

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2000

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

A/Chair: W. Byrne

Members: D. Beamish, L. Davis, C. Doucet, D. Holmes, A. Loney

Regrets: A. Munter, H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-Larsen

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the regular meeting of 5 October 2000.

CARRIED

PRESENTATION

1. WORKING TOGETHER: AN EVALUATION OF THE
TASK FORCE ON POVERTY

- Community Services Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 16 Oct 00
- Report of the Interim Committee of the Task Force on Poverty dated September 2000 issued separately.

Ms. Elizabeth Burrell, representing Evaluation Committee of the Task Force on Poverty provided background information about the establishment of the Task Force. She noted that, with Council approval in February 2000 came tacit approval for establishing an Advisory Committee on Poverty and funding for a Public Participation Coordinator to facilitate that process.

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- Notes: 1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by Committee.
2. Items requiring Council approval will be presented on 25 October 2000 in

Ms. Burrell introduced Diane Doerge, the project facilitator, who presented key findings and recommendations for the establishment of the Advisory Committee. She began by saying that 92% of participants believe the Task Force on Poverty was successful or very successful. The remaining 8% said they could not gauge the success level until Task Force recommendations are implemented. The Task Force mandate was to implement the recommendations from the People's Hearings and a chart in the Interim Report documents the progress of the initial recommendations. Some short-term initiatives included "Partners for Jobs" and the "Millennium Learning Centres." In addition, regional staff working on reducing poverty with people living in poverty felt this helped them to better identify services that could reduce poverty. Some community members and social service users became engaged in the political process for the first time and realized the contribution they could make to the community's quality of life. Ms. Doerge pointed out that other cities in Canada and abroad have been looking at this model as an example of collaborative problem solving with low-income people.

Ms. Doerge described the Advisory Committee on Poverty as an ongoing partnership between the new City of Ottawa and the low-income community. It would be accountable to the People Services Committee. Its mandate would be to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Poverty and address emerging issues. Each year the Advisory Committee would prioritize issues to be addressed and municipal staff would be required to present new policies to the Committee to attain this goal. The Committee would consist of 22 voting members, people living on low-income, with senior staff and one City Councillor as non-voting members. Community members would be selected from community clusters, i.e., groups and community organizations dealing with poverty in different parts of the city. Clusters were formed at the time of the People's Hearings and were retained during the Task Force on Poverty since they were seen as important vehicles to maintain communication between Task Force members and their communities. While diverse sectors of Ottawa's low-income community were represented on the Task Force, the evaluation proposes that the Advisory Committee also have representation from francophones, new Canadians and persons with disabilities. The participation of senior staff on the Task Force gave that body the profile it needed to complete its mandate therefore it is recommended that ways be found to strengthen that two way communication.

Ms. Doerge said another recommendation is that sub-committees be formed to work on particular areas. Front line city staff, individuals or organizations with expertise would be asked to sit on the sub-committees. In drawing upon the strengths and weaknesses of the Task Force on Poverty, the Evaluation Committee identified important mechanisms to enable the Advisory Committee to work effectively with the wider community. The Public Participation Co-ordinator's task will be to facilitate the overall process and to liaise with community and city bodies. The Executive Directors of the Community Health and Resource Centres reviewed the recommendations and agreed to allow community developers, who were critical to the success of the Task Force, to work with others to strengthen and maintain clusters.

Ms. Doerge noted that many organizations in Ottawa-Carleton have expertise in dealing with poverty. Coalitions could be formed to support the Advisory Committee, thus keeping the

wider community informed. The Social Planning Council is committed to working with the Public Participation Co-ordinator to facilitate such a group. It is recommended that work begin this Fall to lay the groundwork for the Advisory Committee in order to begin operations in 2001.

Ms. Burrell concluded the presentation by stating the importance of low-income people's vision, needs, hopes and desires not getting lost, and of the entire community continuing to contribute to the betterment of their lives.

Councillor A. Loney asked about the size of the proposed Advisory Committee and the sub-committees that would be formed. Ms. Burrell indicated there might be as many as nine sub-committees. Ms. Doerge provided information on the proposed frequency of meeting. She said the rationale behind the selection of 22 people is to ensure overall representation across the city. Councillor Loney asked what kind of support this proposal received from the Ottawa Transition Board and the new city's staff. Ms Doerge indicated there is ongoing communication with the service departments and funding to hire the Public Participation Co-ordinator was channeled through the Somerset Community Health Centre. Councillor Loney asked if the funding of the position was until the end of the year or longer. Ms. Burrell said it is assumed that the position is for at least one year.

Councillor L. Davis recalled that her goals for the 1997-2000 term of Council had been the creation of a Task Force on Child Poverty, noting that this issue is still being evaluated from the perspective of adult poverty. She asked about the concerns of the poor, particularly in the rural areas. Ms. Burrell noted that people are fearful and cynical of the political process and worry that the issue of poverty may get lost. She added that people who need assistance and whose incomes have been cut drastically are worried that if they get a job, they will not have enough money for transportation, for clothing and for other related necessities. Ms. Burrell said people want to work or go to school but they have trouble getting student loans that they have to pay back once their education is completed. Other persons fear not having enough money to buy groceries, to pay utility bills and to obtain the basic necessities of life.

Councillor Davis asked for additional details about the clusters. Ms. Doerge replied that some of their work would include organizing forums on specific topics, such as a recent forum on the Ontario Disability Support Program. Another focus will be dealing with those living in poverty in rural communities and how to ensure their needs are met. Councillor Davis suggested people could help one another in informal ways such as sharing their automobiles for shopping, medical appointments and so on. Ms. Doerge noted that children living in poverty must be cared for on a priority basis.

Anne Hubbert shared with the Committee her experience of cooperative living, and she emphasized the importance of ensuring this kind of accommodation continues to be available to persons living in illness and/or poverty.

The Committee then considered the following:

Moved by D. Holmes

- 1. That Regional Council recommend to the new City of Ottawa that the recommendations contained in the report of the Interim Committee of the Task Force on Poverty be accepted.**
- 2. That the recommendations be presented to the new People Services Committee as early in 2001 as possible by the General Manager, People Services.**
- 3. That the General Manager of People Services be requested to begin the implementation of the Advisory Committee on Poverty.**

CARRIED, as amended

REGULAR ITEMS

2. FUNDING TO END AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the appointment of a Selection Committee with authority to make decisions regarding the allocations of funding for implementation of the Community Action Plan on Homelessness, Update 2000. The Selection Committee would be comprised of the following:

- **Two members of Regional Council.**
- **Honourable Claudette Bradshaw or her delegate from HRDC.**
- **Ministry of Health representative.**
- **Ministry of Community and Social Services representative.**
- **Private sector representative.**
- **Two nominees from the Alliance to End Homelessness.**
- **Two homeless individuals.**
- **Representative from the Community Foundation.**
- **Three staff from the Homelessness Initiatives Team.**
- **Barb Flint , Homelessness Initiatives Team as chair.**

CARRIED

3. PRIORITIES FOR REINVESTMENT OF NCB SAVINGS (2000)

The Committee heard from Messrs. Geoff Botting, Principal, MacArthur High School and Dave Smith, Ottawa restaurateur and Philanthropist. Mr. Botting described the “Learn to Earn” Program at MacArthur High School that teaches trades to “hard tech” sector youth. Mr. Botting clarified the term “hard tech” applies to 500 out of the 83,000 students who are not doing well in the public school system and whose lack of success will impact negatively on growth in the community. The program could also be of benefit to young people who are either under-employed or unemployed. Mr. Botting admitted this is a school board problem, however, a community group has formed around the issue and is seeking the Region’s assistance at this time.

Dave Smith indicated that parts of the technical school, such as the dry cleaning plant, have already closed; the carpentry shop is outdated and the body shop needs upgraded equipment. He called it an incredible space where youth can be trained in the trades they need to know and that society requires. The second floor of MacArthur School provides hospitality/food sector training and assistance to disabled youth. Mr. Smith pointed out that trades jobs command high salaries, and that tradespersons are presently in short supply. He posited a program such as this could move across the country, with the participation of other partnering agencies, but before this can happen, funds are needed to upgrade the facility.

Councillor D. Holmes posed a number of questions of clarification before putting forward a Motion calling for a grant of \$150,000 to be awarded to the group from the 2000 National Child Benefit (NCB) Program funds. Committee discussion focused on whether or not the grant would need to be approved by the Ottawa Transition Board. Ms. Alexia Taschereau, the Legal Department representative, indicated this would be the case. Councillor L. Davis suggested that the Region could purchase the required equipment, or the amount could be split into smaller amounts to by-pass the need for Board approval.

Councillor A. Loney said staff has already indicated that the Transition Board cannot touch these funds, as they are for a specific purpose. He could not support dividing the amount and urged the Committee to honour the full request.

In reply to Councillor Davis, Mr. Botting said his first priority would be to re-establish the dry cleaning program (\$30 to \$50,000); an additional \$50,000 would be used to develop a Personal Support Worker program. The additional \$50,000 would be utilized to upgrade equipment for automotive repair/mechanics, or construction technology. Mr. Botting added that since there are no overhead costs, all the funding would go directly to these programs. Councillor Davis posited the Board would find it impossible to refuse the request if the funds are being used to create training programs.

Councillor D. Beamish wanted to know whether the request was for one-time funding only. Mr. Botting indicated that the group feels it can raise money in the corporate community, and is only seeking funds for infrastructure improvements, on a one-time basis. The Councillor asked why the funds identified in the 2000 budget have not been spent. Mr. Luc Legault, representing the A/Social Services Commissioner, replied that some of the NCB programs did not get an early start in 2000 and the amounts in Annex A represent that unspent portion. He added that staff anticipates additional funds will become available and these can be carried forward into subsequent years. Mr. Legault also requested that the \$150,000 being proposed be approved on the understanding that the proponents bring forward a proposal that staff can evaluate.

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the allocations outlined in Annex A for the reinvestment of \$557,000 in municipal savings from additional federal investment in the National Child Benefit in 2000 as well as NCB funds unspent in 2000.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That \$150,000 be allocated from the NCB funds in 2000 to the Learn to Earn Program, subject to the availability of funds.

CARRIED, as amended

4. SAGE YOUTH-JEUNESSE SAGE

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. COMMUNITY FUNDING: 1995 TO 2000
- A/Social Services Commissioner's memorandum dated 21 Sep 00

OTHER BUSINESS

PRESENTATION ON 2001 BUDGET

The Committee directed that the Coordinator canvass all Members of Council to ascertain the level of interest in a presentation from the General Manager, People Services, on the 2001 budget and staffing recommendations.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee was informed that the 2 November meeting was cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR