

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER 1999

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Munter

Members: D. Beamish W. Byrne, L. Davis C. Doucet, D. Holmes, H. Kreling
A. Loney, M. McGoldrick-Larsen

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the meeting of 7 October, 1999.

REGULAR ITEMS

SOCIAL SERVICES

1. REGION'S TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT:
"PARTNERS FOR JOBS"

- Social Services Commissioner's report dated 4 Oct 99
- "Partners for Jobs/Partenaires pour l'emploi", June/juin 1999, issued separately
- Projects Currently Underway/Projets déjà en cours, issued separately

The Regional Chair, Bob Chiarelli, introduced the item. He began by saying the Task Force presented an unique opportunity for the partners to come to the table with a collective agenda. Chair Chiarelli acknowledged the Task Force Co-Chairs, Mr. John Kelly from JetForm Corporation and Ms. Andrée Lortie, from la Cité collégiale.

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- Notes:
1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendation(s) approved by Committee.
 2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 10 November 1999 in Community Services Report No. 36

Chair Chiarelli spoke about the Task Force identifying nine pilot projects to strengthen the workforce, as well as nine Strategic Directions and a number of specific actions. He expressed his pleasure in participating as Regional Chair and in the fact that all was done within existing budgets. Chair Chiarelli highlighted the contribution made to the Task Force by the Chair of the Community Services Committee, Alex Munter, as well as that of the Social Services Commissioner, Dick Stewart and Réjean Chartrand, Executive Director, Economic Affairs Division

D. Stewart introduced Ms. Linda Capperault, Director, Community Relations and Employment Development Division, Social Services Department, Ms. Colleen Hendrick, Social Services Manager, and Chris Michaud, Project Manager who were present to answer questions of the Committee. Commissioner Stewart presented highlights of "Partners for Jobs", the Final Report of the Task Force on Employment. He spoke about the nine Strategic Directions identified therein, some of which include:

- the Region providing overall leadership;
- implementation of pilot projects and identifying new initiatives;
- identifying public policies and program rules;
- working with the federal and provincial governments;
- seeking alternate funding for supports.

Mr. Stewart said there are three fundamental principles underlying the report:

- economic growth depends on a skilled workforce;
- people want to work;
- investing in people pays off.

Commissioner Stewart spoke about the key opportunities afforded by the Task Force on Employment. These include:

- integrating economic development and workforce development;
- supporting people to obtain and retain employment;
- customizing training to meet labour market needs.

He described the next steps in the process:

- a six-month action plan ending in March 2000;
- reinvestment of National Child Benefit Program funds to support employment and to mobilize the community;
- development of an ongoing structure to integrate economic and workforce development.

Mr. Stewart concluded his presentation by noting there needs to be continued government and community involvement to sustain those initiatives currently underway and the ones that are forthcoming. Replying to a question from Councillor L. Davis, Commissioner Stewart explained that efforts in the United States are focused on workforce retention. This is done through measures such as providing affordable child care and customized training; as well, the tax structures are different. Councillor Davis wanted to know whether there was interaction with the federal government on workforce development. Mr. Stewart indicated some work has been undertaken in partnership with local Members of Parliament.

Councillor A. Loney asked for additional details about the partnership with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) at the employment facility in the Lincoln Heights Shopping Centre. Commissioner Stewart described the extant arrangements, noting that another joint centre may open in the east end in one and one-half to two years. When asked to comment on the Province's reaction to this arrangement, Mr. Stewart pointed out this is an emerging service model everywhere in the Province, in the absence of a federal/provincial strategy on employment.

Committee Chair A. Munter asked whether the Region is being penalized for the 25 people currently working at a local high tech company. Commissioner Stewart indicated there have been verbal admonishments, but as yet, no funds have been taken away. He noted that the target for community placement remains 3500 people, and likely there will be 300 to 400 in the next 12-month period. He indicated there is no information available on how the Province intends to penalize municipalities that don't meet their targets.

After further discussion, the following recommendation was put forward:

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve this report and the Region's role to provide overall leadership for the Strategic Directions contained in the Final Report of the Task Force on Employment.

CARRIED

2. SOCIAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO MONITORING
ONTARIO WORKS ACTION PLAN

- Social Services Commissioner's report dated 24 Sep 99
- Response to Motion CS 30 (99)

Dr. Michael Birmingham, Executive Director, Carlington Community and Health Services

Dr. Birmingham, speaking as the representative of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRC) in Ottawa-Carleton, expressed support for Recommendation 16 which calls for a lobbying strategy. He said there have been concerns over the last few years with the disappearance of funds for lobbying and advocacy. He stressed the importance of the Region undertaking these functions with the Province on behalf of its clients. Dr. Birmingham pointed out that CHRCs are no longer able to advocate for their clients, as service demands have increased significantly and resources have declined, consequently, funds must be used for service delivery. He asked that the Committee support Recommendation 16.

Ms. Dianne Urquhart, Program Co-ordinator, Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton

Ms. Urquhart's presentation focused on issues related to Communication, Transportation and Day care (child care), responsibilities that lie squarely within the municipal jurisdiction. She highlighted four recommendations in response to the staff report:

- ◆ that an evaluation process be put in place to ensure adequate time is allocated to clients for the initial assessment of Ontario Works, that clients receive copies of documents they sign and that documents be available in plain language;
- ◆ that there be a plan of action for a public education campaign countering negative stereotyping of social assistance;
- ◆ that the Committee request additional information from the department on participants receiving transportation assistance;
- ◆ that a proactive initiative, similar to the Task Force on Employment, be established to develop an action plan for increased child care in the Region.¹

¹ The complete text of the presentation is on file with the Committee Co-ordinator.

Ms. Linda Lalonde, the Anti Poverty Project, made the following comments:

On Rec. 4: little or no information about the Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) is provided to exiting clients when the point is to give someone going to work benefits to help them retain that employment.

On Rec. 7: there is no reference about the provision of ongoing information; if someone's situation changes and they fail to advise their worker, they will not get up-to-date information.

On Rec. 9: documents should be in plain language (the Participation Agreement is not written in language the average person can understand and is only available in English and French).

On Rec. 10: arrangements should be made for clients to access a bus pass at 80% of the cost if they have a child going to high school and not getting school busing.

On Rec. 11: there is no response for special needs kids of casual shift workers and for short term care.

On Rec. 14: there have been instances where persons provided their Income Statement on a regular basis and copies of cheque stubs: they are now being asked to provide a letter confirming employment. There are other ways by which this could be done.

On Rec. 17: there is no need for a formal process in this regard. The important thing is to have direct and immediate client input, and if there are things happening on the street that are impacting on clients, that information can safely get to the department and be acted upon.

Ms. Lalonde concluded by saying she was surprised by the fact no further work is proposed for the Monitoring Ontario Works Project Team. In reply to a question from Councillor D. Holmes, the speaker indicated there is interest in continuing the work and she recalled that the original Resolution had called for a two-year monitoring process.

Ms. Karen Graham, Chair, Ontario Works Monitoring Committee, thanked Commissioner Stewart and senior staff for looking into the Project Team's recommendations. She expressed interest in continuing the work for a second year, pointing out this is not about advocacy but about gathering information for the department and for the community.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen asked that staff respond to comments about the amount of time allotted for the original assessment for Ontario Works. Commissioner Stewart said staff want to move the discussion about client employability closer to the start of the process, perhaps at the same time as determining eligibility for financial assistance. He pointed out that staff doing this work typically carry a caseload of 120 clients. They are constantly trying to find a balance between the absolute requirement to respond to requests for income support in a timely way, identify crisis cases and deal with them immediately and meet the needs of others within a certain timeframe while at the same time do the qualitative work of helping clients strategize about employment. When asked whether the Province provides funding for a specific timeframe for intake, Mr. Stewart replied in the negative.

The Committee Chair, A. Munter, asked whether the Department has advocated for the funding for additional child care spaces in the Ontario Works program to help it succeed. Mr. Stewart replied staff are constantly dealing with the Province on the inadequacy of the O.W. child care budget: the Region is currently overspent on that budget and is awaiting news about a further infusion of provincial funds. Chair Munter alluded to a reference made about using savings from caseload decline to deal with employment support issues, and he inquired whether this would be done. Mr. Stewart pointed out that the EHSS issue was raised by both the Task Force on Employment and the Task Force on Poverty. The Department will examine the downward and upward pressures on expenditures and will provide the Committee with options on reinvesting savings.

Replying to a question from Councillor Holmes, Commissioner Stewart indicated staff will report back to Committee on the possibility of a second year role for the Monitoring Ontario Works Project Team. Councillor Holmes informed the Committee she will present a Motion, during budget deliberations, on how to fund an advocacy group, how this group might be established, who might want to be a partner in the group and what its membership might be. Commissioner Stewart clarified the comments about advocacy are meant to indicate the department wants to support issue as opposed to case advocacy. As well, there needs to be a corporate capacity for intergovernmental relations, and consistency in the Region's message to the senior levels of government on the linkage between economic development and workforce development. Mr. Stewart added this does not negate the fact there is an absolute need for community-based advocacy.

The Committee then considered the following Motions:

Moved by D. Holmes

1. **That the Social Services Department provide a report to indicate:**
 - **how much time is provided for clients to explain Ontario Works (original assessment)**
 - **what information is provided**
 - **languages that information is provided in**
 - **how clients can be provided with a copy of the documents**
 - **how to provide “plain language” information**
 - **how many clients receive transportation assistance**
 - **criteria by which clients are eligible for transportation assistance.**

CARRIED, as amended

2. **That staff report back on the Ontario Works Monitoring project continuing to operate for the second year.**

CARRIED, as amended

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

RECEIVED

3. **PRELIMINARY COSTING OF THE
TASK FORCE ON POVERTY RECOMMENDATIONS**
 - Social Services Commissioner’s report dated 21 Sep 99
 - Response to Motion CS 33 (99)

Jocelyne St Jean, Director, Strategic and Operational Support, presented the report. She indicated the first grouping of recommendations deals with advocacy and reflect the Department’s belief that a corporate effort is needed in this regard. The other groupings illustrate initiatives that are already underway and which of the recommendations will need further analysis to determine their precise costs.

Councillor D. Beamish asked whether the preliminary estimates of \$625,000 to \$925,000 would be met within existing budgets. Ms. St Jean indicated these amounts represent upwards pressures on the Department’s budget. Responding to further questions from the Councillor about the cost of the child care recommendations, the Director, Child Care Division, Gayle Preston, said it has not been determined how many spaces would be required, but regular subsidized spaces cost approximately \$7,000 per space.

This amount is normally cost -shared 80/20 with the Province but regrettably, there is no new money is available from this source.

When asked by Councillor Beamish to provide an estimate of the cost of the 2-1-1 Line, the Social Services Commissioner, D. Stewart, indicated there may be a requirement for capital investments of \$1 million. He pointed out that the analysis will also have to contain details on the potential savings from “collapsing” several similar services into one.

Councillor Beamish asked what the start-up costs of the Micro-Investment Fund would be. Ms. St Jean explained the purpose of the fund is to provide assistance to persons who might not qualify for business development grants from banking institutions. She pointed out that, as other low income earners might also be interested in this program, the amount of the regional investment would have to be determined.

At this point, the Committee Chair, A. Munter, read a Motion from Councillor D. Holmes, calling for 30% of the savings from caseload reduction to be earmarked for implementing the recommendations of the Task Force that help people get off assistance and retain employment. A prioritizing exercise is to be undertaken by Task Force participants and departmental staff. Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen asked if staff could indicate, at this point, how much revenue this represents. Mr. Stewart estimated the amount at \$4 million, noting this figure may increase between now and year-end. The Committee heard from the following members of the public:

Terry Meehan, a member of Task Force on Poverty representing the southeast cluster, spoke in reference to Recommendations 8, 11 and 12. She stressed the importance of accurate, timely information being provided about changes that affect people’s lives. She spoke about having only recently found out her family was eligible to receive a reduced rate or a bus pass, after two months of taking money from the food budget to ensure the children could get to school. She urged the Committee to take the recommendations seriously and to also consider the cost of not acting on them.

Gordon Hodgins, President, Debra-Dynes Community Association, urged the Committee to implement the 26 recommendations presented by the Task Force on Poverty as soon as possible, in order to improve the lives of both young and old who are barely existing. He expressed the hope the Task Force has not just been an exercise in free speech. He highlighted training, housing and a chance at a good, decent quality of life as issues of the greatest importance.

Cliff Gazee, Co-Chair, Task Force on Poverty, said it is almost two years since the People’s Hearings on Poverty and the creation of the Task Force. He posited it is time to do something for those who have spoken and begin to address their concerns. Mr. Gazee noted that, while it is useful to have preliminary costing, it is also necessary to look at the potential savings to be had from implementing some of the recommendations. He concurred with earlier comments about the importance of Essential Health and Social

Supports (EHSS) and the need for additional child care spaces. Other key components include access to telephone and telecommunications systems and mobility. Mr. Gazee said he was pleased to hear the intent is to use caseload savings to relieve some of the pressures so people can make a real contribution.

Barbara Bareham, a member of the Task Force on Poverty, pointed out that the recommendations are not a wish-list, but a reflection of the true needs of the working poor and of social assistance recipients in their daily lives. She spoke about Recommendation 11, stressing the importance of having greater access to information and pointing out there is currently a lack of information available to low income individuals and families particularly. Ms. Bareham suggested the RMOC focus on the developmental aspect of the recommendation and improve its capacity to provide information on regional and community programs and services across the Region and also in areas of the City where there is a high population of low income residents. This can be done by hiring one full-time person who would circulate among community agencies to provide members or staff with information about new programs. Ms. Bareham spoke about the basic need for every household to have telephone service, both for personal safety and to obtain employment. She asked that the Region take the recommendations seriously and make the necessary changes in the community.

Rose Wakeham, a community representative on the Task Force on Poverty, said two of the previous speakers overcame personal challenges to address the Committee because they feel strongly about the recommendations put forward. Ms. Wakeham, a single mother of three, told the Committee she wants to work, she has many skills but she is held back by the fact she is not bilingual. The Essential Health and Social Supports have helped many families meet their actual expenses, and the Region should respond to the request for \$500,000 to meet the anticipated uptake of this program. Ms. Wakeham thanked the Committee for its commitment to reducing barriers to employment in the Region.

Hélène Perrault, representing the eastern cluster, spoke about the importance of putting in place Essential Health and Social Supports. The Monitoring Ontario Works report has illustrated that people want to work. There is a constant flow of persons moving from being on social assistance to the work force, many have jobs with low salaries and no job security. Many of these are contract jobs, with no benefits, and there is always the stress of having to find another job afterwards. Often a person working part-time has not accumulated sufficient hours to collect Employment Insurance afterwards. Even if the person finds a full-time job, benefits are often not available before six-months. Ms. Perrault said she was pleased to see that the Region has revised its policy about EHSS and she recommended that \$500,000 be reserved for this purpose, to ensure the community goes from simply surviving to living.

Ken Clavette, Ottawa and District Labour Council

Mr. Clavette said he has become very passionate about transportation issues and how these affect people. Transportation is a major barrier to finding employment and becoming full participants in society for persons living in poverty. Mr. Clavette said the one issue people saw as positive in Community Placements was the fact that they got a bus pass and felt they could more actively participate in society. He was critical of governments thinking in silos, and he challenged the Committee to break the silos down. People need to be given the tools they need to find employment for themselves; the issue of providing bus passes is critical. Mr. Clavette said there should be a policy in place by January 2000 about how to provide transportation to the most vulnerable in the community.

Mo Garahan, Community Developer, Sandy Hill Community Health Centre, a resource person to the Task Force on Poverty, spoke on the issue of advocacy, saying she applauds the recommendation to develop and implement an overall advocacy strategy. The Task Force recommendations speak to partnering with the community in these efforts and the co-ordination required for this is not costed in the report. Ms. Garahan stressed the importance of supplying resources to an independent community organization that can build a demonstrable, broad-based constituency and provide feed-back to the Region.

Ms. Garahan reminded the Committee that the Task Force on Poverty's main objective is to make changes that have immediate and tangible effects for low income persons in the Region. The community has thought long and hard about the real issues facing the poor and about specific ways of addressing these. The costing report does not speak to the kind of creative ideas that the Task Force has come up with to address its own recommendations. She asked that the Committee understand and support the report as a preliminary costing and work with the Task Force in developing other options. Task Force participants have creative ideas and should be partners in the development of the implementation plan.

Linda Lalonde, a Task Force member representing the west end, asked why the costing report has no information on the savings that will be generated when people come off social assistance. She inquired whether there could be another costing exercise that shows the social costs of people not being able to participate and being cut off from the community. Ms. Lalonde wanted to know why only 30% from caseload savings was being earmarked and what would happen to the remaining 70%. She spoke about Recommendation 8, questioning the assertion there was no cost to the Region at this time, and pointing out there is a direct cost to the Region by having children not being able to get to school and dropping out, as they will be the next generation's welfare recipients.

Committee Discussion

Councillor D. Holmes expressed the view the Region is fortunate in having a decreasing caseload; from time to time, some of those savings have gone to meet other needs of the Corporation. She said it is clear, by looking at the recommendations, and listening to the public, that there is great hardship in the community since the current provincial government has come to power. Councillor Holmes posited it is now time to replace some of the money that was taken out of special supports. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to earmark 30% of caseload savings to meet some of the other pressures alluded by Commissioner Stewart, child care for example.

Replying to questions from Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen about directions regarding the 2000 budget, Commissioner Stewart said he thought the matter would be coming before Council in late November. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen said she is raising this matter because she is having difficulty, from a corporate perspective, committing funds to one area without knowing what the big picture will be. She indicated she would be more comfortable referring the Motion to the budget debate as opposed to dealing with it today.

Councillor H. Kreling posed a number of questions of clarification related to the \$4 million figure cited by Mr. Stewart in an earlier comment. The latter indicated there is something of a surplus in social assistance in 1999 and this will be rolled in to the corporate-wide surpluses and reported to Council in May 2000: there are some un-anticipated expenses in other areas that will need to be covered.

Responding to further questions from Councillor Kreling, Chair Munter clarified that Councillor Holmes' Motion directs staff, in consultation with the Task Force, to take the recommendations and prioritize the ones that help people the most and put those in the 2000 budget estimates to be debated. Councillor Holmes clarified that her second Motion aims to find solutions to the transportation issues highlighted in Recommendations 21 to 24. Councillor Kreling said he could support both Motions, based on the clarifications provided.

In reply to Councillor C. Doucet, Commissioner Stewart explained the reasons behind the decline in caseload. The Councillor said he was delighted to see Councillor Holmes' Motion come forward, as he didn't like to see money from cuts being re-directed into infrastructure. He expressed the view 100% of the savings should be going back and he said he would support the Motion with that understanding. Speaking to the second Motion, Councillor Doucet proposed a "friendly amendment" about finding a method to reduce the cost of transit to people on social assistance.

Councillor A. Loney reminded Committee members of the pressures the Transit Commission faces because the Province no longer provides 75% of public transit costs. He added that a lot of extra money will be required to maintain current transit service without backsliding. The Councillor said making transit as affordable as possible for everyone in the Region has a large price tag. He needed to have an indication of which direction the department wanted to take with the recommendations and he asked when this could be provided. Commissioner Stewart replied that, if the Motion is approved, staff will have a context by which to organize their thoughts, and will prioritize the recommendations in consultation with the Task Force. Since the Holmes Motion directs staff to look at issues that will most rapidly assist people find work or retain employment, recommendations around expanding EHSS and dealing with transportation issues may take on more importance.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen indicated she would not support the Motion directing funds to be placed in the 2000 budget estimates. The Councillor said she fully appreciates the situation of persons on social assistance but, at the other end of the spectrum is the requirement to look at transportation needs as a result of economic development. She pointed to the firm of JDS Uniphase currently hiring 100 people a week, and she reminded the Committee that a number of those persons are or were social assistance recipients. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen said their transportation needs must also be examined and this is the reason she would prefer to wait to see the total picture as opposed to earmarking any savings to any specific budget.

Committee Chair Munter expressed the view that Council owes it to the people who participated in the process, who came up with concrete examples of the kinds of issues poor people in the community face, and who proposed possible solutions, to act on their recommendations. Chair Munter agreed with Councillor Doucet that 100% of the savings should be reinvested, but the Motion is an attempt at pragmatism. The priority has to be placed on concrete measures that put money into people's pockets to help them move from social assistance to work and to remain at work in low paying jobs.

Moved by D. Holmes

1. **That 30% of the savings from the decline in social assistance caseload, to a cap of \$1 million, be earmarked, in the 2000 budget, to implement specific recommendations of the Task Force on Poverty which assist people in making the transition from social assistance to employment and/or which help the working poor remain off assistance, and;**

2. **That the Task Force on Poverty, working with regional staff, prioritize their recommendations within the framework of helping the transition off social assistance and helping the working poor.**

CARRIED, as amended
(M. McGoldrick-Larsen
dissented)

3. **That Recommendations 21 through 24 of the Task Force on Poverty Interim Report be referred to the Transit Services Committee (the Community Services Committee believes strongly in the need for mobility in order to obtain employment).**

CARRIED, as amended

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

RECEIVED

COUNCILLORS' ITEMS

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IULA) DECLARATION ON WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Committee Co-ordinator's memorandum dated 12 Oct 99

Councillor D. Holmes introduced the item by saying it was now appropriate to bring this matter before Council, to actually operationalize the Declaration, to request that women be given equitable access to services, to employment and to political opportunity. The Councillor also requested approval for the action plan described in the report.

Valerie Collicott, Women's Action Centre Against Violence

Ms. Collicott expressed support for the declaration and the Action Plan. She spoke about women not feeling safe, for themselves and for their children and not wanting to go out at night. What this means for the Region is that a lot of voices in the community are not being heard: a lot of women impacted by decisions made by the Region can't come and say how they are affected. Ms. Collicott pointed out that transportation is a major issue for women. The Women's Action Centre would like to dialogue with planners and developers to ensure neighbourhoods are designed so people can feel safe therein.

The Women's Action Centre would also like to see more women participate in this male-dominated career. More women should be involved in actual decision-making and hold political office in the community.

Michael Birmingham, Network of Community Health and Resource Centres and the Association of Community Health Centres (Provincial)

Dr. Birmingham asked that the Committee support the declaration, in recognition of the Platform for Action that came out of Cairo and the work done at Beijing. He pointed out this is the 25th anniversary of legislation on choice being passed for women in Canada. Dr. Birmingham posited that the fight to achieve choice would not have been as difficult, and the legislation would have passed sooner, if there had been equity at all levels of government. The fact that women's voices are not heard equally at all levels of government affects the visibility of women's issues for decision-makers.

Dr. Birmingham continued by saying it is clear that women do not have equal access to services and have to fight against barriers such as access to child care, to English as a Second Language. He said there is still no recognition, in a significant way, for the unpaid, caring labour that women provide in building healthier communities. Across the low income communities, women are providing child care for one another at no cost; they don't get points for this, or achieve other benefits. Dr. Birmingham said support for the Motion was long overdue, and he thanked Councillor Holmes for bringing it forward.

Councillor D. Beamish pointed out that a lot of people are disadvantaged and don't have access to services in the community. He asked which specific needs were not being met in Ottawa-Carleton; women are well represented around municipal council tables and there appear to be no barriers to women getting jobs. Dr. Birmingham replied that the Motion seeks to ensure there are no barriers and to clarify the situation. Often, women's issues are invisible unless they are made visible. Councillor Beamish asked about the situation of men unable to find work because of lack of training or schooling. Dr. Birmingham pointed out that talking about women's issues means talking about family issues. He noted it is mostly women who are unemployed and living on assistance in the community and, unless this fact is recognized and made more visible, the issue will not be addressed.

Maria Neil, on behalf of Dr. Christine Turkewych, Vice President, Ottawa Chapter, Canadian Federation of University Women CFUW)

Ms. Neal said the CFUW is a voluntary, non-partisan, self-funded, bilingual organization of 500 women university graduates living in Ottawa. Members are active in public affairs and working to raise the social, economic and legal status of women, as well as to improve education, the environment, peace, justice, human and equality rights. The Ottawa Chapter, founded in 1919 is one of 130 clubs across Canada, with a membership of approximately 10,000. CFUW is affiliated with the International Federation of University Women with its 67 associations and 180,000 members. CFUW urges the

Committee to recommend Council adopt the IULA declaration and the action plan described in the report. They are concerned that the City of Ottawa give women equitable representation on all decision-making committees and advisory councils, decrease barriers to employment and promotion in all levels of municipal government from administrative front-line staff positions to middle and senior management, decrease barriers to elected positions and appointments and ensure that women's representation be sufficient to encompass the diverse needs of women based on linguistic, cultural, racial, physical and educational factors.

Councillor Beamish asked whether the speaker could point specifically to where regional government is deficient in the areas she mentioned. Ms. Neil replied this question had already been adequately answered by Dr. Birmingham. Councillor Beamish wanted to know which Committees do not allow women to participate. Ms. Neil replied there is no lack of participation in committees. What the Motion asks for is that a group be set up, led by two well-known academics in the area, to investigate whether or not there is a need.

In response to further questions from Councillor Beamish, Ms. Neil cited the example of the police force and the fire department in Ottawa, saying they have problems with recruiting women and certainly, in the case of the fire department, in hiring women. She said the Council of Women is concerned about health care and the burden it places on women especially with de-institutionalization at all levels of illness and health care. Women are having to stay at home more because the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) regulations stipulate there are to be no funds made available for home care workers until all other resources have been exhausted. Respite care for women is another big item, there are very few funds for this.

Councillor W. Byrne spoke about the subtle barriers that prevent women from running for office, such as child care and transportation, having to go out to keep up with the other candidates, campaigning day after day while still having to get home to feed the children and put them to bed. These problems are mostly particular to women and may contribute to their decisions as to whether or not to run for office. Councillor Byrne said things are changing but they are changing slowly, and a study such as the one proposed will help keep things changing. She spoke about women approaching middle age who have the responsibility of their parents as well as their children, noting it is usually women who have that responsibility. Councillor Byrne volunteered to sit on the working group, because this is a very important focus for all levels of government, as well as for the community. Opening access to women means putting in the time and the effort to find the gaps that are not so obvious and address them.

Maria Neil, representing the Council of Women, said members are particularly concerned about the need for women to have services on an equitable basis., and believe this cannot be achieved without a good number of women in senior positions in local government. The Council does not ask for quotas but does expect well-qualified women to be offered

employment when they apply for vacant positions. In addition, women already employed at the regional level should be given the opportunity to move up and to achieve higher rank in their careers. Women should be accorded more equitable access to positions of management in the government closest to the people, and this is a very important point about regional, municipal government. Members of the Council believe the citizens of the Region will be better served by having more women involved with, and employed by, regional government. The economic aspects of environment and health are all tightly linked and affect each other closely. Economic matters or funding are often an excuse for not ensuring environmental safety, and the Council is particularly concerned about the health matters already mentioned, as well as pesticides in the environment and breast cancer. If there are more women in the bureaucracy and in government, there will be action on these matters. Ms. Neil urged acceptance of the Holmes Motion.

Fran Klodawsky, Carleton University, on behalf of Carolyn Andrew, University of Ottawa

The speaker said she and Ms. Andrews are both very pleased to have been invited to participate and are willing to stay involved. There is a need for a committee to investigate, seriously and concretely, the issues of inequitable access that exist in the Region. Baseline information is needed to begin to identify areas Regional Council and others in the community can address in a serious way and to prioritize areas where the most can be done over the shortest period of time. It will be of immense benefit to have all the players at the table, the Region, community representatives and the Universities working together. This initiative will be of benefit generally to everyone in the Region and seems to complement the following initiatives currently underway:

- efforts to improve quality of life in the Region. This is an important factor for an area like Ottawa-Carleton and the committee will identify areas where it can be improved for many persons in the Region;
- public transit. Overall, the evidence suggests that women use and are more dependent on public transit than men are, and benefit more when public transit is provided in a way that meets their needs. This initiative seems to parallel the efforts of OC Transpo to increase its customer-friendly face;
- land use planning. If there can be, up front, ideas on improving access for a wide variety of women, more effective land use planning can take place and benefit more people.

With respect to safety issues, Ms. Klodawsky said it is evident that improving women's access improves things for other groups and individuals, for example those with disabilities, those who have been poor, those who are immigrants. She thanked Councillor Holmes for bringing the matter before the Committee.

Councillor A. Loney asked for additional details about the terms and parameters of the study, noting it seems to get further afield with every new presentation. Ms. Klodawsky replied that the working group will work within its means, it will prioritize areas for investigation and look at the available resources. Funding will be sought from other areas, and there may be students who want to undertake research projects related to these questions. By working together and discussing priorities and feasibility, the group will collect information about what currently exists in terms of disparities between men and women, identify why that is the case and what kind of initiatives might effectively reduce those disparities. In response to a further question from Councillor Loney, Ms. Klodawsky said that looking at the employment problem within the Region might not be sufficient if the problem is considered to be that of the people in Ottawa-Carleton.

Councillor Clive Doucet expressed the view that, as someone of academic inclination, he felt that a focus just on gender would be misplaced. Ms. Klodawsky said this was a valid and important comment. Considering the discussion in feminist academe and feminist studies over the last ten to twenty years, women from minority groups have criticized academic feminists, who have, on the whole, been white and middle class, for forgetting about the diversity of women. Currently in women's studies, there is a real effort to include this diversity. When doing so, issues such as disability, ethnicity, income and class are taken into account. While these problems affect half the population considerably more, and because the focal point is on equity, remembering the diversity of women will help the study group.

Denise Lemire, Réseau socio-action des femmes francophones (RSAFF)

Ms. Lemire said she represents both the Réseau socio-action and the Réseau des chercheurs féministes de l'Ontario français. Le Réseau socio-action was created in 1989 and is a network of business and professional women who promote services and products for women in the Region. There are approximately 125 members, business and professional women, and some women politicians including MPP Claudette Boyer, Regional Councillor Madeleine Meilleur and Vanier Councillor Diane Doré. Ms. Lemire said running for political office is difficult to do without money and without the support of the community. The RSAFF has excellent women who could be in political life, but there is no formal network to support them. She said the IULA declaration is a wish-list and if the situation in Ottawa-Carleton is studied further, the results will be very interesting. The RSAFF would be also be interested in helping the number of francophone women running for office increase.

Ms. Lemire spoke about the Réseau des chercheurs féministes de l'Ontario français, an organization established in 1992 that brings together approximately 40 francophone women researchers in the Province. Its mission is to support research by and for francophone women and to highlight the findings of those researchers. There are many activities at this level, including bi-annual colloquia and keeping a Directory of Researchers. Ms. Lemire said it would be important to be able to analyze the results of the study by including the variables of maternal language and languages spoken at home. This would provide information on french-speaking persons for analysis which could be followed-up with strategies and actions plans. She suggested it would be interesting to hear a presentation on the study at a Forum for francophone women of the third millennium, to be held in Ottawa in March 2000. Workshops could be held where women can participate, talk about their experiences, work at developing strategies. Ms. Lemire said the Region should become a leader in encouraging women to access the political milieu and to make it as accessible to women as possible.

Committee Discussion

Councillor Holmes said the IULA Declaration applies equally to women of the First and Third Worlds, and she cited a number of instances where women have faced problems accessing services and employment. The Councillor pointed out that most women over sixty do not go out at night, as they do not feel safe on the streets, on regional roads, and in their own homes. She said women's safety was not taken into account when developing the city. She spoke about this applying to OC Transpo, since most women will not use public transportation at night, they will not go into a Transitway station: low income women are at a disadvantage in this regard. OC Transpo is trying to hire more women as bus drivers but is having problems doing this because the hours of work are difficult.

With regard to health services, little attention has been paid over the years to the fact that women present diseases differently. It has required a great deal of effort to make this fact known to health and community services and there is a role for the Region's Health Department to advocate for health strategies. Speaking on the issue of land use, Councillor Holmes said engineers and planners need to take women's safety into account when designing public spaces, transitway stations, roadways. Most male engineers have no concept of this reality.

Councillor Holmes said policies and gaps in service have to be examined, in health, in land use planning. The working group must also examine how to sensitize women to take greater part in the working of regional government. The Region must be more sensitive to the needs of women and make changes if it wants to see women participate more actively.

Committee Chair A. Munter spoke about the impact of cuts to government programs in the area of human services made in the 1990s. He posited that these cuts have disproportionately affected women, because services have been scaled back and the

implicit expectation was that women would “take up the slack”. Chair Munter made reference to comments about women stepping in and filling the gaps in child care that society would otherwise have to deal with collectively. He pointed out that the discussion on the previous three items also spoke about the need to address this.

Councillor Loney said he did not believe it was proper to proceed with a study that is so ill-defined on paper. He expressed support for the comments made by the delegations, but he felt the study was too large, too encompassing and that it needed to be more defined. Councillor Loney said he accepted that women are disadvantaged in contemporary society, but this should not preclude the action plan from being more clearly spelled out, from talking about timing, funding, and the amount of time that will be required of regional staff participating in the study. He proposed the following to address these concerns:

Moved by A. Loney

That the action plan (described in the report) be referred to the Social Services Commissioner who, in consultation with the P&DA Commissioner, will bring back a detailed plan on what is required to set up the Working Group.

LOST

YEAS: H. Kreling, A. Loney 2
NAYS: C. Doucet, D. Holmes, A. Munter 3

Moved by D. Holmes

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council adopt the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That in order to implement this decision, the Region of Ottawa-Carleton (ROC) will set up a Working Group made up of elected councillors, staff of the ROC (from among OC Transpo, Health Department, Environment and Transportation, Social Services, Police, Planning and Development Approvals as the lead department and Human Resources), community representatives from local women’s groups and organizations serving women’s needs and representatives from the Women’s Studies Programs at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This working group will be charged with doing a study of the current situation and the gaps in the current situation of women’s access to regional government services and

employment (including finding ways to fund this study). The study will address the diverse needs and circumstances of women and the results of the study will propose recommendations to the ROC on ensuring women's access to services and employment.

CARRIED, as amended

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR