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Coming up at 1 pm, the monthly Social Services Committee at Wellington County. This is what we're talking about:




Chair Anderson has called the meeting to order. He begins by noting that this is [#InternationalWomensDay](#), and invites everyone to take a moment to appreciate the women in their life.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest? Nope.

First item: Stephen Dewar, General Manager/Chief, Guelph-Wellington Paramedic Service with the Paramedic Service 2022 Data Review.

Increase in emergency call volumes is going up, which is also making the length of response times go up. And the off load delay at the hospitals isn't helping either. We are at, or slightly above, the projected expansion of service need established in 2016 for the decade.

Despite increases in staffing, the service wasn't able to anticipate offload delays. Average response time is over 8 minutes, which is about an  of about half-a-minute. Dewar says worst response time was over an hour b/c it was a hunter in the bush with no idea where he was.

Delays in 2022 added up to about 11k hours. A delay is considered more than 30 minutes and Dewar calls it a "significant drain in resources." It was more than double the amount of hours compared to 2021.

On the bright side, there funding for a nurse to co-ordinate offloading has been approved, and the service is in the process of finalising that agreement and then putting someone in place.

Dewar adds that 13k enrolled in the Community Paramedicine programs has also had an impact in making sure people don't get to the point where they need to call 9-1-1. Funding is still temp. thru 2024 and Dewar says they're waiting to see if that's extended.

Dewar says they're making every effort to minimise the impacts of delays.

Dewar is asked if when the offload nurse might be in place. Dewar says they told the hospital to try and start staffing right away, but the hospital is having issues staffing all positions, so he's not sure.

Why increase calls for children? Dewar says its RSV and influenza, but this is not a unique GW phenomenon. They're looking to see if some additional training is needed.

Dewar is asked by Cllr Bulmer is Dewar has ever tried to separate out the rural and urban numbers. Dewar says they've tried in the past but that's hard to do, another reminder that we're in a unique situation in GW.

Warden Lennox asks about the impact of ageing population. Dewar says yes, and they also considered the trends in medicine too, the changing lengthy of stays at hospital for different procedures. Pandemic was not anticipated though.

Lennox asks when the service might renew those growth numbers and predictions. Dewar says they're having those discussions with the City of Guelph. There's also the new pressure on growth to consider, but there is a cost to a consultant to do it right.

Cllr Duncan says the impact on volunteer fire depts, Erin's response numbers have tripled for example. The Hillsburgh paramedic station is now open 24 hrs/day, but the Erin FF are still responding to the same # of medical emergencies.

Report received unanimously.

Next, Financial Statements as of February 28, 2023. Obviously it's still early in the year so there's nothing terribly controversial here.

Q: Is there still delays in projects because of supplies.

Staff says yes, some of the things completed by the end of the year have been delayed because of supply. Grace Gardens is an example, the windows and doors ordered have yet to arrive.

Motion to receive the financial report received unanimously.

Next: Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care - Directed Growth Approach to Child Care Expansion. Mandy Koroniak, Director of Children's Early Years Division, will present.

Deadline: 53k new spaces have to be created in Ontario by 2026. In 2022, the Province shared access and inclusion framework which is about making sure low-income families, marginalised, Indigenous groups and new Canadians are covered.

The Province has also announced that the capital framework and application processes will come out sometime in the next few months.

Cllr Cork asks where the 53k children are now. Koroniak says they're likely in "informal" settings.

Lennox asks about the criteria, is the Province providing metrics? Koroniak says the Province has id'ed vulnerable populations and prioritised neighbourhoods, but this is all activated at the local level. Privacy is a priority.

Lennox asks if this impacts the level of need. Koroniak says there have been changes in licensing with Province adding a step be having daycare provider fit in with the growth plan.

Anderson asks about the plan for addressing the increased numbers. Koroniak says that it's the Province setting the targets, and then its up to the service manager to find where to put those spaces.

Motion to receive the report passes unanimously.

Next: Pictures of Community Housing Properties In Development. Pretty straightforward: <https://pub-wellington.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=6951>

Director of Housing Poste notes that St. Josephs Silver Maples Project in Guelph is now taking people in. It's a seniors home.

Cork asks if it's still possible to do a physical tour of the sites sometime later this year. Poste says they can set something up.

Motion to receive as information passed unanimously.

Next, 2023-25 Planned Funding Allocations for Provincially-Delivered Housing and Homelessness Prevention Programmes. This report is about details from the MMaH about funding for homeless programs. The numbers here are preliminary, but they are the minimums.

Big funding increases to the Canada-Ontario Housing Initiative, but there was a reduction to the Housing Benefit, which goes to rent-geared-to-income in the private market, and less money for rent stabilisation funds.

Poste says that Minister Clark is pushing the Federal government to keep that social services relief funds in the system, but it's an uphill climb.

Cork asks if the relief fund is down to nothing now. Poste says that the funding went to a number of pilot programs and now their maybe a matter of deciding which programs will continue and which ones won't.

Cllr Bulmer asks about Poste's confidence that the numbers will not go lower. Poste says they understand that they want municipalities to plan for these minimum numbers, although he notes that this letter came in after the budget process at the County.

Anderson notes that some of those funds when to PPE and cleaning, and those costs won't be going away b/c COVID isn't going away.

Motion to receive report for information passes unanimously.

Next, End of Mortgages System Planning Update. This will affect much of the county's non-social housing like rent-geared-to-income units, and makes some recommendations to send staff to make new agreements with properties as they reach end of mortgage dates.

Recommendation:

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That the report, End of Mortgages System Planning Update, be received for information; and

That staff be authorized to negotiate and execute agreements with Housing Services Act listed social housing providers subject to review by the County's Treasury department, County Solicitor and approval by the Social Services Administrator; and

That Council authorize the Warden and Clerk to execute all necessary agreements under the County's End of Mortgage Strategy.

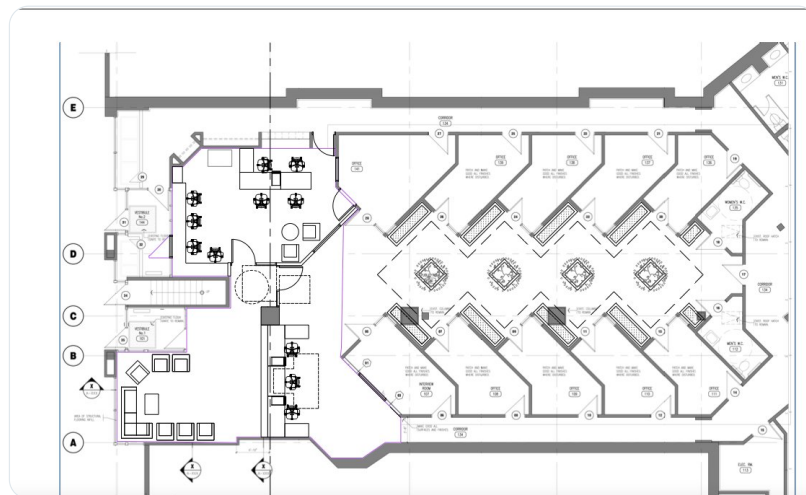
That one passes unanimously.

Next, Renovations to 129 Wyndham Street. These are proposed changes to the Social Services office reception area, the one where people seek help from the staff and where there are computers and resources for people.

Luisa Artuso, Social Services Administrator, says that they've seen an increase in incidents that have raised concerns about the health and safety of staff. Apparently there was a hold and secure just yesterday.

Presently, when people come in, they have access to the whole building, but the changes will put a reception area up front where people can be greeted, assessed, and then directed to where they need to go.

Artuso says they're looking at numbers now and will come back with proposals, but these are not huge renovations.



Cork notes that it's too bad that the County has to do this, but keeping staff safe is a top priority. Artuso adds that the County's experiences are not uncommon, and almost every area is seeing an increase in these cases. Post-pandemic things are very different.

Cork asks for example. Artusso says there's no clear documentation, but there's a heightened acuity to the complex needs of people and the incidents now seem more dramatic. Why? Not sure yet.

Bulmer agrees it's a shame, but is also concerned about the office feeling like a prison while trying to be secure. Artusso notes that there's no loud sound when doors lock. Focus is on natural light and calming colours, lots of plants. People are always given option to leave.

Bulmer asks if the facility has a panic button. Artusso says yes, and it's tested regularly.

Bulmer asks if the HR committee is updated about these instances. CAP Scott Wilson says he would have to look at the reporting methods.

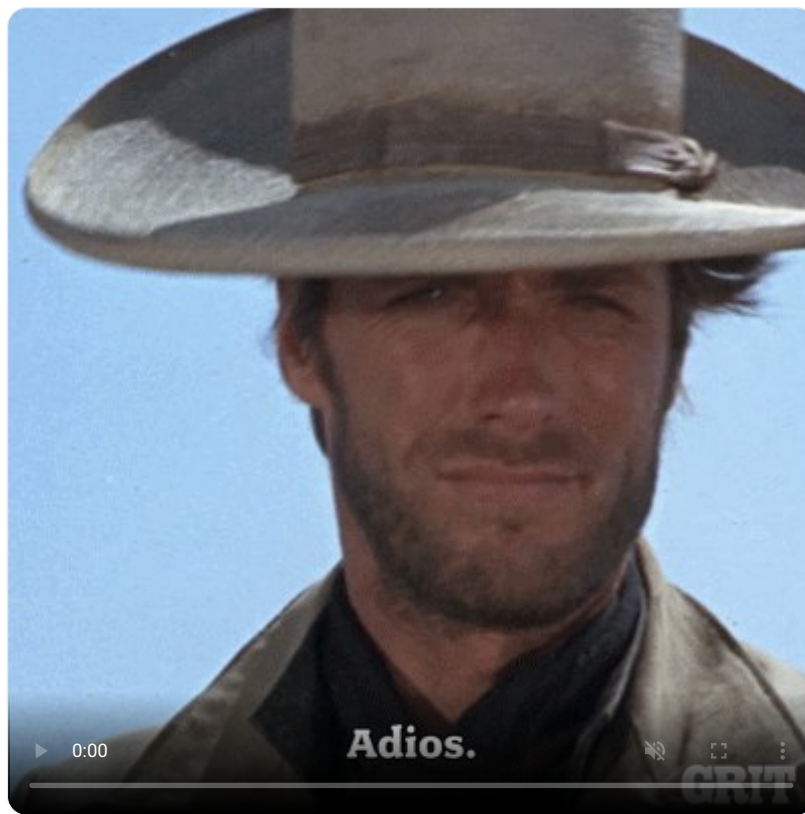
Wilson adds that they've recently completed a review of safety at the social services office, and there were very few at-risk areas that needed an immediate response. He's also reviewed additional concerns and they're being dealt with or are dealt with. Staff are safe.

Motion to receive report for information passes unanimously.

Next, Ontario Works. Nothing to report this month in open session (?).

Committee will now move into closed session for "personal matters about an identified individual".

No action items are going to come out of closed session, so that's basically the end of this meeting.



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