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Coming up at 1 pm, it's the Wellington County Social Services Meeting. This is what's on the agenda:



MEETING PREVIEW: County Social Services Meeting for September 13...

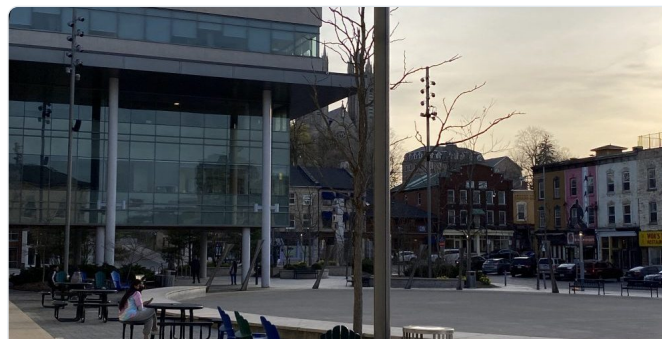
Wellington County's Social Services Committee are meeting again, and they're meeting again in the Guthrie Room of the Administrative Centre. Good thing because there's a packed ag...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/09/09/meeting-preview-county-social-services-meeting-f...>

Chair Anderson calls the meeting to order.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest? None.

First item: Paramedic Service Response Performance 2022 and Performance Plan 2024 with Stephen Dewar, General Manager/Chief of Guelph-Wellington Paramedic Service. This is the same report presented to #Guelph Cow in July:



Committee of the Whole Preview – What's on the Agenda for the July 5...

We've got one more month of meetings before the start of the annual summer break, and it's going to be a pretty busy month. To kick off July, city council will be looking to the future ...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/06/23/committee-of-the-whole-preview-whats-on-the-age...>

Dewar notes that most municipalities don't publish stats about service delivery in small sections of the municipality, so it's hard to compare and contrast the response in Wellington

to other places.

Dewar says there's a new computer program being upgraded to the system that will help the Service make changes and better prioritise calls, which will also have an impact on response times. This upgrade is coming from the Province.

Also, the community paramedicine program is showing good progress in preventing emergency calls in the first place. There have been improvements in offload times at GGH, and while they're creeping back up in Sept, there's reason for hope.

Cllr Bulmer asks about timelines for facility upgrades. Dewar says conversation between City staff the County treasurer are looking at what a lease agreement might look like, and then that could be part of the County's budget process. Dewar's not involved in those talks tho.

Bulmer notes 19 of the 20 data points meet benchmark in the city, but it's reverse for the county. Realising there's a difference btw urban/rural is there a level of service ppl in rural areas should expect?...

...Dewar says that he's not sure he can answer the question, but he says the goal is to no compare levels of service, but to improve the performance and response times generally. He says we can do better and will strive to do that with deployment plans.

Cllr Cork says he has some of Bulmer's concerns, should we be setting different targets for the rural areas? (That was a comment more than an official question.)

Cork asks if the Hospital ever got that offload help? Dewar says they have hired someone, and though it was originally going to come from the GGH budget, there's now some provincial money to cover the cost.

Anderson asks if that's permanent funding. Dewar says it's still one time, but they do have enough to cover the salary for a year.

Cllr Duncan asks about Level 1 response for Erin. Dewar says the information in the report comes from a generated report in a provincial database, so he will have to go back in to get the specific details.

CAO Wilson asks if there's going to a refresh into the 2016 resource study? Dewar says he has to go back to Guelph staff and see what that status is. Wilson says that they need to have confidence that the location of new stations is still where they need to be.

Motion to receive the report approved.

Next, Social Services Financial Statements as of August 31, 2023. Staff report that there will be a line-by-line variance report in October, but right now housing is running ahead of budget and Ontario works is running below budget.

Motion to receive the statements approved.

Next, Wellington Directed Growth and the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System. Mandy Koroniak, Director of Children's Early Years Division, will present.

This information report essentially directs where the money needs to go for the growth of childcare service in the region for the next few years, particularly under the guidelines of the new \$10/day childcare.

Mayor Guthrie asks if this is just a mathematical equation based on growth? Koroniak says yes, but access rates are the key consideration, based on child population and availability.

Bulmer notes the need in Mapleton, despite the fact there's grants available. How do we get momentum. Koroniak says Mapleton is top priority, and there are significant challenges with start-up grant which excludes purchase of land and buildings.

Bulmer asks if the money can be used for lease or improvements? Koroniak says yes, but the lease of the building would have to be achieved through operating funding. The start-up can be used to furnish a new facility.

Guthrie asks if there's anyway services can be combined under one roof. Anderson says there a lot of possibilities, Woolwich built a new arena and put a daycare centre in there. Mapleton is not going unsaid, the County and Township are putting heat on to get childcare there.

Motion to receive report passes unanimously.

Next: 2023 Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative and Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative Funding. Mark Posted, manager of housing presents.

This report presents the allocations for various funding received from the Feds and ONgov in this summer. Poste says normally they receive allocations earlier in the year, but they only got confirmation in August. There will be more info at the next social services meet.

Recommendation:

Recommendation:

That staff complete all necessary Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing reporting for the projects and draft and execute all necessary agreements related to the funding; and

That approval for delegated authority be provided to the CAO and the Social Services Administrator,

subject to the approval of the County Solicitor for approving commitments made by the County of Wellington under the 2023 Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative programme; and

That, based on the commitments made under delegated authority, that Housing staff complete all necessary Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing reporting for the projects and draft and execute all necessary agreements related to the funding.

Cork/Bulmer move the recommendation.

Guthrie asks if upgrades to homes are leaning to more green/efficient upgrades. Poste says they're taking that into account since that offset operating down the road. They also work with climate change co-ordinator on options.

Guthrie asks for an example. Poste says County is always looking for higher efficiency, especially with natural gas, but there also looking at more electric options. Plus there's a green investment line in the County budget.

Motion unanimously approved.

Next, Increase in Emergency Shelter Spaces. This is about reactivating two former shelter sites. There's a greater need for shelter space for families, and that's what the facility on Waterloo Avenue will be dedicated to, plus one for adult males on Hwy 6.

County staff are looking for \$150,000 in emergency funding – approximately \$15,000 from Wellington and \$135,000 from Guelph.

Guthrie/Lennox move the recommendation:

Recommendation:

That an additional municipal contribution of \$150,000 be approved for Housing Services in 2023 to fund the operation of 38 additional emergency shelter spaces from October 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Bulmer notes that that's about \$43 per person per day, how does that compare with other shelter costs. Poste doesn't have that breakdown, but notes the needs are slightly differing in 1 Waterloo case b/c its family so it's 24/7.

Bulmer asks about other supports when stays and shelters are increasing in length. Poste says partners are actively trying to address need, and rapid diversion is working hard to get people out of the system. That team is managed to hold the line despite increased demand.

Social services manager Luisa Artuso says that primary care is a big gap in shelter spaces, especially mental health services. Given the info collected, these would be optimal spaces to have more support.

Status of Grace Gardens? Poste says he believes it's full now, and it's been relatively quiet there.

Guthrie says that this is a significant number of shelter beds coming online and the community is looking for leadership. This shows that the County understands the urgency and thanks staff.

Cllr Busuttill asks if Stepping Stone is funded for the provision of health support. Artuso says they fund a nurse out of the base budget, and they took that extra step because of the dire need. They're not a healthcare agency. Poste adds that it was originally 1-time funds.

Motion approved!

Next, Housing Services Status and Activity Report Q1 and Q2 2023. There are stats about the number of emergency shelter spaces being used, plus an update to the numbers on the by-name list.

Anderson asks about preventative measures, so many people on the edge so what's the benchmark for reliability now. Staff say that anyone making more than \$10k/year will probably not be eligible for assistance from most programs, but there may be others with higher cut offs.

Anderson says that the point he's getting at is that these numbers have changed in years, even though the cost of living has gone way up. County needs to be aggressive in getting higher cut offs or chronic homelessness is getting worse.

Lennox says that there are very acute needs, and they have to be addressed, but the issue is further up in the housing continuum. Anything we can do to support advocacy efforts its key, need more people pulling in the same direction.

Artuso notes that advocacy strategies are part of the plan and notes that supporting the working poor should be key because they're not always helped by social services or advocacy efforts. In should be a focus of the upcoming symposium too.

Guthrie says that we need an advocacy plan. He remembers as a councillor being against the hiring of intergovernmental staff, but he was wrong. Having a team dedicated to advocacy work pays for itself.

Bulmer asks if Wellington County has ever worked with Guelph staff on something like this? Guthrie says he would have to take that back to staff, but he wanted to make the case that Wellington could have their own intergovernmental peeps too.

Busuttil says if the idea is to make some noise for the issue, then she hopes that including people with lived experience should be a part of the plan.

Motion to receive the report passes.

Next, 2024/25 Preliminary Budget Impacts Housing Services. Artuso is presenting this one, a preliminary budget impact doc. It's being shared in advance of the County budget, so financial staff haven't completed their review yet.

Prevention, Emergency Response, Transition and Retention of affordable housing are the three areas of focus. Artuso says the focus should go on prevention and retention, but as CoL goes up more people are becoming vulnerable. Also increase to mental health and addition issues.

That means definite rise in demand for emergency response, but there are also new demands on operational as capital projects become complete; full-year of funding for Grace Gardens next year, Kindle coming online, et al.

The County is looking to increase the Housing Stability Programme by \$500,000 in 2024 due to the increased demand for assisting eligible households with utility and rent arrears and one-time rental fees/moving costs.

Another \$2.1 million is planning for emergency shelter services including an increase in the number of available beds and accompanying staffing, plus another \$314,000 for transitional housing and \$776,000 for supportive housing.

County is looking at increase in number of beds at Stepping Stone, plus another 15 beds of transitional housing out in the community on top of 65 Delhi development. Artuso says that they're looking at pushing Min. of Health for more support on health issues.

Artuso says that administration is being stretched keeping tabs on everyone, managing the By-Name List. They're looking for a one-year contract for someone to train staff and improve best practices.

Artuso says that ultimately, this doesn't look at what's really needed, especially rent-geared-to-income, but they feel that this is a reasonable ask and addresses some immediate need.

Cork says he feels kind of numbed that despite all their efforts, it feels like they're not having an impact. Are we winning? Artuso says imagine how many people would be waiting if they haven't been making process. Also, progress is invisible if someone has housing.

Artuso says that she believes that they will see an impact with the new shelter beds and the transitional housing projects, but they need to stay on top of getting operational funds, or completed capital projects will sit empty.

Responding to a Q from Duncan, Artuso says that this work is a lot like childcare, without community involvement these projects can't get done, and what the County can do is make sure that they give people the opportunity to have convos about funding available. It's a patch work.

Lennox notes that this demands advocacy to the community about what the needs are and how we can collectively work together to get things done. The only way to get past some NIMBY issues is to advocate here as well as to upper levels of government.

Motion to receive the report for info passes unanimously.

Committee is now moving in closed to discuss matters concerning labour, which essentially means that's the end of the meeting.



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