Social Services Committee
REPORT 06-005
9:30 a.m.
April 25, 2006
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West, Hamilton

Present:
Chair B. Bratina
Councillors B. Kelly, T. Jackson, B. McHattie

Absent:
Councillor S. Merulla, City Business

Also Present:
G. Peace, City Manager
J. Priel, General Manager, V. Woodcox, C. Buffett,
J. Soldera, B. Bax, Community Services
I. Sturgeon, City Clerks

THE SOCIAL & SERVICES COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 06-005 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Impact of Ontario Works 2005-06 Transition Directive Relating to the Special Diet Allowance (SSC06008)(City Wide) (Item 5.1)


2. Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (SSC06007)(City Wide) (Item 5.2)

   That Report SSC06007 respecting the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, be received.

3. Homemakers and Nurses Services Program Update HCS03012 (e)) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)

   (a) That an extension of the transition/termination of the Homemakers and Nurses Services Program beyond the target date of April 1, 2006 be approved, with an increase in budget estimated not to exceed $258,580 for the remainder of 2006 to be allocated from the Provincial Social Services Initiatives Fund.

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(b) That Council correspond with the Minister of Health and Long Term Care requesting approval for the transfer of $1.4 million provincial Homemakers and Nurses Services funds to the successful community support agency for the provision of Homemaking Services in Hamilton.

(c) That Council correspond with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Community Care Access Centre requesting that city clients who are eligible to receive homemaking services under the Community Care Access Centre criteria be transferred immediately.

(d) That staff be directed to report back to Council upon Ministerial approval of the transfer of provincial homemakers’ funds to the approved community agency in order to identify the termination date of the City’s Homemakers and Nurses Program and the fiscal impact of the new termination date on the City’s 2006 budget.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL:

(a) Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes noted.

(b) Declaration of Interest

None

(c) Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 21, 2006 meeting were approved as presented.

The Clerk’s Report of the April 11th, 2006 meeting was received.

(d) Delegation Requests (Item 4)

The Committee approved the following delegation requests for the April 25th meeting;

i) Item 5.1.1 Ms. Deirdre Pike, from the Social Planning & Research Council and Mary Lee, Campaign/Income Security Working Group

ii) Item 5.2.2. Rev. Thom Davies and Mr. Paul Johnson, Wesley Urban Ministries

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(e) Impact of Ontario Works 2005-06 Transition Directive Relating to the Special Diet Allowance (SSC06008)(City Wide) (Item 5.1)

i) Ms. Deirdre Pike, from the Social Planning & Research Council and Mary Lee, Campaign/Income Security Working Group (Item 5.1.1)

Ms. Pike noted that the current Special Diet Allowance is inadequate and advised that local groups were currently advocating the government to revert back to the previous rules. Ms. Pike asked staff to ensure that the City be included in the report as one of the concerned groups. Ms. Pike provided copies of the "Poverty Watch" newsletter which was circulated to members of Committee.

Ms. Mary Lee provided comments about her personal experiences with the Special Diet allowance and suggested that disease prevention was the better approach. Ms. Lee provided an information hand-out to members of Committee regarding the changes to the Special Diet Allowance.

Sue Grafe, on behalf of Health Providers Against Poverty, spoke of the impacts caused by the changes to the Special Diet Allowance. Ms. Grafe noted that Disease Prevention and Health Promotion would lower costs in medical treatments and social services.

A lengthy discussion ensued and members of Committee noted the importance of the City stating that they are also an advocate of this issue.

Committee approved the following motion;

(Morelli/Jackson)
That staff be directed to follow-up with an additional report providing further information including, but not limited to, the impacts/implications of the changes in Provincial legislation, the City of Hamilton's position on these changes and suggestions on how we will proceed in future.

CARRIED

Chairman Bratina thanked the speakers for their presentations.

(f) Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (SSC06007) (Item 5.2)

i) Mr. Bob Wood and Ms. Donna Eaton from the Housing Help Centre (Item 5.2.1)

Mr. Wood noted that his written comments had been included in the agenda. In addition, he suggested that it might become difficult for the Housing Help centre to maintain service levels if the City is forced to
use funds that were intended to go to direct service. It was his understanding that over the next few months, staff will be meeting with the service providers and will hopefully come up with a solution to this problem.

The Committee thanked Mr. Wood for his submission and received the correspondence.

ii) Rev. Thom Davies and Mr. Paul Johnson, Wesley Urban Ministries (Item 5.2.2)

Mr. Johnson advised Committee that he was in support of the staff information report and that he concurred with the funding changes being proposed by the Health and Social Supports Branch.

Rev. Thom Davies provided examples of the types of agencies who interact with the clientele using this program and suggested that the collaboration of staff and community partners was a successful one.

The Committee approved the staff information report.

(g) General Information

(i) Emergency Shelter Funding Pressures (SSC06003) (City Wide) (Item 7.2) - Outstanding Business Item J

On a motion, (Morelli/Kelly), Committee identified Item J as being complete and removed this item from the Outstanding Business List.

(h) Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting of the Social Services Committee adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor B. Bratina
Chair

I. Sturgeon,
Legislative Assistant
April 25, 2006