



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

Date: October 13, 2021

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Location: Electronic Meeting

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

Regrets: Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Darren Barkhouse - Manager of Children's Services, Kelly Stone - Supervisor of Social Services, Chris Bantock – Deputy Clerk

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

The Chair called the Meeting to Order. Councillor Bunting provided regrets for this meeting.

### **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 October 13, 2021, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

### **3. Delegations**

None scheduled.

### **4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works**

#### **4.1 Housing Focused Street Outreach Program (SOC21-013)**

**Staff Recommendation:** THAT the report titled "Housing Focused Street Outreach Program" (SOC21-013) be received for information.

**Sub-committee Discussion:** The Director of Social Services introduced Kelly Stone, Supervisor of Social Services and Darren Barkhouse, the new Manager of Children's Services. The Director stated that visible homelessness is prevalent and increased numbers have been seen. An overview of the Housing Focused Street Outreach Program was provided as follows:

- Funds from the Social Services Relief Fund are being used in partnership with Choices for Change and Stratford Police Services to hire two social workers who will focus on street outreach outside office hours in the evenings, on Saturdays and on-call Sundays and Mondays.
- Stratford Police Services are providing funding for a vehicle to transport required items.
- The outreach workers will provide education for businesses or homeowners on what to do and how to handle situations with homeless individuals.

The Director advised that ideally the Connection Centre will open to provide a warming space for people through the winter. They are hoping it will be a one-stop shop for mobile supports that will ideally have showers, laundry facilities and on-site support. Examples of partnerships they are looking for are outreach staff, nurse practitioners and paramedics.

Staff have been advised that the Salvation Army is not continuing with the housing resource centre they were operating. Staff are looking to put out a request for proposals and house those services within the Connection Centre hub.

It was questioned whether the Connection Centre would only run during cold weather or certain hours. The Director advised staff estimate it will be run 5-6 days a week from 1-5 p.m., in a permanent location, however, details have not been confirmed. The outreach workers would be operating in a mobile fashion.

They are working on a similar project in Listowel. If someone outside Stratford or Listowel wants to access services, transportation supports will be available.

It was clarified that there are three City staff outreach workers available during the day. There are also outreach workers working with partner organizations.

It was questioned whether temporary housing options affect a person's status on the housing waitlist. The Director stated that homelessness is a priority status, however, temporary housing situations are considered precarious and that it does not affect status on the waitlist. If someone presents as homeless, they are connected with an outreach worker and emergency accommodations, depending on circumstances. There are requirements around engagement with the social worker and certain people may have service restrictions due to past situations.

In response to whether staff have had any further discussions with Indwell, the Director advised that there have been conversations but nothing further is coming at this time.

The Director stated that large numbers of people experiencing chronic homelessness is a serious problem in every municipality throughout the country right now.

Motion by Councillor Vassilakos

**Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Housing Focused Street Outreach Program" (SOC21-013) be received for information.**

**Carried**

## **5. Next Sub-committee Meeting**

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.

**6. 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: 3:45 P.M.