



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

Date: November 10, 2020

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Location: Electronically

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

Staff Present Electronically: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Eden Grodzinski - Manager of Housing, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Angie Juarez - Supervisor of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk

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

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a member at the Social Services Sub-committee meeting on November 10, 2020.

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Supervisor of Social Services, Housing Division

4.1 Introduction to Bill 204, Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020 (SOC20-010)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Introduction to Bill 204, Helping Tenants and Small Business Act, 2020" (SOC20-010) be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Housing referred to the PowerPoint presentation included with the agenda and provided an overview of Bill 204, *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020*. The bill temporarily freezes residential rent increases in 2021 and applies to most residential units, including RGI units, with the exception of non-profit housing co-operatives.

The usual RGI rent adjustment process was explained and it was noted that there may be small impacts on the municipal budget. As a result of this legislation Staff were unable to increase rent by 1.8% for the Britannia Street housing units.

Housing co-operatives are not subject to the *Residential Tenancies Act* and rental increases require the approval of the membership at an annual general meeting, so this bill does not impact those providers. Communications have been sent to all housing providers, as well as all landlords the City has rent supplement agreements with.

In response to how landlords are affected, the Manager clarified that this bill applies to all landlords in Ontario, including both the public and private sector.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Introduction to Bill 204, Helping Tenants and Small Business Act, 2020" (SOC20-010) be received for information.

Carried

4.2 Delegation of Authorities for Housing Division Agreements, including properties owned by The Corporation of the City of Stratford and Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation (SOC20-011)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report "Delegation of Authorities for Housing Division Agreements, including properties owned by The Corporation of the City of Stratford and Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation" (SOC20-011) be received for information purposes.

AND THAT Council delegate authority to the Director of Social Services, or Manager of Housing or Supervisor of Social Services, Housing Division to sign agreements between prospective tenants, program recipients, housing providers/landlords and The Corporation of the City of Stratford and/or the Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Housing advised that staff have reviewed their documents and want to clarify and clean up delegation of authority. The Housing Division enters into a number of lease and rent supplements agreements every year and staff are looking for delegated authority to sign those agreements.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report "Delegation of Authorities for Housing Division Agreements, including properties owned by The Corporation of the City of Stratford and Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation" (SOC20-011) be received for information purposes;

AND THAT Council delegate authority to the Director of Social Services, or Manager of Housing or Supervisor of Social Services, Housing Division to sign agreements between prospective tenants, program recipients, housing providers/landlords and The Corporation of the City of Stratford and/or the Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation.

In response to whether this is a big change, the Director advised that there have been changes in management and staff wanted to be clear who has the authority to sign the agreements.

The Chair called the question on the motion on the floor.

Carried

5. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

5.1 Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan Update (SOC20-009)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan Update (SOC20-009)" be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works advised that there have been several changes over the past year related to how certain forms of income are interpreted to support clients during the pandemic.

The Ministry is working on several initiatives, including a centralized intake unit to complete applications. It is being prototyped in seven municipalities, then rolled out to the Employment Services Transformation sites. The Province intends to fully onboard all 47 service managers by the end of March 2021.

One of the major changes is that they will be processing applications at the provincial level. Only certain types of applications classified as high risk and/or complex will be sent to local offices.

It was asked whether staff are seeing a change in the amount of administrative time related to this program. The Manager advised that it is unknown until the issues are worked through at the prototype sites.

In response to whether follow-up and reporting would still fall to the service manager, the Manager replied that once it rolls out in March, the initial application will be reviewed by the central intake office and then files will be assigned to local caseworkers. Staff are continuing to ask questions around how clients who walk into the Social Services offices will complete their applications. Concerns about barriers to assistance were noted. The Director of Social Services advised that intake was previously centralized in 2001-2004 and the service managers found that the human touch was lost, and then intake was decentralized back to the local service managers. It was noted that technology has changed greatly since that time.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan Update (SOC20-009)" be received for information.

Carried

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is December 15, 2020.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 3:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 3:49 P.M.