



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Social Services Sub-committee MINUTES

Date: December 10, 2019

Time: 4:34 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair Presiding, Councillor Henderson - Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Vassilakos

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Eden Grodzinski - Manager of Housing, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Vice-Chair called the Meeting to Order.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made at the December 10, 2019 Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Salvation Army Tax Program – Stratford and North Perth (SOC19-022)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Acting Clerk be authorized to enter into two agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the tax program in Stratford and North Perth, as outlined in the Agreements.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works stated this program has been in operation since 2013 in Stratford and was piloted in North Perth in 2018. The specifics of the program were provided and 600 returns were completed last year.

Staff would like to extend the agreement in both locations for one year, with a one-year extension option. The agreement is for a maximum of 500 returns, however, there is flexibility built into the agreement to ensure they don't have to turn anyone away. The funding for this program is through the Ontario Works Employment Supports funding.

Discussion took place regarding the income scale. The Director of Social Services clarified this program is not only for clients on OW or ODSP. It was also noted that the scale says, "people" and could be referring to a single parent with two children.

The Director advised that program eligibility, particularly for childcare, is being determined by a person's submitted income-tax. It is very important for everyone to file their taxes to remain eligible for programs. It was also noted this program is available throughout Perth County.

This item will be listed for consideration on the December 16, 2019 Committee and Council reconvene agendas.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Acting Clerk be authorized to enter into two agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the tax program in Stratford and North Perth, as outlined in the Agreements.

Carried

5. Report of the Housing Stability Policy & Program Coordinator

5.1 Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Five-Year Update (2020-2024) (SOC19-023)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Five-Year Update (2020-2024)" be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Housing stated the deadline for this report remains December 31, 2019, however the Ministry changed the process to require Ministry approval before it is adopted by Council. Sub-committee requested at the last meeting to see the draft Plan.

A comprehensive presentation of the Plan will be provided following Ministry approval. Highlights of the draft Plan were provided. The new Plan is based on updated Provincial Policy Guidelines, in which there are new 8 directives. Comprehensive consultations with the public and stakeholders were completed, including evaluation of the previous plan.

Four new strategic objectives were drafted and the Manager briefly reviewed them.

In response to the number of hours it took to complete the Plan, the Manager advised that it was a major undertaking, taking approximately 25% of staff time in the spring. The lead on this project was the Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator.

With regard to Ministry approval, the Manager advised they want to make sure the plan is in keeping with provincial policy directives. As to whether the forms are the same and can be measured and compared, the Director advised the templates are known to change each year based on the service plan. She noted that there is one staff position dedicated to the Housing and Homelessness plan.

It was asked whether a condensed, visually appealing version of the plan will be created. The Manager confirmed that a graphic designer has begun working on graphics and there will be a public roll-out of the plan following approval.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Five-Year Update (2020-2024)" be received for information.

Carried

It was noted that on page 63 of the agenda regarding the community housing portfolio, there are several coming due in 2020. The Manager of Housing advised she would bring a report forward on the operating agreements and that it is quite complicated. The expiring agreements are federally funded and were funded under agreements with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation entered into 35 years ago. The financial arrangements were explained. It was noted that capital costs are a problem for all providers.

The Chair advised she visited Indwell in Woodstock and was impressed with the set-up. She suggested it would be something to work towards and inquired about available funding.

The Manager of Housing advised the City obtained COCHI funding which is intended to support community housing providers and has been used for capital funding repairs and rent subsidies. OPHI funding has been earmarked for Phase 2 of the Britannia housing project. All funds are spoken for until 2022.

Discussion took place regarding emergency housing in cold weather. The Director advised there has always been available accommodation through the hotels and there has never been an instance where someone could not be housed. The Manager of Ontario Works explained that staff are working on a housing policy for those who require it during temperatures of -10 and extreme heat. Staff are using these benchmarks already but would like to formalize the policy. This program is funded through the CHPI budget but the Director advised that if funding is exhausted, staff would be coming back to Council.

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:34 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:53 P.M.