

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 13-2005

Minutes of a meeting of the Public Health Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario on August 22, 2005, commencing at 12:40 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Timms, Chair; Angelone; Baty; Brock; Casselman; Goulbourne; Harry.

Staff: Mr. Mike Trojan, Chief Administrative Officer; Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Mr. Christensen, Director, Health Protection & Promotion; Mr. Hudgin, Manager, Safe Water Program; Mr. Hunter, Manager, Health Protection & Promotion; Mr. Kelly, Public Health Inspector; Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health; Ms. Ott, Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

146. AMO Conference

Councillor Timms advised that at the recent AMO conference, discussions took place with Regional Chair Partington, Councillor Casselman, Dr. Basrur and Jim Watson, Minister, Health Promotion, regarding the following important issues:

- The Province's commitment to the Public Health Department's economic and healthy well-being strategies in Niagara.
- Honouring the Province's commitment for 65% provincial funding in 2006 and 75% funding in 2007.
- The Province's support of the Regional Chair's Roundtable on Obesity and recognition of Niagara's successful launch of this program.
- A commitment by the Province to approve the Public Health Department's budget on a more timely basis.

A discussion ensued regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Health versus the Minister of Health Promotion. Dr. Williams

commented that the Minister of Health Promotion's portfolio, as she understands it, relates to sports and recreation; physical fitness; obesity and healthy lifestyle and tobacco prevention programs. Committee members requested definitions of both Ministers' portfolios.

Councillor Casselman commented that she spoke to the Minister of the importance of promoting Arts and Culture as part of a healthy lifestyle and its benefits as it relates to stress reduction. Councillor Casselman also advised that the Minister is planning a "listening tour" in Niagara in the Fall as a means to assess priorities, noting that Minister Watson will be meeting with the Minister of Finance to discuss new monies needed to fund sports and recreation and healthy lifestyle programs.

Committee was advised that LHINs was also discussed and the Province was aware of the concerns expressed by Niagara as to the lack of consultation regarding the boundaries and composition of LHINs as well as the time delays in implementing the executive for LHINs (given the immediate closure of Niagara's Niagara District Health Council). Committee members expressed an interest in attending future meetings held regarding LHINs. Staff was asked to email the LHIN's office in Grimsby and seek clarification regarding public access to LHIN meetings. It was also suggested that Regional Council be advised that the Province is aware of Niagara's concerns regarding LHINs and that the Regional Chair and Council has been successful in getting their message to the Province.

147. 2006 Budget Process

Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health, provided a brief overview of the criteria contained in Report PHD 48-2005, which will be used to evaluate changes to the Public Health Department's 2006 Current Budget.

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Angelone

That Report PHD 48-2005, August 22, 2005, respecting 2006 Budget Process, be received for information; and

That the Public Health Department criteria for evaluating changes to the 2006 Public Health Current Budget be approved.

Carried.

Moved by Councillor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Angelone

That the next Regional Council Business Planning session include all Board of Health members to deal with Public Health issues, most specifically to clarify the direction and emphasis of the Board of Health, a discussion on the role and responsibilities of the Board, as well as the development of a communications piece; and

That this session be held on a Thursday during "Communications Week".

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 70.)

148. West Nile Virus

Mr. Hunter, Manager, Health Protection and Promotion, provided a summary of the activities and strategies with respect to bird surveillance, mosquito surveillance, mosquito control and communication used by the Public Health Department in its efforts to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus.

Moved by Councillor Angelone
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That Report PHD 51-2005, August 22, 2005, respecting West Nile Virus Update 2005, be received for information.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 71.)

149. Recreational Water Management and Public Pools Programs

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Harry

Mr. Hunter provided an update on the activities within the Beach Water Management and Public Pools Programs for the Public Health Department. Mr. Hunter introduced Glen Hudgin, Manager, Safe Water Program.

Committee requested clarification with respect to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's regulations as it relates to the health and safety operational procedures for public pools and wading pools. Committee expressed their concerns that, due to the uncertainties of the regulations,

municipalities may close their public pools and wading pools or apply fees that may be detrimental to Niagara's strategies as they relate to obesity and healthy lifestyle programs.

Moved by Councillor Brock
Seconded by Councillor Harry

That Report PHD 52-2005, August, 22, 2005, respecting Recreational Water Management and Public Pools Programs, be received for information.

Carried.

(Refer to staff direction on page PHSC 71.)

OTHER BUSINESS

150. Follow up - City of Welland Issues

Councillor Goulbourne commented that in following up with Mitech's complaints to the City of Welland on how the Public Health Department handled media issues, he commented that it was recognized that the department and Region did a great job.

Councillor Goulbourne also commented that the City of Welland was well served with the Public Health Department's location of its flu clinics.

151. "Cities Want Province to Cover Costs"

Councillor Timms apprised Committee of the AMO update related to Ontario municipalities launching their own campaign saying the province should pick up the \$3 billion annual cost of welfare and public health now being borne by property taxpayers. Councillor Timms commented that Premier McGuinty later said in his keynote address to AMO that he considers the 75/25 PH funding a \$220 million "upload" shifting Public Health downloading back to the Province. Committee members concurred that the \$3 billion annual deficit needs to be addressed by the province and lobbying to that effect should continue.

STAFF DIRECTION

That staff be directed to:

- (i) Include on the next Public Health Services Committee agenda, the alpha survey and information regarding uncertainties related to shifts in funding. Information is also requested outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Minister of Health versus the Minister of Health Promotion. (Refer to minute 146 and 147.)

- (ii) Provide information on the severity of morbidity with respect to the West Nile Virus. (Included in the 2005 WNV summary report.) (Refer to minute 148.)
- (iii) Continue to communicate with municipalities and advise them that the RNPHD is seeking clarification of the regulations for Public Wading Pools Programs. (Refer to minute 149.)

ADJOURNMENT

Committee adjourned at 1:48 p.m. to meet again on Monday, September 12, 2005, at 12:30 p.m. in C.R. 4, Regional Headquarters.

Bruce Timms
Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk