partnerships, including local businesses, have been moving forward in a positive manner to address this issue.

13. Poverty in Niagara – The Business Education Council of Niagara 2008 DVD
A DVD was presented on the issue of poverty in Niagara which was presented by the Business Education Council and produced by OEB Enterprise with the assistance of Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services and other staff and business persons to raise public awareness of this important and difficult issue. It was suggested that Cogeco be contacted to explore the “airing” of this DVD on television.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

14. Update on Poverty Report “A Legacy of Poverty?”
Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on
Child Health in Niagara Region
COM 04-2008/PHD 04-2008

Sarah Pennisi, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities and Pat Heidebrecht, Director, Children’s Services, provided an update on the poverty report “A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region”.

Poverty was described as to the Community Impact; Impact on the social determinants of health; Experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion; and Measuring poverty. The four recommendations made in the report “A Legacy of Poverty” were highlighted as follows:

- Decrease poverty through advocacy;
- Ensure 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 progress.

Ms. Pennisi highlighted several poverty reduction strategies linked to the recommendations that are already in place and used in other countries and jurisdictions.

A map was provided indicating Niagara Region Family Income by dissemination areas within the twelve municipalities. Ms. Heidebrecht advised that 14% of Niagara residents, 12.7% of families and 15.6% of Niagara’s children live below the Low Income Cut-off (LICO). Those experiencing the greatest depth of poverty include women and female-led single parent homes. Among those living in poverty, two parent families have the largest depth of poverty being \$9,900 below the poverty line.

Ms. Heidebrecht highlighted proposed local strategies and recommended future local investments based on the following four recommendations identified in the "Legacy of Poverty" report.

A chart was provided on the four recommendations and Committee members were invited to provide input on these and other strategies, as well as the proposed investment and to return the form to Gail in the Clerk's Office upon completion.

Committee was advised that staff will be providing a detailed framework on the recommended strategies and proposed funding approach to a Council Business Planning Session.

Moved by Councillor Forster
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Report COM 04-2008/PHD 04-2008, February 19, 2008, respecting Update on Poverty Report "A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region", be received for information; and

That staff be authorized to explore the recommended strategies and prepare a detailed report for subsequent consideration by Committee and Council.

Carried.

(Refer to Councillor Information Requests.)

Conflict of Interest

Councillor Forster declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to Report COM 05-2008, Application of Provincial Revenue for Additional Resident Care, as she is a member of ONA and this matter may impact ONA, and she therefore took no part in the discussion of, or voting on, this matter.

15. Application of Provincial Revenue
for Additional Resident Care
COM 05-2008

Moved by Councillor Timms
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That Report COM 05-2008, February 19, 2008 respecting Application of Provincial Revenue for Additional Resident Care, be received; and

That this Committee recommends to Regional Council that additional 2008 Provincial revenue be applied to add 6.4 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) to the Seniors Services staff complement to address increasing resident care needs and to help sustain the additional Provincial revenue in future years.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

16. Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Timms

That the following correspondence items be received:

- PHSS 3-2008 G. Allen Heimann, Medical Officer of Health and Board Secretary, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (January 17, 2008) regarding Board of Health Endorsement of the Private Member's Bill to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to Ban Smoking in Cars Containing Children.
- PHSS 4-2008 Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (January 21, 2008) regarding Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health Resolution #08-01.
- PHSS 5-2008 Vera Etches, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Sudbury & District Health Unit (January 25, 2008) regarding Public Health System Renewal in Ontario.
- PHSS 6-2008 Kenneth Todd, Director of Corporate Support Services (January 25, 2008) regarding Friends of Recovery Request for Funding.
- PHSS 7-2008 Madeleine Meilleur, Minister, Ministry of Community and Social Services (January 31, 2008) respecting increased levels of new refugee claimants.

Carried.

COUNCILLOR INFORMATION REQUESTS

- (i) The following requests came out of the discussions on the Update on Poverty Report "A Legacy of Poverty?": (Refer to minute 14.)
- Schedule a Council Business Planning Session for the sole purpose of dealing with "Poverty in Niagara".
 - Ensure the supporting data regarding Poverty in the Niagara Region is brought to Niagara Week at Queen's Park and to the Federal government in Ottawa.
 - Forward reports, presentation and DVD on Poverty to local municipalities.
 - Look into airing the "Poverty in Niagara – The Business Education Council of Niagara 2008" DVD on Cogeco.

- Request information on what local municipal council's mandate/role/responsibility is towards poverty and developing a link with the Region.
- Provide an inventory of the agencies that are available to support low income families, children and adults.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 3:45 p.m., to meet again in Committee Room 4 on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.

Brian Baty
Co-Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Judy Casselman
Co-Chair

Janet Pilon
Acting Regional Clerk