

MUNICIPAL SHARED SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: Teams Meeting - Stratford Hosting

- 1. Call 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*.

- 3. Confirmation of the Agenda**
- 4. Adoption of Previous Minutes – November 21, 2024 Meeting**
Attachment – Draft minutes of November 21, 2024
- 5. Business arising from the previous minutes**
- 6. Social Services** - 3rd Quarter Update for the Social Services Department (2024)
- 7. Stratford Perth Archives** – Activities Update Report from Stratford-Perth Archives for MSSC
- 8. Perth Paramedic Services** – no update provided
- 9. Provincial Offences** - POA Court Services Report for MSSC and Operational Update
- 10. New Business**

11. 2025 Meeting Schedule

- March 20, 2024 – Perth County
- June 19, 2024 – City of Stratford
- September 18, 2024 – Perth County
- November 20, 2024 (Budget) – City of Stratford
- December 18, 2024 – Perth County

12. Adjournment



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: December 19, 2024
To: Municipal Shared Services Committee
From: Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: 3rd Quarter Update for the Social Services Department (2024)

Administrative

Introduction to Quarterly Infographics

Background: The City of Stratford CMSM strives to base its service delivery on evidence-based approaches to best serve our clients' needs. This approach ensures that decisions are grounded in empirical evidence and current data. Utilizing the data we can proactively attempt to predict trends and mobilize our programming, service delivery and resource allocations accordingly.

Analysis: Staff have compiled some of the key statistics and were able to transform the statistics into easily digestible infographic formats, enabling the public to quickly comprehend the information. These reports will be updated internally, monthly, with variances reviewed quarterly. By presenting data over time, the infographics allow for the identification of trends in Housing and Homelessness as well as Children's Services and Ontario Works. It is hoped this initiative enhances data accessibility, improves understanding of trends and enhances community engagement and awareness regarding social issues, fostering a more informed public dialogue around these critical areas. The infographics will be distributed quarterly to council as part of the Social Services sub-committee updates, as well as made available to the public through the City of Stratford website.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

This initiative is being performed within our current staff resources, with no impact on the operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

The initiative itself does not have impact on future operating budgets, the findings of the initiative may impact future programming, service delivery and resource allocations.

OUTCOME: At the October 15, 2024 Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following recommendation of the Social Services Committee:

THAT the report titled, "Introduction to Quarterly Infographics" (SOC24-010), be received for information.

Annual Community Income Tax Clinic for Completion of 2023 Returns

Background:

The City of Stratford has coordinated an annual income tax clinic for low-income residents since 1989, with the support of local accounting firms. Services continued to be provided this year free of charge by two local accounting firms, Famme & Co. Professional Corporation, and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation. Together they provided the opportunity for 124 participants to have returns completed.

Analysis:

Pre-pandemic, appointments were scheduled for in-person attendances with the accountants at various locations in Stratford on one day mid-March. Throughout the pandemic, the City of Stratford Social Services Department coordinated these services without interruption to residents by moving to a drop off/pick up approach and after consultation with the accounting firms involved, this method continues. We can serve more participants and allow more time to the agencies preparing the returns free of charge. We communicated well in advance of the clinic, providing details to partner agencies, posting to various media platforms, including displaying details on screens on the city transit buses, as well as reminders to Ontario Works clients. Caseworkers, reception, and intake staff were informed of the details to share with clients.

We had the same commitment as previous years of 132 appointment times from Famme & Co. Professional Corporation and McCutchen & Pearce Professional Corporation for completion of the 2023 tax returns. The program is offered on a first come first served basis with every effort made to accommodate as many participants as possible. Initially the 132 spaces were booked completely but there were several cancellations, so every attempt was made to backfill the remaining spots. By the end of the clinic 124 returns were completed.

This year participation was open to any participant on Social Assistance (Ontario Works, ODSP) with a Form T5007, Seniors 65+ with single income of \$25,396 or less and couple income of \$34,346 or less. Finally, all other participants with a single income of \$16,000 or less and couple income of \$32,000 or less. This allows the service to be provided to individuals who may not otherwise be able to afford to file taxes through private corporations or accountants. Only current year returns are completed during the clinic. As an alternative, referrals were made to a program offered through The Salvation Army under Purchase of Service Agreements with the City for anyone unable to meet our submission deadline, or if they had multiple years of returns or estate returns to be completed. The Salvation Army offers sites in St. Marys and Listowel which enables participants without the means to travel to Stratford to still participate in this very worthwhile opportunity.

Since its inception, this well-received program has been beneficial to residents of Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County. It provides an essential service that helps residents access further resources and ensure they are receiving all federal benefits available to them to maximize incomes. It has been helpful for individuals requiring income tax returns for applications such as Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing or the Canada Child Benefit and fosters greater financial stability when receiving federal benefits such as GST/HST credit.

All professional accounting services are provided free of charge to participants.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There is no cost to the Corporation other than some administrative staff time to coordinate with the accounting firms and schedule appointments, which did not have an impact on this year's budget or to service delivery.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There would be no future year impact relating to the 2023 clinic.

OUTCOME: At the October 15, 2024 Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following recommendation of the Social Services Committee: THAT the City of Stratford issue a thank you to all businesses that provided their support and services during the Annual Community Income Tax Clinic.

Housing

Supported Transitional Housing Pilot Project

Background: Local By-Name List (BNL) data demonstrates that the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness has significantly increased over the last three years. In January of 2021, in our service area, 91 households were identified as experiencing chronic homelessness ('chronic' is defined as a period of homelessness lasting 6 months or longer),¹ while BNL data in June of 2024 was indicative of 150 households meeting the criteria for chronicity.

The Supported Transitional Housing pilot project intends to function as a support available to individuals who could benefit from intensive in-home support services, with a focus on providing guidance on developing the skills required to live independently. This type of support could include education on tasks such as housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping, budgeting, how to be a good neighbour, making and attending appointments, conflict resolution, and guest management. The program will see participants receive in-home support a minimum of three times per week and will serve

as a transition between living outdoors and living in a traditional landlord/tenant relationship where rules are expected to be followed under the Residential Tenancies Act.

¹ Housing, I. a. C. C. (2024, August 7). *Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada - Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy Directives*. https://housinginfrastructure.canada.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/directives-eng.html#_toc2

Analysis:

Individuals who experience chronic homelessness can require highly individualized care plans in relation to their varying depth of needs and success in a transitional housing program will vary from person to person. Eligibility for the program will be determined on a case-by-case basis, however all eligible participants will be active and 'chronic' on the local homelessness By-Name List, will have an active application for Rent-Geared-to-Income housing, and will have demonstrated, over time, that they could benefit from an intensive support transition program to work toward long-term success once housed, either in the private market or within Rent-Geared-to-Income housing. Program success factors will be measured by level of engagement with supports, program participation, progression of life skills development, connections to health and social services, guest management strategies, and the length of time in transitional housing before becoming housed.

Understanding that safe and stable housing is an integral part of the overall Social Determinants of Health², program success will also be measured by improved overall health outcomes related to **financial stability**: learning to make and keep appointments with Social Assistance Caseworkers; **health care access and quality**: bringing health care to the home by working closely with the Community Paramedic team who can facilitate connections to Family Health Teams, pharmacies for medication management, wound care, and ongoing health monitoring; **neighbourhood and built environment**: safe housing, transportation, and the ability to access nutritious foods; **social and community context**: social support, community engagement, and freedom from discrimination and violence. All these factors contribute to ongoing physical and mental wellness.

² *Social Determinants of Health - Healthy People 2030* | Health.gov. (n.d.). <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

The average rental income on a one-bedroom unit in Rent-Geared-to-Income housing, for a single adult in receipt of Ontario Works (OW), is \$122.00; \$146.00 for a single adult in receipt of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

As participants in the Supported Transitional Housing Program will be signing occupancy agreements rather than traditional leases, there will be no rent charged. Therefore, the potential monthly revenue loss on the unit is \$122.00 x 12 months totaling \$1,464.00 per year for OW recipients, and \$146.00 x 12 months totaling \$1,752.00 for ODSP recipients. The benefits of this program would be seen through increases to individuals'

overall wellness, and opportunities for long-term independence. Additionally, it is intended that there would be less pressure on the social, health, and criminal justice systems, through a wrap around support approach. This is more cost-effective than using emergency housing solutions through motels.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

This program began in August 2024, and it is anticipated that any costs in 2024 will be managed within the 614 – Perth & Stratford Housing Corporation budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Potential impacts would include lost rental revenues for 1-2 units and the value of these is based on the income levels of the individuals. With increased transitions, there could also be increased replacement of in-unit appliances required for transitions including refrigerator, induction cooktop, microwave, and more significant repairs such as flooring, drywall, plumbing, electrical. An additional \$50,000 has been included in the draft 2025 budget to address these estimated costs.

Outcome: At the October 15, 2024 Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following recommendation of the Social Services Committee: THAT the report titled, "Supported Transitional Housing Pilot Project" (SOC24-011), be received for information.

Homelessness

Intensive Case Management (ICM) Program Update

Background: Since September 2018, the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) has provided housing assistance and wrap-around supports, to locally established priority groups. This includes youth, families with dependent aged children, individuals exiting provincial institutions, and those chronically experiencing homelessness or self identify as Indigenous.

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for homelessness, the City of Stratford Social Services Department was responsible for the implementation of a housing first program, focusing on supporting chronically homeless individuals, while prioritizing those with the highest levels of acuity, and connecting them with an Intensive Case Manager working with the SHOPP program. In addition to being connected to an Intensive Case Manager, funding allocations were also made available for individuals in the program including a housing allowance to assist with the high costs associated with the rental units, as well as funding to assist with eviction prevention, and for life stabilization.

Analysis: In 2021 the provincial government combined the funding resources across

the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) that included the Home for Good Funding, into one stream of funding now called the Homelessness Prevention Plan (HPP). As a result, funding streams available when the program was implemented are no longer available to SHOPP participants or the landlords participating in the SHOPP program.

As a result of the cancellation of the SHOPP program and unavailability of additional benefits previously available, the City is faced with the ongoing challenge of having to redefine a program that is no longer available.

The challenge with the current name and funding changes, is that landlords or people connected to the program, signed on with the initial financial benefits associated with SHOPP. The City has circulated a letter confirming the end of SHOPP and benefits to the participating landlords as of June 1, 2024.

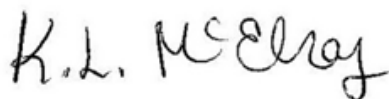
The funding however remains available under the HPP program through the Housing Stability Bank, to assist with first and last month rents, utility and rent arrears, insurance, and furniture costs, confirming that the ICM program will still offer Intensive Case Management supports, to prioritized populations including those who qualified for the SHOPP program.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable: There are no financial implications to be reported as a result of this report.

OUTCOME: At the August 12, 2024 Regular Council meeting, Council adopted the following resolution: THAT the report titled, "Intensive Case Management (ICM) Update" (COU24-084), related to the rebranding from the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) model due to the funding source changes, be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Kim McElroy,

Director of Social Services - Consolidated Municipal Service Manager Stratford

To: Municipal Shared Services Committee
Meeting Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024
Prepared By: Betty Jo Belton, Manager of Archives Services / Archivist
Subject: Activities Update Report from Stratford-Perth Archives for MSSC

Recommended Action:

THAT Municipal Shared Services Committee receives the “Activities Update Report from Stratford-Perth Archives.”

Executive Summary:

Staff at Stratford-Perth Archives provide Reference and Research services to local governments and community members. There were 1,184 queries received via email/phone and in-person visits as of October 31, 2024. Fifty-one donations or transfers of records and fifty-eight reference books were received between January and the end of October. Public outreach through weekly articles in area newspapers, exhibits and talks to community groups is on-going.

Background Information:

This report provides a general overview of projects and services provided at Stratford-Perth Archives from January to the end of October 2024. It is intended for the MSSC meeting of December 19, 2024.

Comments:

Reference & Research Services

Stratford-Perth Archives staff responded to 1,184 queries received via email/phone and in-person visits from January to the end of October 2024. This work has involved 1,624 emails and 79 scanning requests for photographs and documents to be used for a township history book, Black history celebrations at a local library, family history, home and property research, and the history of the Allman arena in Stratford. Staff also provided assistance with using the Land Registry Office website OnLand, advice on preserving land deeds from the early 1800s and responded to 56 requests from municipal staff for information from their archived records.

On September 23, Megan Lockhart joined the Archives as Assistant Archivist for Reference, replacing Ellen Thomas, who retired in August after several years of dedicated service. Megan previously worked at St. Marys Archives and, most recently, was an Archives Technician at Oxford County Archives. With over eight years of experience in municipal archives, a BA in History from Western University, and Fine Arts Diplomas in Cultural Resource Management and Collections Management from the University of Victoria, Ms. Lockhart is a great addition to the Archives team.

Positive feedback on Archives’ services and assistance has been received on multiple occasions, including these comments:

Thank you very much for your prompt work on this, great information and I can let the concerned individuals know.

Wow! This is so impressive that you came up with all that already! Thanks for the tips and I may be in touch for more info but this is a GREAT start.

Thank you so much for all of this information. Can't wait to do the research into this house. I'm so excited to have purchased it and can't wait to spend more time there.

Thank you very much for your reply and details. I really appreciate you sending copies of a few pages from the family history book. That definitely convinces me to make a plan to visit the Archives in person and look through things and then decide if a copy would be helpful.

Cataloguing and Digitization

On September 14, Stratford-Perth Archives launched a new newspaper database via the OurDigitalWorld website. The website is a "discovery portal" that brings together content from archives and libraries across the province providing free online public access to past issues of local newspapers. Not only are the newspapers available for viewing, but each issue is keyword searchable making it easy to locate specific content. Work is on-going and more newspapers will be added as they are digitized.

As of the end of October, there had been over 38,000 views of the Stratford-Perth Archives newspaper database by users from across North America and from as far away as Norway and New Zealand. The following feedback is an example of the comments received since the launch: *"I just read in the Stratford paper online about your newspapers starting to be online. I've already found some answers to my puzzles!! 😊 Thank you for getting these online so people can search from home."*

Collections Management and Development

Forty-one donations or transfers of records and fifty-one reference books have been received since the beginning of the year. During November and December staff will be focused on processing collections in preparation for monetary appraisals for donors who have requested a tax receipt for a gift-in-kind donation to Perth County. Independent appraisers are required for donations likely to have a fair market value over one thousand dollars. Archives staff have expertise in collections management to determine which donations require independent evaluation and to assess the value of collections with a fair market value under one thousand dollars.

Public Outreach

Forty-two weekly news articles, written by Archives staff about local history, have been published in the Listowel Banner, Mitchell Advocate and Stratford Beacon Herald so far this year. Another ten articles have been published monthly in the Stratford Times.

Readers often reach out with questions about the local history information presented and compliments such as this one:

"Loved seeing your write up in the Beacon Herald this past weekend. [about the history of Stratford's civic flower – the iris] Great job! So refreshing. Thank you for taking the time to do that."

Betty Jo Belton, Manager of Archives Services presented a webinar, "Stratford-Perth Archives: Treasures Old and New", which included an overview of Archives services and collections, via ZOOM for the Perth County Branch of Ontario Ancestors on Thursday, August 15.

Assistant Archivist Jenn Georgiou gave a presentation on how to use the Archives newspaper database at a launch event on September 14. She has since given the same presentation to heads of Perth County libraries at a Perth County Information Network (PCIN) meeting and at a Stratford Public Library staff meeting. Ms. Georgiou also repeated her public presentation on “Digitizing Your Family Photos” at Perth East Public Library on October 22.

Archives brochures were provided to Stratford Public Library staff working with the City of Stratford on a Welcome to Stratford initiative. The brochures will be included in an information packet about community organizations for new residents.

Public Engagement:

Information about programs and services at Stratford-Perth Archives is regularly distributed through the County website and social media accounts, local media, information displays, and talks to community groups.

Financial Implications:

This report describes on-going reference and research; cataloguing and digitization; collections management and development; and, public outreach activities at Stratford-Perth Archives reflected in the approved budget.

Connection to Strategic Plan:

Goal 2: Regionalization and Service Effectiveness
Goal 3: Customer Service Excellence
Goal 5: Corporate Sustainability

Reviewed by:

Annette Diamond, Executive Director of Legal / Corporate Services

To: Municipal Shared Services Committee
Meeting Date: December 19, 2024
Prepared By: Vicky Hamilton, Manager of Court Services
Subject: POA Court Services Report for MSSC and Operational Update

Recommended Action:

THAT the Municipal Shared Services Committee receives the “POA Court Services Report for MSSC and Operational Update” report for information.

Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on activities at the Provincial Offences Court Service office until the end of September 2024.

Comments:

Court Scheduling

The remaining court dockets for 2024 are completely full. Court Services secured ten additional blitz court dates for 2024. Blitz days are not regularly scheduled court dates, but rather additional days that are provided to assist with addressing the volume and backlog of cases. Court Services continues to work with the Regional Senior Justice of the Peace to secure extra court dates in 2025. Staff have early resolution meetings booked until mid January.

Monthly Pending Caseload

The following table shows the average monthly pending caseload to the end of September.

Year	Pending Caseload
2024	1,868
2023	2,185
2022	1,596
2021	1,440
2020	1,015
2019	1,369

Court Appearances

The table below shows the court appearances to the end of September. There is a steady increase in the number of court appearances over those six years.

Year	Court Appearances
2024	8,120
2023	7,707
2022	6,960
2021	6,267
2020	4,157
2019	5,376

Charges Filed

The following table shows a comparison of the last six years for charges filed.

Year	Charges Filed
2024	7,486
2023	8,684
2022	7,697
2021	7,496
2020	6,139
2019	8,711

Revenue

The table below shows the fines collected to the end of September for each year.

Year	Revenue
2024	\$2,093,840
2023	\$1,381,875
2022	\$1,332,945
2021	\$1,119,215
2020	\$854,728
2019	\$1,152,299

Distribution of Revenue

The distribution of revenue has been calculated based on actual fines paid and the location of each offence.

Municipality	% of Net Revenue
Town of St. Marys	2.29%
City of Stratford	33.03%
County of Perth	64.68%

Connection to Strategic Plan:

Goal 2 – Regionalization & Service Effectiveness

Goal 3 – Customer Service Excellence