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Nov 8, 2023 · 85 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1722310700050137162](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1722310700050137162)

Coming up at 1 pm, it's this month's social services committee at Wellington County. This is what's on the jam-packed agenda today:



Chair Anderson has called the meeting to order.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest? None.

We start with a presentation by Stephen Dewar, General Manager/Chief, Guelph Wellington Paramedic Service. DCAO of Public Services at the City Colleen Clack-Bush is here too, and so is Antti Vilko, General Manager, Facilities and Energy Management.

Dewar is breaking down how they measure response times. It's a follow-up on a request from county council to get more information about the services delays around the county.

In the report, Dewar cites the geographic size of areas like Erin and Mapleton, plus their distance to a hospital and a low volume of calls as the reasons why it's so hard to achieve response time goals.

The service is trying to use data to determine how best to deploy ambulances to improve those response times.

12 hours of coverage were added to Erin in 2013, and then they got bumped to 24 in 2017. Mapleton staffing was increased to 24hrs in 2022, and that it's addition to increased staffing inside Guelph, which theoretically makes more ambulances more available inside the county.

Dewar adds that they've been making periodic changes in their deployment plan too, but it's difficult to compare GW ambulances to others because there's no direct comparisons. He tried to compare notes with Waterloo Region chief, but no reasons jumped out for the difference.

Dewar notes that relocation of stations was one of the recommendations in the 2016 plan, which hasn't been implemented yet. Notes that the City recently completed a needs assessment and there are a lot of improvements needed, and that could lead to better response times.

This was covered at the joint meeting in June:



This Week at Council: Police Money and Paramedic Needs

This week, there back-to-back council meetings, and one of them looked bigger than normal in terms of the number of people around the horseshoe, which was really more like a round table. A joint me...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/06/04/this-week-at-council-police-money-and-paramedic...>

Cork says that the county needs targets that are geared to the rural areas so that it's easier to make sense. Dewar says the provincial dispatch always sends the closest ambo, need to focus on making sure that there's enough resources to cover when an ambo is called elsewhere.

Cork asks is there a way to develop targets that can reflect the unique challenges of servicing rural areas? Dewar says that would be difficult to measure, and probably wouldn't be informative, especially given low call volume. 1 bad accident in Mapleton skews data.

Cork says that they need realistic targets to that they're not getting reports back year-over-year that shows missed targets. Cllr Davidson asks if offload delays are keeping numbers in Erin and Mapleton unchanged? Dewar says that's part, higher volumes too.

Dewar adds that Guelph General has made great strides in affecting off-load days and bringing wait times down. Hopefully that will be reflected in the 2023 numbers.

Bulmer says they've come far on this file and thanks Dewar. He says that they all understand that rural success is going to be different from urban success, they aren't trying to get equal service, but they are trying to get improved service.

Bulmer asks about the size of new facilities. Vilko says the goal is to have something around 3k sq. feet and two bays. For bigger stations that are 5k, those are the bigger stations with a much larger complement of staff in the city.

CAO Wilson asks how they're supposed to know (the County) to budget for a one bay or two bay station. Vilko says they should plan for a two bays, especially if the station's going to be in an area with a lot of future growth.

Cork asks if Guelph General has an offload nurse. Dewar says they have, and that person is in training, and in the meantime they have staff on hand to manage ambulance offloads, which has been a big help.

Warden Lennox says the message he heard at county council was spending significant resources on new stations, so they need some prescription on what needs to go where. But first and foremost is the they want response times "taken care of".

Lennox says that there's still more information needed about where to put revenue to get the biggest benefit. Dewar says that's what the 2016 plan is about and it goes out to 2026. They've been following the plan even though it doesn't account for COVID, but it's been going up.

Dewar says that he doesn't want to leave the impression that the City is waiting for new facilities before investing in more personnel.

Lennox asks if there's a way where they can get a report about the milestones in the service review. Dewar says they can commit to come back in 2023 with the info based in the 90th percentile to get at that specific info. Provincial reporting different from the review.

Davidson asks if there's a general cost for 2 days and 3k sq feet. Vilko says it depends on inflation and other pressures, but ballpark is \$7 million.

Anderson asks if the parameter is 5 stations, or can there be two big stations and more ambulances. Dewar says that's a good model for reducing response times but there's no facilities for crews. Some southern states do that, but none in Canada. The reason: weather.

Davidson notes that the consultant didn't recommend it either.
Vilko adds that his estimate didn't include land acquisition.

Duncan, who's the councillor for Erin, says there's been significant progress made, they've gone from zero hours to 24 hours of coverage & notes the low call volume is driven by people driving themselves to the hospital if they can. 20 min wait versus 30 min to 1 of 3 hospitals

Lennox says the union reps reached out to county council directly about facilities. "Good to know," Mayor Guthrie says off the cuff.

Dewar notes that 3 paramedics in the service got a medal for exemplary service in September, and 2 other members are getting their 30 year bar this year.

Committee receives Dewar's report for information.

Next, Guelph Transitional Housing Construction Project - Status Report 1. Kevin Mulholland, Construction & Property Manager says it's going well. Demo wrapped up, granular are going in, and they're trying to get services into the building.

Report received.

Next, Tender Award – Corridor Improvements 576 Woolwich St.

A two-storey building with 100 residential units needs new plumbing, a new ceiling and LED light fixtures on the first floor. Zehr Construction out of St. Jacobs put in the lowest bid for the job at \$303,200, and staff are recommending that committee proceed with the tender.

Motion to award the tender approved unanimously.

Social Services Financial Statements as of October 31, 2023. Shauna Calder, Manager of Finance, says not much has changed from last month. The report is received for info.

Next, Ontario Works 2024 User Fees and Charges – Every year, the committee has to approve user fees at Ontario Works for the next year. These costs include photocopies, faxes, and interpreter services, and next year those services will cost exactly the same as they do today.

Motion to accept the new/old fees approved.

Preliminary 2024-2033 Ten-Year Plan: Social Services. Calder notes 39.8 per cent increase for the City when it comes to social housing compared to about 8 per cent for the County (they're covering much of their increase out of reserve).

Calder says they removed Reaching Home funding from the budget though they do expect it will be renewed (playing it safe). There is some increased staff needs, and a shifting of costs between the three areas (OW, childcare, and housing).

Increasing costs of maintenance are also a driver, and the County is also having to pick up rent supplements costs. Small adjustments in the affordable housing budget, \$200k increase to the reserve tough.

Ontario Works, increase of 4% to county and 15% to the city. One of the big drivers here is some capital changes to the OW offices in downtown Guelph and in Fergus. Staffing and benefits for OW are, of course, covered by ONgov.

Childcare: 13% for county and 39% for the city. Parent fee revenue now reflect full capacity. Decrease in funding of \$1 million which is one-time transitional grant that the County has gotten the last couple of years but they're not sure they'll get it again.

Bulmer asks if rent subsidies is shared with the city. Calder says yes. Bulmer says he has concerns with that change because this should be covered by upper levels of government.

Lennox says its not a surprise about cost increases, and he's concerned about continued escalation. Calder says there was thought about urgent need in 2024-25, anticipate 3% inflation in 10-year plan, but 2025 will have further increases.

Luisa Artuso, Social Services Administrator, adds that they know that they're expecting post-pandemic effects will extend past 2025, and that where advocacy comes in to the upper levels of gov't for stabilised ongoing funding for social services. Trying to buy time in '24, '25.

Busuttil asks about the navigator positions at OW and how its funded. Calder says the new positions have no additional provincial funding, that's on the County. Artuso adds the position is meant to help people get immediate support and help them get services they need.

Busuttil notes that a lot of that is already happening at neighbourhood groups. Artuso notes that it has to do with the transformation of OW, the navigator will start the process, and pass them off to an intake worker to get the direct help they need.

Duncan says the advocacy piece is important, they do need help and it needs to be sustainable. The more the ONgov hears it, the better, because this might not just be a bump in the road but a new reality.

Motion That the preliminary 2024-2033 Social Services Ten-Year Plan as set out in this report be endorsed and forwarded to the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee for inclusion in the County of Wellington's Preliminary Ten-Year Plan, approved.

Next, State of the Wellington Child Care System and Workforce. Mandy Koroniak, Director of the Children's Early Years Division is presenting.

Issues:

Nearly 2/3 of programs are relying on non-registered programme staff more than on RECEs
1/4 are depending on supervisors to cover staff absences
1-in-5 have had Director approvals from the Ministry for supervisors be filled by staff that do not meet qualifications.

Also:

36 per cent have paused enrolment
9 per cent have closed a programme room due to decreased service levels
4 per cent have shortened operating hours.

Bulmer asks about salary. It seems that ECEs offered \$25/hour are still tough position to fill because they're only part-time. Koroniak says \$18/\$19 is the floor with \$25 the max. Advocates called for \$30-40 though. FT vs PT wasn't part of the valuation

Lennox asks about further actions. Koroniak says they're waiting for info from ONgov about a workforce announcement that's expected sometime this month. Last announcement about bursary for Conestoga had no additional help for salaries.

Anderson notes that they need people, and no one wants to go to school to get the training it they can't afford to cover the cost.

Next, Transfer of 400 King Street, Mount Forest to Service System Manager. Director of Housing Mark Poste explains recent changes to Housing Services Act allows WC to renegotiate when a mortgage gets paid off, which is next summer for 400 King.

Staff see nothing but an upside to holding on to 400 King Street and are advising the committee to prepare for the building's transfer in 2024.

Cork asks what the difference is going to be. Poste says the property being managed by a separate board and the county took over in 2017, but there are still separate books and processes. That will be integrated through this process.

Guthrie asks if the County is aware of the condition of the property. Poste says the maintenance team has been working with the provider to do catch-up, but the county is comfortable with the current state of the property.

Recommendation: That staff be directed to take necessary steps to prepare for the transfer of 440 King Street to the County of Wellington as the Service System Manager following the end of mortgage in August 2024 is approved.

Next, Social Assistance Renewal Plan and Employment Services Transformation Update. Stuart Beumer, Director of Ontario Works is presenting.

As of January 1, staff will be working with clients to determine employment readiness, and the ones needing more help ("life sustainability needs") will be referred to a different service that will work with OW. Staff being trained on new assessment tool.

Motion to receive report for information approved.

Next, Integration of Social Services Update. Artuso notes that some of this info has already been shared through various reports. The plan is to be more open to clientele and help people apply for social services through one source. The navigators will replace intake workers.

Motion to receive the verbal report approved.

Next, 2024 100% Municipal Contribution to Sanguen Health Centre. You may recall that the van team came to the committee seeking funding last month. Artuso says they've had a few meetings since then, and compiled the report to provide info and insight into the services.

Artuso notes that this service does not fall under the prescribed provision of social services so this is discretionary spending. The effectiveness of the van can't be denied though, and they see this is an opportunity about how best to support those living rough.

County will be looking at how best they can work with social services in their goals and how service can be more equitably distributed through the county.

Davidson asks if they've looked at other sources of funding. Artuso says yes, federal funding is out for now, and they will be continuing to look for those new sources. Filled out a lot of grants which have not yet been successful.

Bulmer asks if other County affiliation will lead to other potential funding opportunities. Artuso says that seems likely.

Guthrie asks about the \$90k, does that fall under the 90-10 split with the City. Artuso says that's all coming from the county since it counts as discretionary spending. Guthrie suggests a midterm report with metrics and an update about funding search.

Artuso says her staff are excited about this because of the connection to people in need in the community, and it's something they can build on.

Davidson asks about where the rest of the \$246k is coming from. Calder says that it eliminates the first quarter and other grants and then halved. They can go to the City for the other \$90k.

Davidson asks what if they can't make up the rest. Artuso says their expectation is that they would still provide service to the county.

Recommendation:

That the County include \$90,718 of 100% municipal funds in the Preliminary 2024 Budget and 10-year plan to be funded from the County Shared Services Reserve for the Sanguen Health Centre to sustain the current level of services (cont'd)

provided by the Community Health Van in the County of Wellington; and

That County staff submit a recommendation for ongoing annualized funding to Sanguen

Health Centre by September 2024 for increased services that better align with Social Services to commence in January 2025.

That's approved.

Next, 2024 100% Municipal Contribution to Daytime Drop-In Services in Guelph. Artuso says that Royal City Mission is presently meeting the need, but the need is increasing. Notes that this is also discretionary, and if City opts to continue with RCM then they will too.

Part of this is coming out of the recommendation at the October 17 meeting of Guelph council.

- "That City staff are directed to seek feedback from the Downtown Guelph Business Association, local downtown social service agencies and the County of Wellington to consider the best location(s) and delivery method for the provision of 12-hour service, 7 days a week daytime shelter space, reporting back to City Council on recommended next steps no later than November 2023. Options presented should consider issuing a Request for Proposals to identify interested service partners, and identification of possible funding sources."
- "City staff are also directed to work with Royal City Mission to consider a month-to-month extension of the current Community Benefit Agreement, to ensure consistent service provision until Council has time to consider next steps."

Bulmer asks about the RCM call out for donations. Clack-Bush says that RCM needed help to get the end of the pilot year. The City's recommendation will be coming to council on November 28.

Recommendation:

That the County include \$27,872 100% municipal funds in the 2024 preliminary budget for the provision of daytime drop-in services in Guelph; and

That the County provide funds to the service provider selected by the City of Guelph; and
(cont'd)

That if Guelph City Council approves the Royal City Mission contract extension, the County extend the current service agreement with RCM, to provide \$2,323 on a monthly basis commencing January 1, 2024, until such time the City of Guelph selects a new service provider.

Recommendation approved.

Next, committee is moving into closed session to discuss matters about an employee. In other words, for this tweeter...



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