

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

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| Our File/N/Réf.<br>Your File/V/Réf. | 03-07-97-0094   |
| DATE                                | 14 January 1997   |
| TO/DEST.                            | Chair and Members<br>Community Services Committee           |
| FROM/EXP.                           | Committee Co-ordinator                                      |
| SUBJECT/OBJET                       | <b>TABLED MOTION RE: ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR FOOD PROGRAMS</b> |

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**REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.**

**BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 19 Sep 96, the Community Services Committee tabled the following Motion to the 1997 budget deliberations:

**That \$20,000 be provided from the Provision for Unforeseen to be distributed among the Debra Dynes Community House (food program), the Dalhousie Food Action Group, the Emergency Food Centre and the Gloucester Food Cupboard as a pre-commitment to the 1997 budget, to be allocated by staff.**

An Extract of the relevant Committee Minute is attached for reference.

*Approved by  
M. J. Beauregard*

Extract of Minute  
Community Services Committee Meeting  
19 September 1996

**PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO  
FOOD PROGRAMS IN 1997**

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- Social Services Commissioner report dated 3 Sept 96

The Commissioner, Social Services Department, Mr. D. Stewart, began by saying the report was prepared in response to a Committee Motion (16 May 96) directing that objective criteria be developed to govern the allocation of funds to food programs in 1997. Mr. Stewart acknowledged the considerable efforts of both the community and departmental staff in developing the proposed criteria.

Ms. Linda Capperauld, Director, Community Services Division, highlighted the following points:

- the figures quoted in the report represent the estimated allocations to food programs for 1997 should the criteria be approved and not the actual allocations;
- the department acknowledges that introducing criteria represents a departure from the usual procedure and that this type of change can be disruptive to programs;
- the proposed criteria are based on the important premise that Regional funds are to complement community efforts to distribute food across the Region, not to be the primary source of support; however staff acknowledge that regional support is very important;
- the proposed criteria try to address the need for stable funding for co-ordination activities, i.e., co-ordinating volunteers and fund-raising activities; co-ordination requirements increase with the number of people served and when increased fund-raising is required, particularly in neighbourhoods with lower available incomes.

Ms. Capperauld concluded her presentation by saying the department would be prepared to help food programs adjust to the new criteria and to assist with establishing linkages between those programs and other community organisations that might be of assistance in this regard.

In reply to a question from Councillor A. Munter, Mr. Stewart clarified how the Region of Waterloo has used the Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance Program to provide food hampers to clients of FBA and GWA. He noted however that under the regulations governing both programs, food is not a “permitted item” and should the RMOC decide to provide food vouchers, these would not be subsidised by the Province. Mr. Stewart clarified vouchers may be provided from time to time under special circumstances generally relating to unforeseen medical emergencies and these circumstances must be documented on file. The Director, Income Maintenance Division, Mr. Merv. Sabey, added that the Department has been unsuccessfully pursuing this matter with the MCSS for many years.

Councillor D. Holmes asked whether all food program Boards have the same policy with respect to once-a-month visits by clients. Ms. Capperauld indicated centres operate somewhat differently and some allow repeat visits, however the figures quoted in the report under the heading “Average No. of People Served Monthly” would not reflect the second visit. In reply to further questions from the Councillor, Ms. Capperauld said the proposed criteria do not take into account whether programs are “stand-alone” or are part of a community centre. She added that staff regularly encourage program operators to look for this kind of collaboration to maximise administrative support. With respect to the decision to use average income as opposed to median income, Ms. Capperauld noted it appeared, after consultation with the departmental Review Unit, that this was the criteria most often used.

Councillor Linda Davis spoke about the variations in house prices in the Parkdale area, putting forth the view these variations would have an impact on the average income. Ms. Capperauld clarified that the average income is based on an average of the persons living in the neighbourhood at the time the Census is taken, and not on the value of the home or of the homeowner. She added the department chose particular census tracts because it was thought they captured not only the need but potentially the neighbourhood where the fund-raising would occur.

Councillor M. Bellemare asked whether the proposed formula would be applied in an identical way in subsequent years. Ms. Capperauld said staff make the assumption the funding envelope will remain at its current level, however should the number of people served increase dramatically, the department would not be able to implement the full criteria. She indicated the intent is to implement the criteria over a few years then reassess it to see whether the formula is working.

Councillor Bellemare wanted to know whether staff had considered phasing-in the allocations over a period of years to mitigate the impact on program operators. Ms. Capperauld indicated this would be an option; another approach would be to determine, in consultation with food programs, to increase or decrease funding only within a certain percentage range in the first year, then balance the rest in subsequent years to achieve increases or decreases of no more than 10 - 20%.

Responding to questions from Councillor Wendy Stewart, Ms. Capperauld said the ethnic make-up of a community was not considered as a criteria, as it is difficult to establish a correlation between the ethnic mix, the fund-raising capacity of a neighbourhood and the actual use of food programs. She also noted no differentiation was made between old and new programs.

Committee Chair M. Meilleur asked that staff clarify a comment about the number of people who receive social assistance being distributed evenly across the Region. Ms. Capperauld indicated that while certain pockets appear to have higher concentrations, there is a relatively even distribution of persons receiving both GWA and FBA across the Region. Ms. Capperauld noted that one of the highest concentrations of social assistance recipients live in a part of the City of Nepean that does not have a regionally-funded program, hence the difficulty in using this factor as a criteria. Commissioner Stewart pointed out that demand for social assistance has shifted from the more traditional concentrations and there are currently high demands for assistance coming from suburban neighbourhoods as result of the current economic downturn.

The following delegations were heard:

Jane Fyles, representing the Dalhousie Food Action Group

The speaker began by commending the Department for its commitment to food banks and for the proposed criteria. She noted that, although the number of clients had fallen from 1300 to 800 in the Fall of 1994, the client base remained the same, i.e., mostly single persons. Because of the requirement for clients to provide clear identification, the community perceives Dalhousie as being transparently fair and the program operator has recognised that numbers need to be closely examined and interpreted.

Ms. Fyles said she wondered how the Dalhousie facility would go about replacing \$10,000 in lost funding when it appears the Ottawa Food Bank will be facing hardships because of a number of additional requests for assistance; when local fund-raising efforts are minimal; when the traditional supporters, local churches, face shrinking populations and make shrinking contributions. She noted that society maintains a large number of persons who live on the edge and she described the food bank as the last port in the storm for those individuals. She asked for the Committee's assistance in helping the facility remain open.

Janice Mitchell, a food program user, spoke about having been mugged twice and having to go to the food bank for assistance because of this. She indicated she has special dietary requirements, as she is a diabetic, and she said the best food she gets comes from the food bank.

Maxine Stata, St Luke's Lunch Club

Ms. Stata spoke in support of the Dalhousie food bank. She expressed concerns about having to accommodate persons who cannot get help from that facility at St. Luke's, noting this is a day program that also receives regional funds. She said St Luke's provides a light breakfast and a hot meal at noon and, in the last six months, the number of clients has increased by 30%.

Regina Benks, Gloucester Food Cupboard

Ms. Benks read from a written statement\* which proposes two funding scenarios that would include centres at Heron, Parkdale and Gloucester and, secondly, Caldwell, Dalhousie, Emergency Food Centre and Overbrook-Forbes. She put forward the view that figures from the 1991 Census are no longer accurate and that the downsizing of the public sector has affected the eastern part of the RMOC especially hard. This is the premise for the request to include Gloucester in the category "Income per Private Household Less Than \$60,000".

Alison Dingle, Centretown Emergency Food Centre

Ms. Dingle said she supported the development of criteria but she wanted to focus on their sustainability as effective guidelines and their impact on food program operations. She endorsed the concept of accessibility, noting it needs to be broadened to include hours of operation as well as the amount and nutritional value of food distribution practices. With regard to co-ordination, Ms. Dingle expressed the view the allocations should be based on more than the number of persons served and should be balanced against the number of requests for food met.

Ms. Dingle spoke about Per Capital Income being another area of concern as it impacts differently on centres serving a diverse clientele and on those that serve areas dominated by public housing. She speculated donations from other sources would also decrease if there were reductions in regional funding. She concluded by saying adequate support at this juncture will avoid the problems that will inevitably arise if the emergency food delivery system collapses.

Heather Colls, Kanata Food Cupboard

Ms. Colls noted many people who were supporters are now clients. In the first nine months of 1996, 222 families asked for the Food Cupboard' help: of these, 63% are single parent families, and many clients are the working poor with little money.

Councillor Davis commended Ms. Colls on the work done to achieve the high level of community donated food. Ms. Colls spoke about the importance of not taking the community out of the food bank.

Myrna Christopher, Caldwell Family Centre

Prior to Ms. Christopher's presentation, Mr. Michael Birmingham, Executive Director, Carlington Resource Centre, clarified how numbers and statistics are kept at the family centre. He said the figure quoted, 2300 persons per month does not take into account duplicate requests, which would bring numbers higher.

Ms. Christopher went on to say that a number of people come from outside the community because the facility is open 5 days a week, and these persons are not counted. In reply to questions from Councillor Munter, Ms. Christopher indicated that \$44,000 was raised in 1995, but the level of donation is down; this amount, and the \$16,000 provided by the RMOC, all went to purchase food. Asked to comment on the impact of the proposed cut to the Debra-Dynes Family House, Ms. Christopher acknowledged that up to as many as 1,000 persons would be affected. She asked that the family house funding not be cut. She also pointed out that, while co-ordination is necessary, it is important to have enough money to buy food.

Committee Discussion

The Committee Chair asked that staff comment on the effect of adopting the following Motion from Councillor M. Bellemare:

That in the category of income per household less than \$60,000, the Emergency Centre be allocated \$3,730 and the Gloucester, Heron and Parkdale programs be allocated an equal share of the remaining \$7,456.

Commissioner D. Stewart responded by saying the estimated allocation to Heron and Parkdale would be reduced as a result of having to divide funding between three agencies as opposed to two.

Speaking to his Motions, Councillor Bellemare noted that, while staff have developed a fair and reasonable long term formula with objective criteria, Committee members have the duty to try to mitigate the impact of change, especially for programs receiving cuts. He suggested a cap of 10% be put on decreases for 1997 but that no cap be imposed on increases as some programs may need additional funds to ensure their stability. Councillor Bellemare said he could support, further to the presentation made by the Gloucester food program, that this facility be included in the category Income per Private Household under \$60,000.

Councillor L. Davis pointed out the actual dollar increase does not represent a huge increase, therefore the staff proposals seem equitable and balanced. She put forth the view that the argument which says the 1991 Census figures do not reflect the current situation could be made region-wide.

Councillor D. Holmes proposed that the Median Income be used as opposed to Average Income and she moved an additional \$20,000 from the Provision for Unforeseen be provided in 1997 and be provided to those agencies receiving large reductions. She suggested the Number of Hours Open also be a category.

Councillor A. Munter said he thought the proposed criteria represents a good first attempt, and that other elements could be introduced to refine the criteria. He expressed some concern with the arbitrariness of substituting in one particular area, real numbers for adjudged numbers.

At this point, discussion focused on whether the Motion asking for additional funds should be tabled to the 1997 budget deliberations. Councillor Holmes asked that the decision not be delayed, to provide more stability for program operators. Councillor A. Loney said he felt there was room for using procedure at this point, as the actual amounts for allocation are not before the Committee. He speculated there may be additional requests from programs not currently funded, and they would be eligible under the criteria. He added there is currently no money in the Provision for the Unforeseen for 1997, as no budgetary decisions have been taken to date.

Moved by A. Loney

**That the following Motion be Tabled to the 1997 Budget deliberations:**

**That \$20,000 be provided from the Provision for Unforeseen to be distributed among the Dalhousie, Debra Dynes, Emergency and Gloucester centres as a pre-commitment to the 1997 budget, to be allocated by staff.**

CARRIED

YEAS: M. Bellemare, L. Davis, A. Loney, D. Pratt, M. Meilleur

NAYS: D. Holmes, B. McGarry, A. Munter

Moved by M. Bellemare

**That in the category of income per household less than \$60,000, the Emergency Centre be allocated \$3,730 and the Gloucester, Heron and Parkdale programs be allocated an equal share of the remaining \$7,456.**

LOST  
(M. Bellemare  
in favour)

Moved by M. Bellemare

**That there be no decrease of more than 10% for the 1997 allocations.**

LOST

YEAS: M. Bellemare, D. Holmes, A. Munter

NAYS: L. Davis, A. Loney, B. McGarry, M. Meilleur, D. Pratt

Moved by D. Holmes

**That the median income be used as the criteria for “income per private household”;  
that the number of hours open be a criteria.**

WITHDRAWN

Some discussion ensued further to a Motion from Councillor Munter asking that Hours of Operation be added as a criteria since greater demands on the co-ordination function should be part of the analysis. Replying to a question from Councillor Davis, Commissioner Stewart noted there is quite a range of hours of operation among centres. In early discussions with program operators, staff found that hours of operation were fairly rooted in how centres organised their work, therefore there was no direct relationship between these and the amount of co-ordination required.

Councillor B. McGarry said he thought he would prefer to see the criteria relate more to the numbers of people served. Councillor Loney suggested the criteria be revisited later in 1997 and he stressed the need for more accurate, comparable data from the agencies on the numbers of people served.

Moved by D. Holmes

**That the following be referred to staff:**

**That the criteria for funding for food programs be amended to add:**

- **Number of hours and days open**

REFERRED

Moved by A. Loney

**That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the following criteria to be used in allocating funds to the eleven (11) currently Regionally funded Food Programs, in order to maximise the availability of free food to low income residents of Ottawa-Carleton:**



1. **A basic contribution of \$15,000 towards co-ordination applicable to Food Programs serving up to 1000 people monthly, with an increment of \$5,000 for each additional 500 people served;**
2. **Remaining funds available would be shared among Food Programs in neighbourhoods with minimal resources: 2/3 of remaining funds to Food Programs in neighbourhoods where income per private household is less than \$50,000 and the balance to Food Programs in neighbourhoods where income per private household is less than \$60,000;**
3. **Regional support not to exceed 15% of program operational value, with the exception of Food Programs in neighbourhoods with minimal resources.**

CARRIED

(D. Holmes dissented)