



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Social Services Sub-committee MINUTES

Date: November 15, 2023
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Location: Council Chambers

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Wordofa

Regrets: Councillor Nijjar and Councillor Briscoe

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary, John Ritz - Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Nijjar and Councillor Briscoe provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

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*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the November 15, 2023, Social Services Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

None were scheduled.

4. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

4.1 Accertaclaim ServiCorp Inc. Contract Renewal (SOC23-021)

Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Ontario Works provided the following highlights from the staff report:

- the City currently using Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. to adjudicate dental claims on behalf of the Ontario Works Division;
- the scope of the program being expanded to include denture and vision claims;
- expansion of services reducing administrative burden on staff;
- shifting to electronic verification portal allowing service providers to access information to determine eligibility in real-time and submit payment; and
- the portal increasing the efficiency of the service and allowing Ontario Works to meet a Provincial modernization initiative.

It was questioned how many clients have access to email. The Manager of Ontario Works stated 35% of clients are enrolled in My Benefits, however, 60-70% have some access to email.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of City of Stratford enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. for the delivery of healthcare benefits (dental, denture and vision care) for the Ontario Works Division;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to sign the agreement with Accertaclaim Servi Corp Inc. on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Carried

5. Report of the Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor

5.1 Enhancements to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County (SOC23-022)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Homelessness and Housing Stability Supervisor provided the following highlights from the staff report:

- the report being for information and to raise awareness in the community on additional supports for individuals sleeping rough during cold weather months;
- partner agencies keeping Community Care Kits in their vehicles to provide to individuals at encampments and sleeping rough;
- Community Care Kits providing safety measures and building trust between Outreach staff, partner agencies and individuals receiving supports;
- Community Care Kits consisting of a variety of resources and intermediate supplies; and
- a shared branding approach where support staff wear matching backpacks being developed to increase Outreach Worker visibility.

A question and answer period took place between Sub-committee and staff as follows:

- donations of items for the Community Care Kids being sent to the Connection Centre;

- staff speaking with the Canadian Mental Health Association regarding a communication strategy for donations to the program;
- weekend support being available to unsheltered individuals through Stratford Police Services, the Ontario Provincial Police or the Connection Centre;
- after hours and weekend emergency shelter inquiries from local residents being directed to Shelterlink at 519-272-2294;
- individuals living outside of Huron-Perth being identified during the screening process and directed to services which will fit their needs;
- warming centres being set up during cold weather advisories at the Rotary Complex, as well as the library, malls and local businesses dependent on the date and time; and
- if an individual is screened and can be reunited with support persons in their hometown then area transportation can be provided.

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the report titled, "Enhancement to the Homelessness Response in Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County" (SOC23-022), be received for information.

Carried

6. Next Sub-committee Meeting

All Sub-committee meetings for the month of December have been cancelled. Meetings will resume in January 2024.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Wordofa

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:39 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:53 P.M.