

From: Clerk General Line <ClerkGeneralLine@york.ca>

Sent: Friday, February 2, 2024 11:47 AM

Subject: Regional Council Decision - Refugees and Asylum Seekers

On January 25, 2024 Regional Council made the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Federal government is responsible for planned immigration (economic and sponsored migrants, and refugees designated for resettlement in Canada); and,

WHEREAS since asylum seekers are not considered planned or permanent residents until they receive a positive decision on their refugee claim, settlement supports for this group fall to the Provincial government; and,

WHEREAS the total number of Asylum Claimants processed by Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in November 2023 is almost three times the number processed in January 2023 and high levels of asylum seekers are expected to continue for the foreseeable future; and,

WHEREAS there is no centralized, coordinated system to support asylum seekers at their point of entry to access interim accommodations and support as there was with Canada's response to the Ukraine refugees;

WHEREAS on September 28, 2023, Regional Council authorized funding of up to \$4.3 million within the approved Community and Health Services budget for the Region's assistance with one interim accommodation and wraparound supports for asylum seekers in York Region until March 31, 2024; and,

WHEREAS York Region incurred \$2.7 million in costs in 2023; and,

WHEREAS the estimated cost of continuing to provide interim accommodation and wraparound supports at current service levels until the end of 2024 is \$14.1 million, representing \$12.5 million more than what remains from the \$4.3 million Regional Council approved; and,

WHEREAS York Region's 2023-24 Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) allocation, including about \$2.4 million in additional funding allocated by the Province, has provided support to more than 500 households, including refugees and asylum seekers, by making their rent more affordable; and,

WHEREAS COHB has been a critical tool in helping residents, including asylum seekers and others, to move into permanent, stable housing; and,

WHEREAS without increased COHB funding, the Region's ability to assist these households will be limited, resulting in continued pressure on social services including emergency and transitional housing for people who are homeless and interim accommodation sites; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council request the Federal Government to provide funding to cover the \$2.7 million in costs already incurred for the Region's asylum seeker response in 2023; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council request the Federal Government to provide funding to cover all costs the Region may incur in 2024 on the asylum seeker response if current services levels are extended to the end of 2024, estimated at \$14.1 million; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council request the Federal government to provide increased funding through the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit to the Region, at minimum to match the enhanced provincial allocation from fall 2023; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council request the Federal and Provincial governments to provide funding directly to community organizations and service providers (such as churches and faith organizations) that are providing interim housing and settlement supports to asylum seekers; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council request the Federal government to establish coordinated intake for asylum claimants into Canada along with increased housing support capacity to ensure equitable and coordinated access to supports; and further,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Regional Clerk be directed to circulate this motion to the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Premier, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Associate Minister of Housing, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, as well as the Association of Municipalities Ontario, Ontario Big City Mayors, local area MPs and MPPs and other regional municipalities.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

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