



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chamber, City Hall
Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Briscoe - Vice Chair, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Wordofa
Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Darren Barkhouse - Manager of Children's Services, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Shannon Archer - Business and Integration Manager

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Biehn 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

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Children's Services

4.1 200 Britannia Street Affordable Housing Project Update (SOC23-009) 4 - 5

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "200 Britannia Street Affordable Housing Update" (SOC23-009), be received for information.

5. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

5.1 2022 Employment Outcomes Update (SOC23-007) 6 - 8

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "2022 Employment Outcomes Update" (COU23-007), be received for information.

5.2 Salvation Army Tax Program – Stratford and North Perth (SOC23-008) 9 - 12

Motion by

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to enter into two agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the income tax program in Stratford and North Perth, respectively;

THAT City Council delegates its approval authority to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer to execute annual renewal agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the income tax program in Stratford and North Perth, subject to no contract performance issues or amendments to funding identified by the City;

AND THAT Delegation of Authority By-law 135-2017, as amended, be further amended to delegate Council's authority to enter into income tax program agreements on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer.

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is March 22, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

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



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 14, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
 Shannon Archer, Business Integration Manager
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report #: SOC23-009
Attachments: None

Title: 200 Britannia Street Affordable Housing Project Update

Objective: To provide the Social Services Sub-committee with an update regarding the progress on the 200 Britannia St. affordable housing project.

Background: At the November 29, 2021, meeting, Council authorized the award of the contract for the construction of the 200 Britannia St. project and that the Director of Social Services be authorized to initiate construction of the project, subject to confirmation of government funding for the project. (COU21 – 121)

Construction on this project began in February 2022. The 200 Britannia Street affordable housing project is to provide 27 affordable units. Fourteen of these units will be available at 80% of the local Alternate Average Market Rent and the remainder will be supported through rent supplements or other housing supports. The building will have 5 2-bedroom units and 22 1-bedroom units, scooter and tenant storage, a lounge area for tenants of both 200 and 230 Britannia St., and a community garden.

Analysis: Through the course of construction, there have been increases to the cost of the project. These cost increases relate to increased costs of materials and other unforeseen impacts. The City has been working with our developer to determine the extent, and it is our expectation that the cost overruns can be managed within the approved contingency that formed part of the original tender.

Social Services staff are working with other levels of government to secure additional dedicated funding that may assist the Corporation in managing these additional costs and/or reducing the amount of the debenture amounts required.

In addition, staff are completing the occupancy plan with applications anticipated to be available in February 2023, with the first opportunities to move in available in June 2023.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The 2023 budget was prepared anticipating 9 months of occupancy. Revenues and expenses will instead reflect a staggered move-in beginning June 2023. This will have an effect on revenues and expenses that is not expected to be material to the overall approved budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

If additional funding is secured from other levels of government, it has the potential to impact current and future year operating budgets by the potential reduced debenture amount resulting in lowered principal/interest payments as the debenture amounts could be reduced.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Developing our Resources

The 200 Britannia St. affordable housing project will strengthen and develop the City of Stratford's physical resources and provide affordable housing opportunities for residents.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Equity and Local Economy

The 200 Britannia St. affordable housing project will provide citizens with safe, affordable, and community-oriented spaces to live.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "200 Britannia Street Affordable Housing Update" (SOC23-009), be received for information.

Prepared by:	Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing Shannon Archer, Business Integration Manager
Recommended by:	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 14, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report #: SOC23-007
Attachments: None

Title: 2022 Employment Outcomes Update

Objective: To provide the Mayor and Council with an update on 2022 provincially measured employment outcomes for the City of Stratford's Ontario Works Division.

Background: The Ontario Works Division supports individuals and families within the Service Manager area of Stratford, St Marys and Perth County with basic financial assistance and employment supports, as legislated in the Ontario Works Act, 1997. The provincially funded program is delivered locally with funding provided by the Province of Ontario for social assistance payments, as well as 50% of the administrative costs necessary to deliver the program. The remaining 50% of administrative costs to deliver the Ontario Works program is provided by the local municipalities.

In report SOC23-004, a thorough caseload update was provided, as well as details around the status of the provincial targets set for the Ontario Works division regarding measured employment outcomes. These outcomes are measured, monitored, and tracked within the funding agreement signed with the Government of Ontario and are the measured outcomes used to determine effectiveness and program fidelity.

Analysis: Within the current two-year service planning cycle of 2021 and 2022, the City of Stratford's Ontario Works Division were being measured on three targets:

- the percentage of files which closed each month due to employment reasons,
- the overall percentage of the caseload which exited assistance to employment each month, and
- the percentage of the caseload that were actively employed each month.

The Stratford CMSM Ontario Works Division was able to achieve all three targets set with the Government of Ontario, exceed provincial averages in all four measured outcomes and exceeded the customer service standards set by the Province with regard

to days from application contact to the application being granted assistance. The Stratford CMSM also averaged 3.5 days to decision, below the 4-day benchmark set by the Province. The other targets that were achieved are as follows:

Employment Outcome	Stratford CMSM Target	Stratford CMSM Achievement	Provincial Average
% of files exiting to employment	24.09%	26.40%	22.75%
% of overall caseload exiting to employment	1.47%	1.66%	1.10%
% of caseload with employment earnings	10.34%	13.55%	9.27%
Average monthly employment earnings per case	N/A	\$913	\$887

As detailed in the table above, the local office has exceeded all funded targets and provincial averages for the year. For this reason, there are no contractual penalties that may be applied by the Province of Ontario as a result of the 2022 negotiated outcomes.

Financial Implications

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no impact on the current year operating budget as a result of this report.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There is no expected impact to future year operating budgets as a result of this report. The local office was able to achieve all funded targets, as detailed in the contract with the Province of Ontario, meaning there is no potential funding penalty as a result of these outcomes.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Local and Sustainable Food

Promoting sustainable humane farming and healthy diets high in local, seasonal organic food and vegetable protein.

Travel and Transport

Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "2022 Employment Outcomes Update" (COU23-007), be received for information.

Prepared by:	Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Recommended by:	Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
	Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 14, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report #: SOC23-008
Attachments: None

Title: Salvation Army Tax Program – Stratford and North Perth

Objective: To consider approval for the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into an agreement with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada, to deliver an income tax program as noted below in both Stratford and North Perth for low-income individuals and families.

Secondly, to consider delegating Council's authority to approve entering into similar agreements to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer subject to budget approval.

Background: The City of Stratford Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) and the Salvation Army have been working together since 2013 to provide a service to individuals who require tax preparation services and are considered low-income. This service was provided by the Salvation Army and funded by the City of Stratford at a rate of \$25.00 per return completed. Payment is remitted monthly to the Salvation Army based on the number of returns completed, and the tax program is operational from March 1 until October 31. The program has grown from the initial 200 returns being completed annually in 2013 to over 600 returns as of 2021. In 2018, a program was piloted in North Perth whereby the same tax program offered in Stratford was also offered by the Salvation Army located in Listowel, completing approximately 100 returns per year. The total number of returns completed by both locations were as follows:

2020 – 447 (Stratford); Approx. 75 (Listowel)
 2021 – 553 (Stratford); 77 (Listowel)
 2022 – 581 (Stratford); 105 (Listowel)

Analysis: This program has been very beneficial to residents of Stratford, St Marys and Perth County and continues to provide an essential service that helps residents access

further resources and ensures they are receiving all federal benefits available to them. Each year, we have seen incremental increases in the number of people accessing this service through the number of returns completed, and we expect this trend to continue. This year, we have budgeted for a total of 800 returns, an increase from the 700 returns allocated in 2022.

Due to increased costs locally, the Salvation Army has requested an increase from the 2022 rate of \$25.00 per return to a new rate of \$40.00 per return. While this increase, at approximately 60%, is significant, the program remains a top priority and can be afforded within the Ontario Works purchase of service budget. At a rate of \$40.00 per return, the total cost of the program for both Stratford/St Marys and North Perth, if all 800 returns are completed each year, will be \$32,000, funded from Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). This represents an increase of 83% in total overall cost from 2022 to 2023.

The program is offered on a first come first served basis through a secured appointment. These appointments are booked, tracked, and recorded by the Salvation Army staff.

Appointments take place in 20-minute time slots and all clients must sign an Information and Consent form with the Salvation Army for statistical reporting purposes only. All documentation provided in the appointment is returned to the client after the return is completed. Clients can complete several years of returns in back-to-back appointment slots, which can be very beneficial for clients who may have funding owed to them or require several years of returns. This program has been helpful for individuals requiring income tax returns for applications such as Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing or the Canada Child Benefit. By providing this service to low-income individuals in the community, they can foster greater financial stability by receiving federal benefit available to them, which are solely based on their Income Tax returns being completed, such as the GST/HST Credit.

The agreements outline specific requirements of the program and highlight the process that is in place, as described above. There are two separate agreements as one pertains to Stratford/St Marys and the other, North Perth, though both agreements are executed between the City of Stratford and The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada. The agreements are for a one-year term and are renewed annually unless terminated in writing or replaced in accordance with the provision of the Agreement. The funding allotment that has been used historically, and is being proposed in this report, is Ontario Works Employment Supports funding. Each year, when completing the MCCSS Budget, funding is allotted to this program with the expectation that a maximum of 700 returns are being completed annually.

The proposed income scale to be used is the current Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative guidelines, which are listed below. This will allow for this essential

service to be provided to individuals who may not otherwise be able to afford to file their taxes with private corporations, or an accountant.

Number of People	Annual Income
Single	\$30,000
Two People	\$32,500
Three People	\$38,000
Four or more People	\$42,500

Staff also recommend that Council consider delegating its approval authority to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into similar agreements in the future for this income tax program, subject to budget approval.

This annual program has been offered for a number of years and is well received by users. To improve efficiency at the City, it is recommended that Council delegate its authority to the Director or CAO. Staff reports would no longer need to be prepared each time an agreement needs to be entered into and brought before Council for this annual program. Staff will report to Social Services Sub-committee on the annual program for Council's awareness moving forward.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The proposed tax program is 100% provincially funded through the Ontario Works Employment Supports budget (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services). The required \$32,000 has been included on the 2023 Ontario Works provincial budget as a purchase of service agreement. Currently, there is no request for additional municipal funding to support this program. As such, there is no financial implication to the City's net tax levy.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

This program will continue to be funded through the Ontario Works Employment Supports budget, which is 100% provincially funded. The total cost of the program will be included on provincial budgets moving forward. If there are changes to the Ontario Works funding that impact this program, the budget and program will be reviewed at that time for viability while exploring alternate funding sources. The Tax Program agreement has a termination clause if funding is no longer allocated through the Ontario Works program.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to enter into two agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the income tax program in Stratford and North Perth, respectively;

THAT City Council delegates its approval authority to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer to execute annual renewal agreements with The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada to deliver the income tax program in Stratford and North Perth, subject to no contract performance issues or amendments to funding identified by the City;

AND THAT Delegation of Authority By-law 135-2017, as amended, be further amended to delegate Council's authority to enter into income tax program agreements on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works

Recommended by:

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer