

MINUTES
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
CHAMPLAIN ROOM
16 MAY 1996
3:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: M. Meilleur

Members: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, L. Davis, D. Holmes, A. Loney, B. McGarry, A. Munter,
D. Pratt

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of 02 May 1996.

CARRIED

REGULAR ITEMS

1. 1996 PER DIEM AND ADMINISTRATION RATES FOR
COMMUNITY CHILD CARE AGENCIES
- Social Services Commissioner report dated 15 April 1996

Ms. Gayle Preston, Director, Child Care Services Division, Social Services Department, gave a brief overview of the report which recommends approval of the per diem rates for community child care agencies for 1996. Ms. Preston noted the 2.1% reduction in overall costs is to preserve the 707 Jobs Ontario spaces currently in system, as approved by Regional Council. She added that savings of slightly over \$600,000 have been effected and this amount is within the amount estimated in the 1996 budget. Ms. Preston pointed out that staff continue to work with community agencies to find long term strategies for implementation in 1997. She indicated the department will report back to Committee on the recommendations of the provincial child care review which are being presented to the Minister in June.

Notes: 1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation.
2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 12 June 1996 in Community Services Report Number 29.

Denise Tremblay, co-President, Regroupement des services de garde francophone en milieu scolaire

Ms. Tremblay said the Regroupement des services de garde francophones has written to the RMOC in January 1996 on how the proposed cuts will affect the thirteen francophone centres. The speaker put forth the view the francophone centres are at a disadvantage because:

- they have fewer subsidized spaces
- their per diem rates are the lowest, with a difference of as much as \$5.00 per day, per child for similar programs;
- they have the lowest salaries.

Ms. Tremblay suggested this situation could be addressed in the following manner:

- a more equitable distribution of subsidized spaces; some centres that operate with 100% subsidized spaces could easily function with 95% and offer the other 5% to centres that need them;
- more equitable per diem rates to help reduce the existing discrepancies. This is most often reflected in salaries, in many instances the highest expenditure of a centre. Ms. Tremblay asked how salaries could be so different from one centre to another in Ottawa-Carleton, with sometimes as much as a difference of \$10,000 for the same job, with the same qualifications and experience requirements.

Speaking to the issue of per diem rates, Ms. Tremblay said francophone centres have never received the rates required to be fiscally sound. Full fee parents are presently supporting the subsidized spaces and find this situation unfair and unacceptable. The speaker noted the centres lost funding in 1995 and this has brought the rates back to the 1993 level; if the budget is cut by a further 2.1% in 1996, without regard for uncontrollable costs, there is great fear about what will happen in 1997. The survival of many of the centres will be threatened.

Ms. Tremblay concluded her presentation by asking that the situation of each centre be reviewed before cuts are made. She re-emphasized the fact the centres want to work to find long-term solutions to continue to offer quality services, in french, that are accessible to all.

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Committee Chair M. Meilleur asked that staff respond to the comment that per diem rates in francophone centres are lower than in anglophone centres. Ms. Preston said the actual rates depend on factors such as when the centres began operating, how difficult it has been to maintain full fee paying parents and other factors. She pointed out that in the last few years all centres have been under strict budgetary controls with very few increases.

Councillor Meilleur asked for a comment on salary discrepancies of up to \$10,000 in some centres. Commissioner D. Stewart re-iterated that, regrettably, the majority of francophone centres started relatively late and they have not had the historical opportunity to acquire a base budget or a significant percentage of subsidized spaces and they have been working to catch-up. Mr. Stewart noted this is one of the many incongruities of the child care system; it is not necessarily about the language of service but has more to do with timing and the restrictions imposed in the last few years. He put forth the view that re-distributing subsidized spaces might be a solution for some but a problem for others, and there has to be concern for the economic viability of the entire system. Mr. Stewart suggested the real solution lies with the Province showing leadership and providing program funding for all agencies.

Councillor R. Cantin asked for an explanation of why some programs gain while others lose, citing as example the situation of Tupper Tots. G. Preston explained this program has hoped to attract more full fee payers and was given one year to stabilize its budget. She noted the rates are somewhat misleading and that an examination of the actual budgets would illustrate all centres have been treated in the same manner.

Some discussion followed on the issue of uncontrollable costs. Responding to comments from Ms. Tremblay about certain agencies being able to factor these in and some not, Commissioner Stewart indicated that from 1987 onward, there has been significant recognition of these costs for all agencies. He added staff would be willing to review the budgets of this agency to see whether these were captured.

Councillor M. Bellemare said it was his understanding the setting of rates was strictly a regional responsibility and he asked for clarification on Commissioner Stewart's earlier comment about provincial leadership. Mr. Stewart replied he was referring to eliminating per diems as the method of funding child care services, as it is inefficient, it represents many hours of work on the part of staff and the child care community. He added this issue has been the focus of discussion every year and he said he thought the Province may be looking into the matter at this time.

Councillor Bellemare wanted to know whether the requested 1996 rates took into account the 2.1% reduction. Ms. Preston said this decision would have been taken by the individual programs. Councillor Bellemare inquired as to the rationale behind giving, in some cases, a higher rate to an agency than the rate requested. Ms. Preston reiterated that an examination of the actual budget submissions would show all agencies have had a decrease of 2.1% in their budgets; some decided to address this by operating for fewer days and not all agencies have been incorporating the cut in the same manner. The rates outlined in the report are the result of staff handling all agencies in the same way.

Karen Cole, Ottawa-Carleton Child Care Association

Ms. Cole said the OCCCA is a voluntary organization representing 54, not-for-profit purchase of service agencies that employ over 500 persons and provide care to over 4,000 children in Ottawa-Carleton. A recent survey done by the OCCCA of member agencies revealed that agencies found it difficult to reduce their budgets by 2.1%. She noted the OCCCA is in agreement with the need to cut budgets but wants to remind Council this is only for one year. The survey indicated that half the cuts affected staff and impacted on parents in the form of user fees. Many agencies postponed maintenance and purchase of equipment but this is not appropriate for the long term. Agencies have closed for certain time periods to deal with the cuts and many agencies are dealing with uncontrollable costs that are not being recognized. She concluded her presentation by saying the OCCCA will continue to work with the child care community to reach a resolution to the difficulties many agencies are facing.

Jacquie Dwyer, Ottawa Federation of Parents' Day Care

The speaker noted the Federation consists of nine parent and co-operative day care centres; all staff are unionized and work under a collective agreement with CUPE 2204. She reinforced the need to maintain the 707 Jobs Ontario spaces and the commitment to maintain these spaces through a 2.1% cut in the 1996 budget. She spoke about the impact of the cuts on those served and about the fact this has heightened awareness of the vulnerability of the centres as never before.

The Federation took the approach the cuts had to be made without reducing salaries, wages and benefits for three reasons:

- collective agreements had to be honoured;
- wages had already been rolled back effective Jan. 1 96 because of a retroactive cut to pay equity funding;
- the ongoing rumours and uncertainty about the Wage Subsidy being on the chopping block at the Province. This subsidy represents between 18 - 19% of staff salaries in Federation centres, possibly as much as \$6,000 per year.

Ms. Dwyer said the decision to protect salaries meant cuts had to be made from operating budgets, and a cut of 14% had to be made in order to achieve 2.1%. This, coupled with uncontrollable costs, has meant the impact was even greater in those centres. Many programs are now cut to the bone, and faced with the prospect of future cuts, are worried about their future viability and survival.

Nancy Campbell, CUPE 2204.

CUPE 2204 represents 200 child care staff in 12 agencies. She noted agencies have seen no increase, other than for uncontrollable costs, since the 1980s. Ms. Campbell said the process inevitably pits providers against users and has led to discussions about whether user fees will be instituted, whether professional development would be removed, whether major repairs would be made, whether maternity leave would be cut back in an industry where the majority of workers are women. The speaker noted this comes at a time of much uncertainty about child care funding in the Province and has generated an incredible amount of stress in the workplace. Many centres have also lost the hope of achieving equity with regional centres and closing the wage gap due to the undervaluing of women's work. Ms. Campbell said she wanted to point out that every cut does have an impact and she expressed the hope agencies are still offering quality service. However she noted further cuts will be detrimental to the quality of care and she said she hoped the Committee will continue to support quality child care in the RMOC.

Kathy Yach, Child Care Council

Ms. Yach said the Child Care Council met with Ms. Janet Ecker, who will be reporting to the Minister at the end of June, and made a series of recommendations for the Province. The Strategic Planning Committee of the Council met with staff and emphasized to the Province that agencies want to work in partnership and want decisions on child care to be made in consultation with the community. In reply to a question from Councillor A. Cullen, Ms. Yach indicated the Child Care Council is still in support of maintaining the 707 Jobs Ontario spaces, recognizing the fact that the community will be going into the 1997 budget process with a 2.1% reduction.

Councillor A. Munter asked whether an increase of \$1.00 in the Child Care levy at budget time (1996) would have had an impact on setting per diem rates. Commissioner Stewart replied there would still be pressures, but perhaps to a lesser degree. Chair Meilleur expressed the hope the department would be able to work with agencies to iron out some of the difficulties highlighted in earlier presentations.

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the per diem and administration rates for community child care agencies presented in column D of Schedule A retroactive to January 1, 1996.

CARRIED

2. 1996 ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO FOOD PROGRAMS
- Social Services Commissioner report dated 30 April 1996

Councillor R. Cantin pointed to the fact there doesn't appear to be a formula for the allocation of these funds. The Director, Community Services Division, Social Services Department, Ms. Linda Capperauld, said staff describe the difficulties in preparing the report under the heading Purpose of Funding (pp. 17 & 18) and outline some of the criteria used on p. 18 of the report. In addition, staff have looked at the actual amounts requested by the agencies, have ascertained whether other funds are being received, have looked at how food is being distributed, etc. Ms. Capperauld added there has been an attempt not to re-allocate funding to any great extent as this would threaten the viability of existing programs and operators have expressed a general satisfaction with the recommendations put forward.

Councillor Cantin put forward a Motion calling for specific criteria to be established to ensure equitable funding at centres. The Social Services Commissioner, D. Stewart, pointed to the fact that the commitment made to Community Resource/Health Centres regarding equitable funding does not necessarily translate into equal funding and reflects the same kind of approach to funding taken for food programs. Mr. Stewart said staff believe resources must be allocated in the most effective way. The measurements used to achieve this goal may not always appear to make sense but they reflect the intensive, ongoing dialogue between agencies and the department.

Councillor A. Munter noted he had some difficulty with the numbers proposed and he asked whether agencies would be starting at the funding levels described in Column D (p. 19, staff report) for 1997. Ms. Capperauld replied it would be fair to assume this would be so. She added that staff want to meet with the Dalhousie and Parkdale program operators to discuss whether the criteria used in this instance would result in some reallocation to them, but she could not speculate on this presently.

Councillor Munter said the Kanata Food Cupboard has recently been informed it would no longer be able to rely on revenues it previously received from local churches. The Councillor indicated he would not support taking money from one facility to help another and he expressed support for Councillor Cantin's Motion. He asked that staff advise all food program operators that prior to the 1997 allocations being made, the funding formula and criteria will be reviewed. Ms. Capperauld indicated staff have been meeting regularly with existing programs and expansion agencies and they will be provided with Minutes of the discussion.

Councillor A. Loney pointed out this has never been an easy issue to deal with over the years and there have been attempts to get simple answers to a complex matter. He noted that some areas of the RMOC can still support programs without the Region's help and staff have been attempting to see where additional funding would have the strongest impact. He said he would prefer there be a zero-based budget approach for all agencies, as there will never be sufficient funding to parcel out per capita funding throughout the Region. He suggested the Committee and Council accept the recommendations contained in the report, that staff continue to refine the process and go into 1997 with the idea that all programs need to be re-examined.

Committee Chair Meilleur spoke about the situation of Partage Vanier which is not recommended for funding. She noted that 44% of children in Vanier live in poverty and 1185 persons were served in March 1996, with numbers increasing. She expressed the hope this facility, which is operated by elderly women, can survive until 1997.

1. **That Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the following allocations to Food Programs currently funded by the Region to cover the period July to December 1996:**

Caldwell Family Centre	\$8,392
Dalhousie Food Action Centre	15,645
Emergency Food Centre	16,500
Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard	10,364
Heron Emergency Food Centre	5,250
Kanata Food Cupboard	2,000
Parkdale Food Centre	10,699

2. **That Community Services Committee approve the following allocations to Food Programs not currently funded by the Region to cover the whole year 1996:**

Cumberland Food Program (Cumberland Township Community Resource Centre)	\$17,000
Debra Dynes Family House (The)	10,000
Overbrook-Forbes Food Program (Overbrook-Forbes Community	20,000

Services Association)
Pavilion Food Bank (The)

1,200

CARRIED
(A. Munter dissenting)

Moved by R. Cantin

That staff develop an objective formula to assess allocations for 1997 and that this formula be presented to the Community Services Committee by the first meeting in October.

CARRIED
(D. Holmes dissenting)

Moved by D. Holmes

That the criteria for the allocation of funds include:

- 1. Per capita income of surrounding neighbourhoods;**
- 2. financial status of contributing churches, church membership or other sources of funding;**
- 3. fundraising capability of group**

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR'S ITEMS

3. **WARNING LABELS FOR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**
- Committee Co-ordinator memorandum dated 1 May 1996

WHEREAS the House of Commons is currently considering Bill C-222, an act to require a warning label on alcoholic beverage containers; and

WHEREAS this warning would read: "Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs a person's ability to operate machinery or an automobile and may cause health problems or cause birth defects during pregnancy"; and

WHEREAS alcohol abuse presents a serious public health issue, particularly with respect to motor vehicle deaths, fetal alcohol syndrome, family violence, homicides and suicides; and

WHEREAS warning labels are one part of a broader public awareness strategy; and

WHEREAS warning labels have been mandatory in the United States since 1989;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Regional Council endorse Bill C-222 and urge all Members of Parliament representing the Ottawa-Carleton region to vote in favour of it; and

THAT copies of this resolution be distributed to all local MP's.

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF GENERAL WELFARE CASES

- Social Services Commissioner memorandum dated 17 April 1996

The Committee Chair, M. Meilleur, conveyed her appreciation to staff for putting together a report which is unique in Ontario and has attracted considerable attention province-wide. Councillor A. Cullen stressed the importance of continuing to gather data of this nature. He expressed the hope this could eventually be done through improved computer systems.

2. NEW INFORMATION STRATEGY TO REDUCE ACCESS TO TOBACCO BY MINORS

- Associate Medical Officer of Health memorandum dated 24 April 1996

3. 1996 EXPENDITURE FORECAST - GENERAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE & SPECIAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPLEMENTARY AID

- Social Services Commissioner report dated 1 May 1996

4. TRANSFER OF RECOVERY HOMES TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Social Services Commissioner report dated 26 April 1996

In reply to questions from Councillor D. Holmes, Commissioner Stewart indicated the Ministry of Health will take over the responsibility for funding addiction recovery homes as of 01 June 1996. He noted that persons living in these facilities will not be eligible to receive General Welfare Assistance and will no longer receive the monthly personal needs allowance of \$112. Commissioner Stewart added the Ministry has made this policy decision in order to become the lead Ministry for all substance abuse programs and to ensure these programs are adequately supported.

Councillor Holmes asked whether a person who has been in a recovery home for a 6-week period would have to go back on a waiting list for social assistance after being released. Mr. Stewart said he doubted whether a file would have been closed for this period of time

or whether there would be a six-week period for the re-determination and commencing of benefits under GWA. He added these decisions can be made rapidly in emergency situations.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Update - District Health Council Health Care Facilities Restructuring

Councillor A. Loney briefed the Committee about the public consultation related to the District Health Council (DHC) health facilities restructuring, noting two full days have been set aside in the RMOC Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters.

Councillor Loney pointed out the proposal circulating for reaction has been adopted by the DHC, as recommended by the Reconfiguration Committee. He said he did not anticipate there would be a large amount of change in this document which represents two years of work. The issue of governance is important; merging the two main teaching hospitals and the governance of those hospitals and the links to community hospitals will be vital.

Councillor Loney continued by saying the most recent word from hospital executives is that the Province has let them know substantially more than \$100 million will be cut from Ottawa-Carleton and that bigger centres will have to take a bigger hit to protect smaller centres. He reminded Committee members the Province has said it would not reduce health care expenditures to levels lower than they were when it took office. If this commitment is kept, and if sufficient funds are diverted back into community services, things will be workable: if this commitment is not kept, the health care system will be considerably worse than it is now.

2. Expressions of Appreciation to Mr. Glen Ford

On behalf of the Community Services Committee, Chair M. Meilleur thanked Mr. Glen Ford, former Director of the Finance and Administration Division, Health Department, for his work in that capacity and she congratulated Mr. Ford on his recent appointment as Director of Supply Management, Finance Department.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

06 June 1996

CO-ORDINATOR

COMMITTEE CHAIR