



The Corporation of the City of Stratford

Social Services Sub-committee

MINUTES

Date: February 13, 2019
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

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

Staff Present: Jacqueline Mockler - Acting Director of Social Services/Director of Human Resources, Barb Hobson - Manager of Early Years and Child Care, Kim McElroy - Manager of Ontario Works, Eden Grodzinski - Manager of Housing, Alex Burgess - Supervisor of Social Services, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary, Mike Beitz - Corporate Communications Lead

1. Call to Order

The 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

None declared at the February 13, 2019 Social Services Sub-committee Meeting.

3. Delegations

None were scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Housing

4.1 New Digital Community Engagement Platform – letstalksocialservices.ca – provided by the software company, Bang the Table (SOC19-003)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report of the Social Services Department's launch of letstalksocialservices.ca be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Housing and the Corporate Communications Leads reviewed the management report noting that the Social Services Department understands the importance of informing and involving residents in strategy development and the implementation of programs and services that affect their lives.

The new website, letstalksocialservices.ca will be launching this month with an initial focus on engaging community members in the five year review and refresh of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

The Manager of Housing noted that the website was created by Bang the Table, a software company that specializes in on-line stakeholder engagement services and the company has successfully worked with numerous municipalities throughout Ontario.

Bang the Table differs from social media as it strives to ensure that on-line posts and discussions are respectful and civil with a 24 hour, 7 day a week moderation service where comments are reviewed prior to being posted.

In response to questions from Sub-committee the Manager of Housing stated that staff is not currently concerned with the moderators name and photo being included on the website, but will monitor any concerns and make changes if required.

In response to questions the Corporate Communications Lead noted that there is a section on the site with the rules and regulations for posts and that there is a multi-faceted analysis of user of the sites for staff to review at any time.

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report of the Social Services Department's launch of letstalksocialservices.ca be received for information.

Carried

4.2 City of Stratford Social Services Department's Participation in the National 20,000 Homes Campaign Collaborative (SOC19-001)

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council support the Social Services Department's involvement in the 20,000 Homes Campaign Collaborative in order to move the community's goal of ending chronic homelessness forward.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Housing reviewed the management report noting that the City of Stratford Social Services Department has been involved in the National 20,000 Homes Campaign since 2017.

The expectations of a participating community are to establish a local team, attend in-person learning sessions, implement improvement projects during action cycles and report monthly.

In response to questions from Sub-committee the Manager of Housing stated that there was no cap on the number of municipalities that could participate in program and that only 25 municipalities across Canada chose to participate.

Sub-committee questioned if funds may be available for infrastructure.

The Manager of Housing responded that the allocation of funds is currently under review, noting that historically funds are for operations not infrastructure.

Motion by Councillor Bunting

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council support the Social Services Department's involvement in the 20,000 Homes Campaign Collaborative in order to move the community's goal of ending chronic homelessness forward.

Carried

5. Report of the Manager of Early Years and Child Care

5.1 Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, Bill 66 proposed changes to the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (SOC19-004)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the letter "Re: Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018 submitted by OMSSA, January 17, 2019" be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Early Years and Child Care reviewed the report noting that Bill 66 had twelve schedules with each Schedule related to a specific Ministry and Legislation. She also noted that the Bill has only been through First Reading and Second and Third Reading should take place in the spring when the Provincial Budget is passed.

Motion by Councillor Ritsma

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the letter "Re: Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018 submitted by OMSSA, January 17, 2019" be received for information.

Carried

6. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

6.1 Province announces plan for Social Assistance Reform (SOC19-005)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report "Province announces plan for Social Assistance Reform" be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works reviewed the management report noting that announcement from the Province came with broad framework and principles rather than a full implementation plan as the Province is determined to move forward with reforms guided in the following principles and priorities: moving people to employment, locally focused social services, supporting people with disabilities with dignity and cutting red tape and restoring accountability.

"Strengthening our Community: Attracting People and Investment"

She also noted that changes to the Ontario Works earnings exemptions that may decrease benefits to clients.

More information will be presented to Sub-committee as it is received by Ontario Works.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report "Province announces plan for Social Assistance Reform" be received for information.

Carried

6.2 2018 Auditor General Report; Ontario Works Value-for-Money Audit Report (SOC19-002)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report "Office of the Auditor General (OAGO) Ontario Works Value-for Money (VFM) Audit" be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works reviewed the management report noting that the last audit was conducted in 2009. From the audit, 19 recommendations were made with 13 of the recommendations directed at the Ministry and 6 at Ontario Works Service providers.

Sub-committee questioned if we have sufficient staff to be able to carry out the recommendations that were made.

The Manager of Ontario Works responded that they are currently reviewing this and if required will make alternations to case loads.

Sub-committee expressed concerns that under the Special Diet Allowance recommendation there is no reference to collaboration with the local health unit and the health basket program.

Motion by Councillor Bunting

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report "Office of the Auditor General (OAGO) Ontario Works Value-for Money (VFM) Audit" be received for information.

Carried

7. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

There were no Advisory Committee/Outside Board minutes to be provided to Sub-committee at this time.

8. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is March 6, 2019 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:33 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 5:21 p.m.