



## **The Corporation of the City of Stratford Social Services Sub-committee**

### **MINUTES**

Date: March 10, 2026  
Time: 4:30 P.M.  
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

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

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Mandy - Manager of Children's Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jeff Wilson - Manager of Housing, Shannon Archer - Business Integration Manager, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary, Maria Anayi – Manager of Human Resources

Also present: Members of the Public

#### **1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

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 March 10, 2026, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

**3. Delegations**

None scheduled.

**4. Report of the Business Integration Manager**

**4.1 2025 Rent Supplement and Housing Allowance Review (SOC26-003)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "2025 Rent Supplement and Housing Allowance Review" (SOC26-003), be received for information.

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Business Integration Manager provided an overview of the report. Highlights included the following:

- the report being an overview of the level of housing allowances and rent supplements provided in 2025;
- 195 households having been assisted with the total funding amount being \$943,205.00;
- 12 households having been referred to the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) program; and
- since the COBH program was implemented in 2020, 162 households having been referred to the program from the City of Stratford as the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM).

Members of Sub-committee and staff discussed the report:

- clarification that the rent supplements and housing allowances are provided to households as long as needed or until a different affordable option is available;
- the COHB benefit following clients anywhere within Ontario;

- the term "assisted" referring to assistance provided either through the Rent Supplement or the Housing Allowance for an unhoused client to secure housing in the private market where rents are higher;
- clients moved to the COHB program only receiving COHB with the benefit being received until there is an income change; and
- it being noted that the COHB is calculated in the same way as similar programs and is relatively the same benefit amount as other programs.

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "2025 Rent Supplement and Housing Allowance Review" (SOC26-003), be received for information.**

**Carried**

## **5. 2025 Year in Review Reports**

The Director of Social Services, The Manager of Ontario Works, The Manager of Children's Services and The Manager of Housing referring to a PowerPoint presentation, provided the 2025 Year in Review Reports.

Councillor Biehn joined the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

Discussion was had between Sub-committee and staff. In response to Members questions the Director of Social Services and the Manager of Ontario Works provided the following clarification regarding the 2025 Year in Review for the Ontario Works (OW) Division:

- applicants not eligible for OW applicants being referred to other more suitable programs;
- an overview being provided of the improvement areas and challenges being experienced by staff since the 2025 transition to the Provincially controlled decentralized intake system;
- employment goals being identified by OW clients through the Integrated Employment Services Model and being accessed to identify areas of priority; and

- it being noted that since 2023 there has been a significant decrease in job postings in Perth County.

In response to Members questions the Director of Social Services and the Manager of Children's Services provided the following answers and clarification regarding Children's Services 2025 Year in Review:

- information regarding Children's Services and waitlists having not been offered in the maternity ward but can be looked into;
- an overview of the effect the Provincial \$12 daycare directive has had on the existing system with the program expected to take years to establish including infrastructure to provide the spaces and training for the required number of Early Childhood Educators;
- the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELC) system target for access to licensed childcare for children age 0-5 being 37%; and
- it being noted that when this goal is met 63% of children 0-5 years will still not be accommodated under the program.

In response to Members questions, the Director of Social Services and the Manger of Housing provided the following answers and clarification regarding the Housing and Homelessness 2025 Year in Review;

- tiny houses seen in surrounding communities being intended as a temporary solution before entering long term housing;
- at this time tiny houses not being considered in Stratford with the focus being on long term supportive housing and right fit housing;
- it was noted that should appropriate funding come through that tiny houses could be reconsidered but not at this time;
- the Housing Stability team, Outreach workers and Community Partners having the knowledge of available resources and programs for supported housing of different types available to meet unique and individual needs;
- staff observing success when the type of supports are tailored to the right individual;
- waitlists for housing being long at this time; and

- discussion was had regarding vacancy rates, contributing reasons and the costs for turnover.

### **5.1 Ontario Works Division 2025 Year in Review (SOC26-006)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works Division 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-006), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Briscoe

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Ontario Works Division 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-006), be received for information.**

**Carried**

### **5.2 Children's Services Division 2025 Year in Review (SOC26-004)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "Children's Services Division 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-004), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Children's Services Division 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-004), be received for information.**

**Carried**

### **5.3 Housing and Homelessness Divisions 2025 Year in Review (SOC26-005)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled, "Housing and Homelessness Divisions 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-005), be received for information.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Housing and Homelessness Divisions 2025 Year in Review" (SOC26-005), be received for information.**

**Carried**

Discussion was had between Members and staff regarding Housing touching on challenges and contributing factors to housing stability.

**6. Department Update**

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Manager of Children's Services noted prior to 2026 data presented under Resource Consulting for the Children's Services Infographics reported the level of acuity in the children supported. Now the data still reports the number of children in the program and now reporting the number of programs and hours.

**7. Next Sub-committee Meeting**

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting will be held on April 14, 2026, in the Council Chambers if required.

**8. 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: 5:41 P.M.