



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

Date: January 14, 2025
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Briscoe – Vice Chair Presiding, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Henderson

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, John Ritz – Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor, Tatiana Dafoe – Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Vice-Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Chair Henderson provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

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 by a member at the January 14, 2025, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan (SOC25-001)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the 2024 Business Plan having been submitted and executed with the Ministry in March 2024 and the budget and Service Plan being approved at that time;
- previously being called the Service Plan and now being called the Business Plan with these terms being used interchangeably;
- the 2024 Business Plan covering a 4-year period and historically covering a 2 year period;
- the Ministry now providing a template, this being previously provided by the Service Manager;
- the Plan addressing the following four categories:
 - 'Conduct Community Analysis' being an overview of caseload demographics, community occurrences that would support or hinder;
 - 'Review Performance Outcome Targets' being as titled;
 - 'Develop Service Strategies' relating to outcome targets, plans to achieve targets, risk assessments to be completed related to how these will be achieved and related privacy elements;
 - the IT Division having assisted in the privacy strategy and the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy being completed with the DEI Manager;

- 'Manage Program Delivery' being a review of program delivery including fiscal accountability and Provincial framework relating to eligibility and ensuring people are eligible for received services;
- staff currently working on an addendum to the Plan, due in February; and
- the budget to be approved with the addendum approval and staff expecting to provide Council with an update in early April.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works 2024 Business Plan" (SOC25-001), be received for information.

Carried

4.2 CMHA Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC25-002)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the update to the CMHA agreement being to the scatter site component of the Intensive Case Management Program (ICM);
- the funding to provide two full time equivalent case managers carrying caseloads between 12-15 participants and supporting with housing stability;
- a caseload to include individuals experiencing homelessness as well as housed individuals;
- new individuals to be added to caseloads are actively experiencing homelessness, and will be supported until housed;
- individuals to be discharged from the program once an appropriate level of stability has been reached;
- this being measured through various tools and evidence based information;
- the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) having been in place since 2018 and replaced at its conclusion in 2023 with ICM and these positions having existed in several iterations since 2018;

- 2025 budget including additional funding for a Case Manager working out of the Stratford Connect Center with this portion being funded through the OW program;
- the CMHA Counselling Position no longer required as CMHA is meeting the needs of the caseload;
- funding being transitioned from the CMHA Counselling Position to the Case Manager at the Connection Center to better support individuals in the community with housing stability;
- the position providing support for attaining housing including contacting landlords, housing applications and housing searches, while also supporting housing stability for individuals who attend the Connection Centre and are living in Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation;
- the agreement update providing staff the opportunity to clearly define outcomes addressing needs of the program and ensuring an ability to performance manage the contract if needed;
- staff extending the agreement as there are no performance concerns;
- the agreement having a built in out clause should financial or performance related concerns be identified;
- the agreement being sustainable only with the continuation of the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and OW funding in the Provincial and Municipal budget; and
- this being fully funded through the 100% OW Employment Supports portfolio and the 100% Provincially Funded HPP from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into a three-year agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with

the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to providing the City Clerk with any approved contract amendments.

Carried

4.3 Optimism Place Outreach Worker Service Agreement (SOC24-003)

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works presented the report, highlighting the following:

- the Optimism Place Outreach Worker Services Agreement being through the same program;
- the update being to the scatter site component of the Intensive Case Management Program (ICM);
- the agreement being to fund one Case Worker position;
- the updates being applied to an agreement currently in affect;
- the agreement having begun October 2023, and renewed in 2024 with payment for the Case Worker position made at that time;
- more clearly defined outcomes and expectations outlined, and, as with the CMHA agreement, aiming to attach individuals who align with the mandate of the organizations where possible;
- identifying individuals with mental health and addiction as barriers to housing and pairing support through CMHA;
- identifying individuals experiencing intimate partner violence as barriers to housing and pairing support through Optimism Place;
- the Case Worker to support a 12-15 participant caseload and provide support from homeless to housed and in achieving housing stability;
- a \$5,000 discretionary fund included to be tracked closely to inform staff of necessary updates to the Housing Stability Bank Program;

- the updated agreement taking effect January 1, 2025 with the term ending 2027; and
- this resulting in a lower payment amount for 2025 and increasing to \$80,000 in 2026 and 2027.

Discussion on this matter took place between Sub-committee and staff. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- funding having been provided through the Provincial Homelessness Prevention core funding and OW; and
- staff to continue submissions to the province for core funding.

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Council authorize The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services for the provision of services defined in the Outreach Worker Service Agreement;

THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the Outreach Worker Service Agreement with Optimism Place, Women's Shelter, and Support Services;

AND THAT the Director of Social Services be authorized to approve any contract amendments, subject to no changes to the financial considerations or identified performance concerns, for the duration of the contract and subject to a copy of any approved amended contract being provided to the City Clerk.

Carried

5. Department Update

The following Department Update Infographics of November 2024 were provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- Monthly Children's Services Report
- Monthly Homelessness Report
- Monthly Housing Report
- Monthly Ontario Works Report

Sub-committee Discussion: The Director of Social Services provided an overview of the department update, highlighting the following:

- the upcoming December update to be an analysis of variance observed in the final quarter of 2024;
- the November updates indicating numbers remaining consistent;
- a drop in homelessness numbers from 153 to 144;
- staff continuing to mitigate services and identify gaps to change service delivery where necessary;
- a recent report from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) on chronic homelessness identifying more than half of the homeless population having been homeless for over 6 months; and
- staff looking at strategies for rapid rehousing to help these individuals.

Discussion on this matter took place between Sub-committee and staff. Highlights of the discussion included:

- 23 families experiencing homelessness; and
- A specialized OW Case Worker supporting newcomer case load and working closely with support agencies to help with appropriate services.

A member thanked staff and expressed gratitude for the crucial work being done for the City.

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is February 11, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:46 P.M.