

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT 5-2008

Minutes of a meeting of the Public Health and Social Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, 2201 St. David's Road, Thorold, Ontario, on Tuesday, April 15, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Baty, Co-Chair; Casselman, Co-Chair; Cordiner; Forster; Goulbourne; Greenwood; Henderson; Marshall; Rigby.

Councillors

Other: Councillor Augustyn.

Staff: Dr. Williams, Medical Officer of Health; Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services; Ms. Gilroy, Regional Clerk; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Other: Community Services Dept: Ms. Pennisi, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Mr. Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services.

Public Health Dept.: Ms. Columbus, Manager, Youth Connection; Dr. Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health; Mr. Jones, Director, Administrative Services; Dr. Klooz, Associate Commissioner of Health; Ms. Peacefull, Community Development Manager; Dr. Sider, Associate Medical Officer of Health.

Niagara EMS: Mr. Cunnane, Director, EMS; Mr. Smith, Manager of Operations; Mr. Van Valkenburg, Associate Director, EMS.

Administration: Mr. McQueen, Director, Administrative Services; Ms. Papaiz, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications; Mr. Pilon, Executive Officer to Regional Chair.

Human Resources: Mr. Nicol, Commissioner, Human Resources.

PRESENTATION

59. Offload Delay Update

Mr. Kevin Smith, Manager of Operations, provided a slide presentation on the offload delay matter. Slides were presented depicting a weekly comparison of offload delays for the period 2006, 2007 and 2008; the number of ambulances on offload delay; and the frequency of decreased ambulance availability. Mr. Smith commented that offload delays at hospitals have continued to increase over the last two years and that more ambulances delayed in the emergency departments equates to less ambulances to service the community and increased risk to the public. A map was also provided illustrating the main areas where offload delays

occur. As a result, response times to emergency calls have increased across the region, particularly in some lower-tier municipalities.

Committee was apprised of the Niagara Emergency Medical Services (NEMS) and Niagara Health System (NHS) initiatives currently under development and new programs recently undertaken by both the NHS and Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Provincial Plan) to address the off load delay situation.

Dr. Sider, Associate Medical Officer of Health, advised that he would provide Councillors with a copy of a recent speech by Tom Clossen, President and CEO, Ontario Health Association (OHA), in which a number of OHA positions and recommendations are articulated and specifically the OHA analysis and recommendations on patient access to hospital care and services.

In summary, Committee was advised that while NEMS and the NHS continue to work collaboratively to address this issue, EMS has no more capacity to absorb the effects of this situation without increased risk to the public.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

60. Offload Delay Update
PHD 14-2008 (CSD 55-2008)

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That Report PHD 14-2008, April 15, 2008 (CSD 55-2008, April 16, 2008) regarding Offload Delay Update, be referred to the next Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting.

Defeated.

Moved by Councillor Cordiner
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That Report PHD 14-2008, April 15, 2008 (CSD 55-2008, April 16, 2008) respecting Offload Delay Update, be received.

That Option One be endorsed and funding be provided from the Region's Contingency Reserve, and that a letter be written to the Province to request reimbursement of this funding; and

That Senior Management continue to work diligently with the Niagara Health System and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to find solutions to the offload dilemma; and, beginning 90 days from the current date, provide quarterly reports to Committee and Council on progress.

Carried.

Moved by Councillor Henderson
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That staff be directed to develop a resolution for Council's approval addressing the urgent need for a coordinated and effective province-wide approach to the systems issues underlying offload delays, for circulation to other boards of health, AMO and the MOHLTC.

Carried.

(Please note that Report PHD 14-2008 (CSD 55-2008) can be found behind the JNT RPTS Blue Book Tab)

61. Pharmaceutical Services – Long-Term Care Homes:
Renewal of Current Agreement
COM 22-2008

Moved by Councillor Marshall
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Report COM 22-2008, April 15, 2008, respecting Pharmaceutical Services – Long-Term Care Homes: Renewal of Current Agreement, be received.

That the Region extend the current agreement with Medical Pharmacy Limited for pharmaceutical services to the residents of the Region's eight (8) long-term care homes, on a professional fee basis, which is 100 percent paid to the Pharmacy by the Province's Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

That staff review the agreement annually and subsequently recommend to Council to:

- a) consider the renewal of the agreement for an additional year, or,
- b) reissue a Request for Proposal for the provision of required pharmaceutical services.

Carried.

62. Council Business Plan Bursary Program
to Support Youth in Low-Income Households
to access Post-Secondary Education
COM 23-2008

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Henderson

That Report COM 23-2008, April 15, 2008, respecting Council Business Plan Bursary Program to Support Youth in Low-Income Households to access Post-Secondary Education, be received.

That a current budget allocation in the gross and net amount of \$50,000 be approved for the Council Business Plan as submitted in the 2008 Current Budget; and

That approval be given to direct these funds to create a Bursary program to support youth living in low-income households to access post-secondary education.

Carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

63. **Seniors Services Volunteer Program Achievements 2007**
COM 21-2008

Moved by Councillor Henderson
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That Report COM 21-2008, April 15, 2008, respecting Seniors Services Volunteer Program Achievements 2007, be received for information.

Carried.

MINUTES

64. **2-2008**

Moved by Councillor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Cordiner

That Report 2-2008, being the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee Ontarians with Disabilities Act meeting of Tuesday, February 26, 2008, be received.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

65. Moved by Councillor Goulbourne
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That the following communications be received:

PHSS 12-2008 M. Aileen Carroll, Minister Responsible for Seniors (March 2008) extending an invitation to all municipalities to participate in the 2008 Senior of the Year Award.

PHSS 13-2008 Juanita G. Gledhill, Chair, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (March 13, 2008) providing notification of funding for the Emergency Department Action Plan (EDAP) Overnight Respite in the amount of \$193,758.00.

- PHSS 14-2008 Juanita G. Gledhill, Chair, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (March 19, 2008) providing notification of funding for the Emergency Department Action Plan (EDAP) Capital Investment in Supportive Housing in the amount of \$381,944.00.
- PHSS 15-2008 Brian Goodman, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (March 25, 2008) advising that the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada develops appropriate case management strategies to deal with large influxes of refugee claimants when they occur and advising that they are monitoring the situation in South-western Ontario very closely.
- PHSS 16-2008 Hazel Lynn, Medical Officer of Health Grey Bruce Health Unit (April 1, 2008) regarding Health and Well-being of Residents of Retirement Homes,
- PHSS 17-2008 Hazel Lynn, Medical Officer of Health Grey Bruce Health Unit (April 1, 2008) regarding Enhanced Public Funding for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program for Vulnerable Female Youth Utilizing Unused Funds.
- C7044 Memorandum from John Bergsma, Commissioner of Corporate Services, to Chair and Members of Regional Council (April 2, 2008) regarding 2008 Council Business Plan – Update on Initiation of New Initiatives.

Carried.

(Refer to Councillor information Request.)

OTHER BUSINESS

66. **FACS Niagara – Closing Three Child Care Programs**

Mr. Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services Committee, advised that as a result of declining enrolment and financial pressures, FACS Niagara is closing three Child Care programs funded primarily by Children's Services effective June 30, 2008. This will result in the loss of 83 child care spaces of which 31 are presently being utilized in Welland, Niagara Falls, and Smithville.

Family and Children's Services of Niagara (FACS) has operated nursery school/child care programs across Niagara since 1983. Since 2002, FACS has also been one of four organizations chosen to operate Ontario Early Years Centres in Welland and the surrounding area.

The following locations are being closed:

- Niagara Falls – Fallsway (24 spaces)
- Welland – Rainbow (24 spaces)
- Smithville – St. Martin (35 spaces)

Declining enrolment is due to increased demand for full day child care or increased options such as families choosing a Junior or Senior Kindergarten program or Ontario Early Years Services.

FACS will continue to operate at the following sites:

- St. Catharines Central
- St. Catharines Western Hill
- St. Catharines Bunting
- Ontario Early Years Centre – Niagara Centre which serves Welland and surrounding area

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Councillor Marshall

That the oral report by Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services, regarding FACS Niagara closing three Child Care programs, be received.

Carried.

COUNCILLOR INFORMATION REQUESTS

- (i) That staff consider the Council Business Plan and bring forward recommendations for the \$2 million set aside in the Capital Budget for Council Strategic Initiatives. (Committee) (Refer to Minute 65.) (Communication C7044)

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 3:10 p.m., to meet again in Committee Room 4 on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.

Brian Baty
Co-Chair

Gail Reilly
Legislative Assistant

Judy Casselman
Co-Chair

Pam Gilroy
Regional Clerk