



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Monday, November 27, 2023

Time: 7:05 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Hunter, Councillor McCabe, Deputy Mayor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Chris Bantock - Deputy Clerk

To watch the 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.

Mayor Ritsma has 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. Sub-committee Minutes

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Sub-committee minutes are attached for background regarding the discussion held at the November 15, 2023 Sub-committee meeting.

4. Delegations

None scheduled.

5. Report of the Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

5.1 Enhancements to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County (SOC23-022)

8 - 10

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

6. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

6.1 Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. Contract Renewal (SOC23-021)

11 - 14

Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

7. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Committee meeting adjourn.



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

Date: November 15, 2023
 Time: 4:30 P.M.
 Location: Council Chambers

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

Regrets: Councillor Nijjar and Councillor Briscoe

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary, John Ritz - Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Nijjar and Councillor Briscoe provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

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 November 15, 2023, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None were scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. Contract Renewal (SOC23-021)

Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works provided the following highlights from the staff report:

- the City currently using Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. to adjudicate dental claims on behalf of the Ontario Works Division;
- the scope of the program being expanded to include denture and vision claims;
- expansion of services reducing administrative burden on staff;
- shifting to electronic verification portal allowing service providers to access information to determine eligibility in real-time and submit payment; and
- the portal increasing the efficiency of the service and allowing Ontario Works to meet a Provincial modernization initiative.

It was questioned how many clients have access to email. The Manager of Ontario Works stated 35% of clients are enrolled in My Benefits, however, 60-70% have some access to email.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Carried

5. Report of the Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

5.1 Enhancements to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County (SOC23-022)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor provided the following highlights from the staff report:

- the report being for information and to raise awareness in the community on additional supports for individuals sleeping rough during cold weather months;
- partner agencies keeping Community Care Kits in their vehicles to provide to individuals at encampments and sleeping rough;
- Community Care Kits providing safety measures and building trust between Outreach staff, partner agencies and individuals receiving supports;
- Community Care Kits consisting of a variety of resources and intermediate supplies; and
- a shared branding approach where support staff wear matching backpacks being developed to increase Outreach Worker visibility.

A question and answer period took place between Sub-committee and staff as follows:

- donations of items for the Community Care Kids being sent to the Connection Centre;

- staff speaking with the Canadian Mental Health Association regarding a communication strategy for donations to the program;
- weekend support being available to unsheltered individuals through Stratford Police Services, the Ontario Provincial Police or the Connection Centre;
- after hours and weekend emergency shelter inquiries from local residents being directed to Shelterlink at 519-272-2294;
- individuals living outside of Huron-Perth being identified during the screening process and directed to services which will fit their needs;
- warming centres being set up during cold weather advisories at the Rotary Complex, as well as the library, malls and local businesses dependent on the date and time; and
- if an individual is screened and can be reunited with support persons in their hometown then area transportation can be provided.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Carried

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

All Sub-committee meetings for the month of December have been cancelled. Meetings will resume in January 2024.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

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

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:39 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:53 P.M.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 15, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: John Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor
 Kehlar Hillyer, Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator
Report Number: SOC23-022
Attachments: None

Title: Enhancements to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County

Objective: This report is presented to the Mayor and Council for information purposes to raise awareness in the community of an additional homelessness response during the cold weather months between November and March, available for individuals sleeping rough.

Background: As part of the City of Stratford's Coordinated Response to Unsheltered individuals (a response that has been adapted across the service area) Outreach staff are regularly checking in with individuals experiencing homelessness and offering connections to services, referrals to community partners, Emergency Housing solutions, and temporary supplies to assist while working collaboratively to secure permanent stable housing.

As a component of this coordinated response, outreach staff from the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys, Municipality of North Perth, Stratford Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, Community Paramedic program, and the Canadian Mental Health Association, who provide support to the homeless population are piloting a Community Care Kit program. Partners will keep care kits in vehicles to provide to individuals at encampments and sleeping rough. This is anticipated to provide some safety measures ahead of inclement weather when engaging with supports and build trust between Outreach staff, partner agencies, and the individuals receiving supports.

In addition to the Care Kit program, the City of Stratford Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) hopes to increase Outreach Worker visibility in the community through a shared branding approach that will have support staff wearing matching backpacks. This is expected to increase awareness of homelessness supports within the community and for those seeking them.

Analysis: Community Care Kits will consist of a variety of resources and intermediate supplies to individuals at encampments. These kits will be provided on an as needed basis by community partners to individuals and will be equipped with supplies to support individuals during winter months.

Kits will include but are not limited to the following:

- A list of community services and phone numbers in the area in which they are located
- A printout of warming stations and community meals, locations, and times
- Single-use disposable hand and glove warmers
- Gloves and hats
- City of Stratford Transit and PC Connect schedules.
- Lip balm
- A gift card for local establishments
- Reusable water bottle
- Socks

To spread awareness of these services within the communities, matching backpacks for partner support staff will be worn to increase visibility of these services. All staff within supporting roles have been provided a backpack which will be worn during day-to-day activities and when supporting individuals who are most vulnerable within the community. By providing consistent branding across service providers, members of the community either in need of support, or for those who have concern for fellow citizens, will be able to identify a support staff easily to review options of support available.

While the CMSM recognizes this is not a solution for individuals sleeping outside, the goal is to be able to provide essential items while services continue to work with individuals to find permanent stable housing.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Purchase of the backpacks for support staff, at a cost of \$1,166.85 including HST as well as the care kits, at an approximate cost of \$15-\$20 each will be funded within the current Homelessness Prevention Program budget for 2023.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There is potential future impact on budgets if data from the pilot project warrants an expansion of the program. The impact, at an estimated cost of \$15-20 per care kit, will be dependant on the number of care kits required and will be assessed as the program progresses.

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.

Equity and Local Economy

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

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Prepared by: John, Ritz, Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor
Kehlar Hillyer, Housing Stability Policy & Program
Coordinator

Recommended by: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 15, 2023
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: SOC23-021
Attachments: None

Title: Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. Contract Renewal

Objective: To consider entering into a renewal agreement with Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. to continue adjudicating dental services on behalf of the Ontario Works Division, and to expand the scope of services to now adjudicate denture and vision care claims. Furthermore, to consider authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc., on behalf of the City, for the delivery of these services.

Background: Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. (herein referred to as Accerta) has been adjudicating dental claims on behalf of the City of Stratford Ontario Works (OW) Division since 1999 when the initial agreement was signed. Accerta is a B-Corp certified social enterprise and supplementary healthcare benefits provider for government programs. Accerta provides a full suite of services related to adjudicating claims and allows for the local OW Division to solely make payment for dental claims.

Analysis: Accerta is responsible for the eligibility determination of dental claims for clients currently in receipt of Ontario Works. They work with dental offices to adjudicate claims made as part of the discretionary dental program offered by Ontario Works, then determine eligibility, advise dental offices of eligible procedures and costs, and make payment on behalf of the City of Stratford to said dental offices. The Ontario Works Division makes payment on a monthly basis for the total amounts owing, on behalf of eligible clients. The table below details amounts paid by Accerta as well as the fees paid by the City of Stratford Ontario Works Division over the past three years:

Year	Clients Served	# of Services Covered	Dental Claims Paid	Fees Paid
2020	91	359	\$16,460	\$741
2021	92	415	\$18,726	\$843
2022	100	513	\$26,946	\$1,213

In addition to the adjudication of dental claims, staff have explored having Accerta adjudicate both denture and vision-related claims. This has been in consultation with CUPE 1385 staff directly affected by the change, and staff are recommending an expansion of the service agreement to include these additional claims.

Currently, these claims are managed by Ontario Works caseworkers but in an effort to reduce administrative burden, in line with Provincial modernization initiatives, the local office is recommending moving ahead with having Accerta adjudicate these claims. It is anticipated that the time savings from pre-approving, sending letters of approval, holding letters and revisiting old claims and making payment will allow for more high impact time to be spent with Ontario Works clients, as opposed to completing administrative activities such as these.

Another benefit with proceeding as recommended, the local office can further the paperless initiative and move away from the issuance of paper dental cards as dental offices, vision care offices and denturists will now be able to access an online portal that helps them determine eligibility in real-time and submit payment via the online portal. This will reduce the use of paper in the local office, reduce the time spent sending approval letters or creating replacement dental cards and will reduce the administrative burden on local Ontario Works staff. The online portal also increases the efficiency of this service and allow for the Ontario Works office to meet another Provincial modernization initiative (shifting to a paperless delivery format, where possible, for all information related to Ontario Works). Currently 35% of the caseload is enrolled in MyBenefits which allows for paperless delivery of all communications for those individuals and families.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The cost related to the adjudication of dental claims is a set fee of \$100/month plus a percentage of claims paid. These costs are budgeted within the 100% Provincial portfolio on a yearly basis and have no impact to the City's net budget.

To implement the Electronic Verification (EV) portal, there is a one-time fee of \$3,400 plus an ongoing cost of \$90/month. These costs were budgeted in the Consultants line

of the Ontario Works budget for 2023 and have no impact to the City's net budget for 2023.

To have Accerta begin adjudicating denture and vision claims will cost \$1,000 per program for set-up (\$2,000 in total) plus \$100 per month and 4.65% of claims paid. These costs were also budgeted in the Consultants line of the Ontario Works budget for 2023 and have no impact to the City's net budget for 2023.

The total one-time fees owed for 2023 is \$5,400 to set up the EV portal and begin adjudicating denture and vision claims. These were budgeted within the 2023 Ontario Works budget and have no impact to the City's net budget for 2023.

The cost of ongoing benefits for the clients accessing these programs are paid through the Discretionary Benefits program which is 100% funded by the Provincial government and have no impact to the City's net budget for 2023.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Moving forward, the ongoing costs for the delivery of these programs will be budgeted into the Ontario Works budget, utilizing the 100% Provincial funding portfolio first, where possible, before utilizing the cost-shared administrative dollars. The cost per month is for denture, vision, dental and the EV portal are anticipated to be:

Set fee: \$290/month (\$3480/year) plus 4.65% of claims paid.

These costs are continually budgeted by the Ontario Works Division. The cost of ongoing benefits for the clients accessing these programs are paid through the Discretionary Benefits program which is 100% funded by the Provincial government and are expected to have no impact to the City's net operating budgets in future years.

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.

Material and Products

Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.

Zero Waste

Reducing consumption, reusing and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.

Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

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