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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 8, 2024

A regular meeting of the Health & Social Services Committee was held on Thursday, February 8, 2024 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councillor Roy, Chair
Councillor Dies, Vice-Chair
Councillor Anderson
Councillor Brenner
Councillor Foster*
Councillor Jubb* left at 9:55 AM on municipal business
Regional Chair Henry
*** denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also

Present: Councillor Crawford
Councillor McDougall

Absent: Councillor Carter

Staff

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
A. Burgess, Director, Communications & Engagement
C. Boyd, Solicitor, Chief Administrative Office – Legal Services
T. Cheseboro, Chief, Region of Durham Paramedic Services, Health
A. Chung, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
S. Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services
J. Dixon, Director, Business Affairs and Finance Management, Social Services
L. Fortuna*, Director, Health Protection, Health
J. Gaskin, Director, Children’s Services, Social Services
M. Grant, Area Manager, Family Services, Social Services
J. Jordison, Commander, Region of Durham Paramedic Services, Health
R.J. Kyle, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
L. MacDermaid*, Director, Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors, Social Services
M. Macdonald, Manager, Affordable Housing Development and Renewal, Social Services

L. McIntosh, Director, Income & Employment Support, Social Services
O. McIntosh, Area Manager, Income, Employment and Homelessness Support

P. McTavish, Associate Medical Officer of Health

D. Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Income, Employment and Homelessness Support, Social Services

M. Pezeshki, Director, Oral Health, Health

A. Robins, Director, Housing Services

A. Skan, Manager, Housing Services, Social Services

K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

C. Taylor, Manager, Budgets & Finance, Social Services

T. Tyner Cavanagh, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships

E. Valant, Area Manager, Income, Employment and Homelessness Support, Social Services

V. Walker, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

* **denotes staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Brenner, Seconded by Councillor Dies,

(4) That the minutes of the regular Health & Social Services Committee meeting held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Statutory Public Meetings

There were no statutory public meetings.

5. Presentations

5.1 Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Colleen Kiel, Director, and Brent Feeney, Director, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health, re: Strengthening Public Health

Elizabeth Walker, Executive Lead, Colleen Kiel, Director, and Brent Feeney, Director, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health, all participating electronically, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Strengthening Public Health.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Context
- What we Want to Achieve

- Strategy
- #1 Roles and Responsibilities
- #2 Voluntary Mergers
- #3 Funding
- Implementation Timeline
- Working Together on Next Steps

B. Feeney responded to a question from the Committee regarding hurdles that have been or are being experienced with regards to the voluntary merger approach.

5.2 Dr. Maryam Pezeshki, Director, Oral Health, re: Oral Health Division Programs and Services

Dr. Maryam Pezeshki, Director, Oral Health, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Oral Health Division Programs and Services.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Oral Health is...
- Burden of Illness
- Programs & Services
- Dental Clinic
 - Durham Region Oral Health Clinic
 - Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)
 - Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)
 - Eligible Services
- School Screening
 - School Dental Screening
- Health Promotion
 - Health Promotion 2023 Activities
- Claim & Estimate Processes
 - Claim Process
 - Estimate Process
- Inequity in Access to Oral Health Care
 - Inequities in Dental Care
 - Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP)
- Future Consideration
- References

Dr. Pezeshki responded to questions from the Committee with regards to the wait time for residents seeking to obtain services from oral health; and the current capacity limit and whether it is becoming overwhelming.

5.3 Devon Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Erin Valant, Area Manager, and O'Neal McIntosh, Area Manager, Income, Employment and Homelessness Support

Division, re: Overview of Social Assistance Renewal and Employment Services Transformation

Devon Nation-Williams, Area Manager, Erin Valant, Area Manager, and O'Neal McIntosh, Area Manager, Income, Employment and Homelessness Support Division, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Overview of Social Assistance Renewal and Employment Services Transformation.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Agenda
- Social Assistance Renewal
- Ontario Works Application Process Update
- Ontario Works Application Volume
- Employment Services Transformation
- Resulting Shift in Provincial Funding
- Ontario Works Rates
- Ontario Works Rates Compared to Average Market Rent in Durham

6. Delegations

6.1 Christine Vos, Executive Director, and Meghan McLeod, Administrative Assistant, Oak Ridges Hospice, re: Oak Ridges Hospice Update and Durham Hospice Awareness Day

Meghan McLeod, Administrative Assistant, Oak Ridges Hospice, appeared before Committee with regards to Oak Ridges Hospice Update and Durham Hospice Awareness Day.

M. McLeod stated that she was in attendance in recognition of Durham Hospice Awareness Day that was on January 29th and advised that Oak Ridges Hospice is the only residential hospice in Durham Region to provide compassionate care and support to their residents and families.

M. McLeod further stated that in 2023, they served 212 residents which resulted in 27 diversions from emergency rooms and 24 after-hour admissions. She advised that they currently have 38 employees and 111 volunteers, who have provided approximately 9,875 hours of support to residents and their families.

M. McLeod advised that they are committed to the development of the community's health care system and are increasing awareness of hospice palliative care. She stated that they are attempting to raise almost 60% of their operational budget so that families and their loved ones can continue to have access to the service at no cost.

M. McLeod responded to questions of the Committee.

7. Health

7.1 Correspondence

There were no communications to be considered.

7.2 Reports

A) Primary Care Outreach Program (2024-MOH-1)

Report #2024-MOH-1 from R.J. Kyle, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health, was received.

J. Jordison responded to questions of the Committee with regards to how and why anti-psychotic injections are being administered; and why the anti-psychotic injections are being administered outside of medical facilities.

Moved by Reginal Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,
(5) That we recommend to Council:

- A) That the Region of Durham advocates for the provincial government to provide sustained provincial funding for the expansion of the Primary Care Outreach Program to meet the growing needs of Durham Region residents experiencing homelessness and needing urgent health care, mental health and addictions supports; and
- B) That a letter from the Regional Chair on behalf of Regional Council, along with a copy of Report #2024-MOH-1 of the Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health be sent to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Health, Associate Minister of Mental Health & Addictions, all Durham MPPs, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), for their information and consideration.

CARRIED

8. Social Services

8.1 Correspondence

There were no communications to be considered.

8.2 Reports

There were no Social Services reports to be considered.

9. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

10. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

11. Other Business

11.1 Motion Calling on the Province to Increase Ontario Works Rates

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Brenner,
(6) That the rules of procedure be suspended in order to introduce a motion regarding calling on the Province to urgently increase Ontario Works rates.

CARRIED ON A 2/3rds VOTE

Chair Roy vacated the Chair at 10:33 AM to present a motion. Councillor Dies, Vice-Chair, chaired the meeting during this time. Chair Roy resumed the Chair at 10:38 AM.

Moved by Councillor Roy, Seconded by Councillor Dies,
(7) That we recommend to Regional Council:

Whereas the Region of Durham is one of the fastest growing communities in Ontario;

And whereas Ontario Works financial assistance rates have been frozen since 2018 and economic challenges are disproportionately impacting our vulnerable residents by contributing to increasing income insecurity, housing unaffordability, homelessness and food insecurity;

And whereas a basic income program can ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing income inequality and financial instability;

And whereas Ontario Works recipients only have a \$200 income exemption compared to \$1000 for recipients of Ontario Disability Support Program;

And whereas improved financial stability would result in improved social, economic and health outcomes for Durham's vulnerable residents as well as increased opportunities for vulnerable residents to contribute to and invest in their local economies;

And whereas Social Assistance Modernization was introduced by the province with the intention to reduce municipal administrative burden to allow staff to focus efforts on providing intensive stability supports for vulnerable residents;

And whereas administrative efficiencies for municipalities have not been realized under the Social Assistance Modernization;

And whereas the Social Assistance Modernization program has had unintended consequences including delays to processing applications and eliminating essential people-centred supports such as bus fare that are jeopardizing individuals' ability to move out of poverty;

And whereas leadership is urgently needed from the provincial government to develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive and inclusive plan to address increasing levels of poverty for people living in Ontario, in particular for those receiving Ontario Works;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Region of Durham calls on the provincial government to urgently increase Ontario Works rates to a liveable rate and commit to indexing rates to inflation annually in line with the Ontario Disability Support Program; and further that the Ontario Works earning exemption be aligned with the Ontario Disability Support Program to allow individuals in the workforce to keep more of their earning and potentially encourage more participation in the workforce;

That the Region of Durham calls on the provincial government to evaluate the effectiveness of Social Services Modernization in consultation with Municipal Service Managers, particularly to what extent the partial upload of the Ontario Works application process has resulted in streamlining, efficiencies and maintained service standards;

That the province ensure an adequate level of employment services funding is maintained by restoring funding within the Ontario Works program that was reduced as a result of the transfer of responsibility for employment services to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) Service System Managers; and

That a copy of this motion be sent to the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, Minister of Finance, Durham Members of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY ON THE
FOLLOWING RECORDED VOTE:

Yes

Councillor Anderson

Councillor Brenner

Councillor Dies

Councillor Foster

Regional Chair Henry

Councillor Roy, Chair

No

None

Members Absent: Councillor Carter
Councillor Jubb

Declarations of Interest: None

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Health & Social Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

13. Adjournment

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,
(8) That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:39 AM

Respectfully submitted,

E. Roy, Chair

K. Smith, Committee Clerk