Present: Councillors R. Pasuta (Chair), B. McHattie (1st Vice Chair), S. Merulla (2nd Vice Chair), S. Duvall, T. Jackson, M. McCarthy and B. Morelli

Absent with Regrets: Councillors S. Duvall, M. McCarthy – Other City Business
Councillor T. Jackson – Vacation

Also Present: J. Priel, General Manager, Community Services
J. Kay, General Manager/Chief, Hamilton Emergency Services
A. Bradford, Director, Culture
M. Weingartner, Senior Policy Analyst, Social Development
R. Reid, Youth Advisor
S. Paparella, Legislative Assistant, City Clerk’s Office

THE EMERGENCY & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 10-006 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Smart Meters (CS10046) (City Wide) (Item 5.1)

   That Report CS10046, respecting Smart Meters, be received.

2. Early Learning Program, Full Day Learning for Four and Five Year-Olds (CS10042) (City Wide) (Item 5.2)

   That Report CS10042, respecting the Early Learning Program, Full Day Learning for Four to Five Year Olds, be received.
3. **Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Youth Poverty and Homelessness (HYAC10-002) (City Wide) (Item 7.1)**

That Report HYAC10-002, Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee – Youth Poverty and Homelessness, be received.

4. **Adequacy of Ontario Works Assistance Rates and Economic Impact of the Ontario Child Benefit (CS10049) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)**

That the Mayor correspond with the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Chair of the Social Assistance Advisory Council; with copies to all local MPPs, requesting that the scope of the forthcoming social assistance review include:

(i) An emergency increase to provincial social assistance, perhaps in the form of a healthy food allowance or a housing allowance, in advance of the social assistance review, so as to provide some relief to individuals and families in the province, many of whom are currently living on below subsistence-level incomes;

(ii) that the scope of the forthcoming social assistance review include consideration of the establishment of an Ontario Social Assistance Rates Board, to be charged with the task of annually reviewing and adjusting social assistance rates, based on evidence of the cost of a decent standard of living, and that any resulting recommendation be identified as a priority and necessary recommendation;

(iii) that the scope of the forthcoming social assistance review include an in-depth analysis of the social assistance rate restructuring for families receiving the Ontario Child Benefit to ensure that those families on social assistance realize the full benefits of the Ontario Child Benefit; and,

(iv) that the Government of Ontario make the reports of the Social Assistance Review Advisory Committee public within 30 days of the date they are delivered to the Government.

5. **Assessment of Everyone Has A Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (CS10044) (City Wide) (Item 8.2)**

That Report CS10044 “Assessment of Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness” be received for information.
6. **Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045) (City Wide) (Item 8.3)**

That the Mayor correspond with the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services, to request that the Province implement Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates that reflect the real cost of living and are indexed annually to reflect inflation.

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL:**

(a) **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 1)**

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda:

(i) Added as Item 4.2 – A delegation request, submitted by Michelle Hruschka, on behalf of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), on the April 21, 2010 Agenda.

(ii) Added as Item 4.3 – A delegation request, submitted by Sally Palmer, on behalf of the Social Action Committee, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton & District Branch, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), on the April 21, 2010 Agenda.

(iii) Item 7.1 – Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Report HYAC10-002 – Youth Poverty and Homelessness, which was listed on the Agenda as “to be distributed” on the April 21, 2010 Agenda.

The agenda for the April 21, 2010 Emergency & Community Services Committee meeting was approved, as amended.

(b) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)**

There were none declared.

(c) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)**

3.1 **April 7, 2010**

The Minutes of the April 7, 2010 Emergency & Community Services Committee meeting was approved, as presented.
(d) Craig Foye, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic (McQueston), respecting Item 8.1 – Adequacy of Ontario Works Assistance Rates and Economic Impact of the Ontario Child Benefit (Items 4.1 and 6.2)

The delegation request submitted by Craig Foye, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic (McQueston), respecting Item 8.1 – Adequacy of Ontario Works Assistance Rates and Economic Impact of the Ontario Child Benefit, was approved.

Mr. Foye's comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Requested, on behalf of the new Hamilton Community Legal Clinic (McQueston), that the Mayor and members of Council write to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Community and Social Services, and the Social Assistance Review Advisory Council in order to recommend that a number of progressive measure be undertaken.

- The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic is largely in agreement with both the contents of the staff report and the recommendations contained within and, the response from the Social Action Committee of the Ontario Association of social Workers, Hamilton & District Branch.

- Continues to work to have Bill 235 – An Act to Establish the Ontario Social Assistance Rates Board., reintroduced by another back-bench liberal, as a Private Members Bill, but that member was asked by the government to hold off on introducing the Bill, as it was something that was still being considered by the government.

- Currently focusing on some discrete benefits such as the healthy food allowance and a housing allowance.

- The current government model of increasing the Ontario Child Benefit, while decreasing the basic needs allowance portion of social assistance creates a shell game for families on social assistance and other advocating for adequate rates. In addition, the lowering of social assistance rates means that fewer families qualify for social assistance and the crucial benefits that entails, such as a drug card and other crucial benefits.

- The Ontario government announced that it would be cancelling the Special Diet Program that is currently available to recipients of the provincial social assistance to help them buy the necessary food, due to a medical condition.

The Special Diet Program is to be partially replaced by a Nutritional Supplement Program, to be administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. However, it appears that the new benefit will be available only to those with severe medical needs.
These changes will have severe impacts on Hamilton. The effects to public health will be drastic and the additional demand on Hamilton’s food banks and emergency meal programs will be significant; putting dangerous pressure on these already over extended agencies.

A full copy of Mr. Foye's presentation is available online at [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) or through the Office of the City Clerk.

The presentation provided by Craig Foye, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic (McQueston), respecting Item 8.1 – Adequacy of Ontario Works Assistance Rates and Economic Impact of the Ontario Child Benefit, was received.

**Michelle Hruschka, on behalf of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), on the April 21, 2010 Agenda (Items 4.2 and 6.3)**

The delegation request submitted by Michelle Hruschka, on behalf of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), was approved.

Ms. Hruschka’s comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The amounts received by people from social assistance are not suitable.
- Equally disturbing that with the recent budget, the Ontario government is planning on cutting the Special Diet Program.
- The 1% raise in social assistance rates that is actually replacing the 2% raise is alarming.
- Given that it has been over a year since the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Act, we have seen very little movement from the provincial government to address the growing dire situation across the province.
- With respect to food banks, people are still getting expired food. Therefore, we are recommending that the food banks set a policy that is clear for both those accessing these services and those providing them, that when food that has expired is given out, it can be returned and replaced.
- Access to community gardens would go along way in providing fresh fruits and vegetables for the many who struggle.
A full copy of Ms. Hruschka’s presentation is available online at [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) or through the Office of the City Clerk.

The presentation provided by Michelle Hruschka, on behalf of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), was received.

(f) Sally Palmer, on behalf of the Social Action Committee, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton & District Branch, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), on the April 21, 2010 Agenda (Items 4.3 and 6.4)

The delegation request submitted by Sally Palmer, on behalf of the Social Action Committee, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton & District Branch, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), was approved.

Ms. Palmer’s comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The effects of poverty on health in Hamilton are noting short of disastrous, and are being associated with unacceptable rates of hospitalization and shortened lives.

- Applaud the City for recognizing that the present rates of social assistance, as set by the provincial government, are not adequate to maintain food health.

- The Social Action Committee along with the Campaign for Adequate Welfare & Disability Benefits have organized a Rally for Tuesday, April 7, 2010 at Queens Park to protest the continuing claw backs to social assistance, as it relates to the Ontario Child Benefit introduced in 2008.

- Parents on Social Assistance have lost their annual “Back to School” and “Winter Clothing” allowances; they have also experienced significant cuts to the Basic Needs portion of their social assistance.

- The negative attitude, of the provincial government, toward families on social assistance was expressed to representatives from the Social Assistance Committee and the Campaign for Adequate Welfare & Disability Benefits who met with staff of the Ministry of Community and Social Services on December 15, 2009, who were told that the cuts to the Basic Needs Allowance were “a policy decision to lower the welfare wall”.

A full copy of Ms. Palmer’s presentation is available online at [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) or through the Office of the City Clerk.
The presentation provided by Sally Palmer, on behalf of the Social Action Committee, Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton & District Branch, respecting Item 8.3 – Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need (CS10045), was received.

(g) Clay Eborall, President of the Hamilton Farmer’s Market Stallholders Association, respecting the Possible Removal of Parking Validation Located at the Level Parkade near the Farmers’ Market (Item 6.1)

Mr. Eborall’s comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Cancelling 1 hour free parking for market
- Elected president, of stallholders association, petition signed by over 1600 customers of farmers market
- Free parking is important incentive for continued patronage
- Market can bring life into downtown, attract patrons to retailers in community
- Keep money in community
- Local produce, keep local businesses, encourage new ones
- Improve diet and nutrition – providing fresh, healthy produce
- Can usually provide at lower prices
- Reduction of fuel miles – less trucks required
- Asking one of free parking be reconsidered and reinstated for the Hamilton Farmer’s Market.
- Other possibilities to look at – even just keeping free one hour parking for Saturdays.

Staff was asked by Committee what the validated parking statistics were for the last few years. The Director of Culture provided the following information:

- 2008 - 53,902 validations provided at a cost to the City of $110,959.48;
- 2009 - 37,699 validations provided at a cost to the City of $ 94,786.85 (half year at temporary location); and,
- 2010 - 7,570 validations provided at a cost to the City of $18,925.00 (up to April 15, 2010).

The presentation, provided by Clay Eborall, President of the Hamilton Farmer’s Market Stallholders Association, respecting the Possible Removal of Parking Validation Located at the Level Parkade near the Farmers’ Market, was received.
(h) **Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee Report HYAC10-002, respecting Youth Poverty and Homelessness (Item 7.1)**

Katie Schotsman and Fan Yang, of the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee, provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining the report. Their comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

- The Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee has three points of action, with respect to doing their part to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child:
  - Partnership, collaboration and support;
  - Opportunities and Choices; and,
  - Awareness and Advocacy.

- Members of the HYAC participated in Soupfest 2010.

- Exploring a possible partnership with Canada’s only National charity dedicated to finding long-term solutions to homelessness – the Raise the Roof Toque initiative.

- The Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee requested that the City of Hamilton continue to support poverty reduction efforts and youth-engaged opportunities for all Hamilton youth as well as transition programs and supports for street-involved youth.

The presentation provided by the Hamilton Youth Advisory Committee, respecting Youth Poverty and Homelessness, was received.

(i) **Advisory Committee Minutes (Items 5.4)**

The following Advisory Committee Minutes were received:

(i) Tenant Advisory Committee Minutes, March 12, 2010 (Item 5.3)

(ii) Food, Shelter and Housing Advisory Committee Minutes, February 11, 2010 (Item 5.4)

(j) **Amendments to the Outstanding Business List (Item 11):**

The proposed new due dates, for the following Emergency & Community Services Committee’s Outstanding Business List Items, were approved:

(a) Item “P” Players Paradise Sports Complex – New Hockey Facility in Stoney Creek

   **Due Date:** April 21, 2010

   **Proposed New Due Date:** June 16, 2010
(b) Item “Q” - Additional Funding for First Place Hamilton
Due Date: April 21, 2010
Proposed New Due Date: September 8, 2010

The following items were considered complete and removed from the Emergency & Community Services Committee’s Outstanding Business List:

(i) Item “K” – Installation of Sub-meters in Residential Rental Units and its Impact on Tenant Affordability Units

(ii) Item E – Adequacy of Ontario Works Social Assistance Rates and the Economic Impact of the Ontario Works Child Benefit Monies

(iii) Item "T", respecting Ensuring Safe, Healthy and Adequate Food for those in Need

(k) Farmers’ Market Legal Matter (Item 12.1)

Committee had moved into Closed Session, at 2:57 p.m. to discuss Item 12.1, pursuant to Section 8.1, Sub-section (e) of the City’s Procedural By-law 10-053; and, Section 239, Sub-section (e) of the Ontario Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, as the subject matter pertains to litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board.

As shown in the Closed Session Minutes, the Emergency & Community Services Committee reconvened in Open Session at 3:14 p.m.

No action was taken, at this time, with respect to the information provided in Closed Session.

(l) ADJOURNMENT (Item 13)

There being no further business, the Emergency & Community Services Committee meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor R. Pasuta, Chair
Emergency & Community Services Committee

Stephanie Paparella
Legislative Assistant
April 21, 2010

Council – April 28, 2010