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Apr 10, 2024 · 108 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1778104988968829353](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1778104988968829353)

Coming up at 1 pm, it's the first Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee meeting. This is what's on the agenda:



**MEETING PREVIEW: Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Com...**

Wait! What's this?! It's not everyday that there's the start of a new committee, or perhaps we should call this a committee reboot, because it's taking something that ahead...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2024/04/05/meeting-preview-joint-social-services-and-land-am...>

Chair Anderson has called the meeting to order. It's kind of a packed room.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest? Nope.

First, a series of presentations about the services this committee covers, starting with land ambulance, a City of Guelph joint.

DCAO Colleen Clack-Bush notes that CofG uses "Paramedics Services" so there may be some confusion about the nomenclature. She also notes that she will be primary, so this committee might see a little less of Chief Dewar and more of other staff members, including herself.

Dewar notes that this presentation will cover a lot of the same ground as a presentation last June to a joint meeting. The service answers about 80 calls per day, and the most common issue was respiratory issues, followed by chest pain. 15 ambulances in day, 11 at night.

That number will go up to 12 ambulances at night starting next week. Fun fact: ONgov shifted responsibility for ambulances to municipalities in 2000, they still cover 50% but otherwise costs are on Guelph/Wellington.

The service came under the Guelph umbrella in 2009 and is headquartered at Clair Road Emergency Centre. Stations are established in different locations, leased, and Dewar says that this is where some efficiencies can be made b/c these are not purpose built spaces.

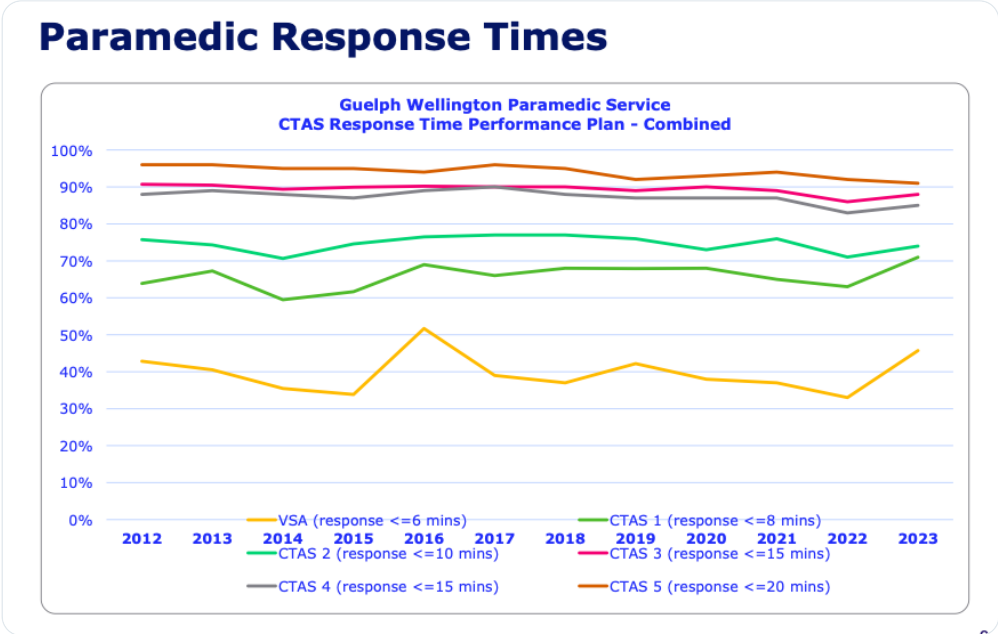
A business plan was developed in 2016, and it forecast (quite correctly) an increase in call volumes, and they've been making investments to expand every year to keep up, plus temp. upgrades during COVID that have since been made permanent.

Dewar notes that the ONgov had announced intentions to reboot paramedic plans in 2019, which was paused during COVID and then abandoned last year. Their modernisation efforts are now focusing on comms and other tech.

Station locations proposed in the biz case are not expected to change even though its 10 years old, but ORH is still looking at the population growth models and are proceeding with the review. Stay tuned for findings in weeks/months to come.

Stations now are not adequate to paramedic needs, and they're impacting staff hiring and retention in a competitive environment.

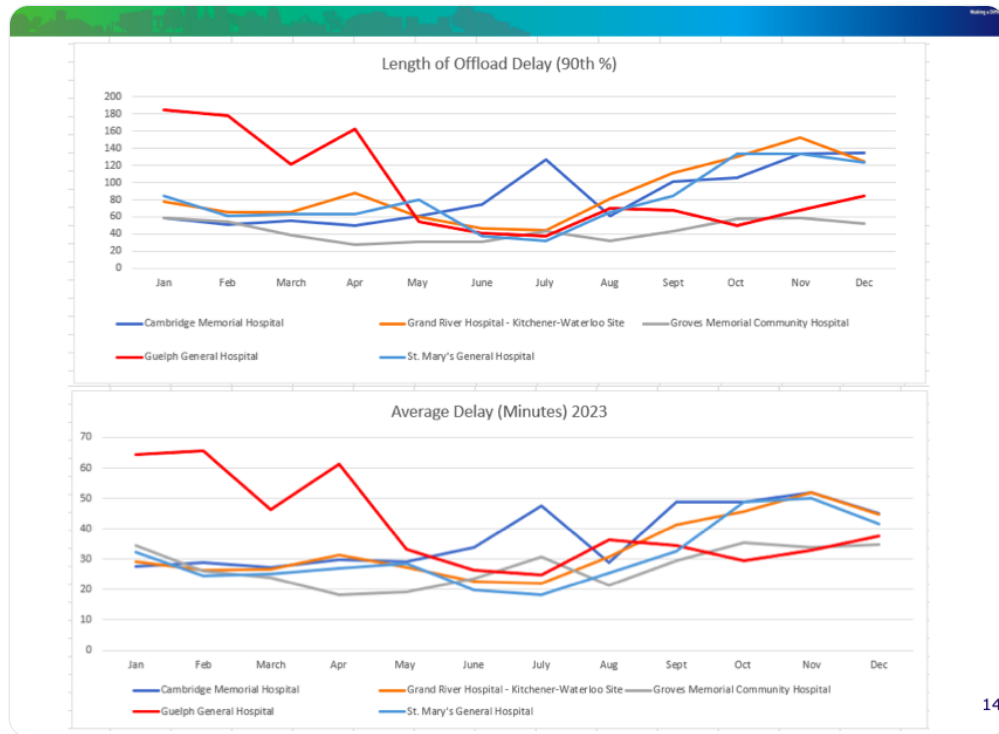
Every year, Guelph council approves the response times and then reports to the ONgov every March. The times have been rather flat over the last few years as you can see.



Dewar notes that the service regularly receives thank you notes and other recognitions, which is great given that they're usually called when people are in distress. It's a sign of how well the paramedics are doing in the community and how they're viewed as an asset.

They've also enjoyed success with the community paramedicine program and are hoping to make it permanent. One significant pressure is offload delays at hospitals, but they've been able to reduce those impacts with hard work and recruitment.

This graph shows the improvement (the red line is Guelph General):



Cllr Bulmer asks about 2024 enhancements, are those permanent? Dewar says all enhancements are permanent except for the additional staffing in 2020 due to COVID, which was made permanent after the fact.

Cllr O'Rourke asks about offload delays in county hospitals. Dewar says there are few at Groves, and the other hospitals have no significant delays. No data about how Marshall closures overnight have had impact.

Cllr Cork asks if they can't just use paramedic in the committee. Clack-Bush says that "Land Ambulance" is a provincial term, because they offer air ambulance too. Hence, why it's in the terms of reference as is.

Cork says that he would like Chief Dewar at the meetings seeing as how there might be questions only he can answer. Clack-Bush says that they're trying to mirror how they do this at council, and they want to make sure they have right staff here to answer right questions.

Cllr Busuttill asks if there's a reporting schedule. Clack-Bush says no, Dewar will be bringing reports as they develop around specific agenda item as will other staff.

Warden Lennox asks about "media reports" about staffing. (Meaning the report about 2025 budget cuts). Clack-Bush says they're look at 2024 expansion positions, incl. paramedics.

Two new shifts approved for '24, spring crew is going ahead, fall crew's fate will be decided following the response time report in July, so it's not technically paused, but they will look at data before posting the jobs.

Stewart adds that it was half funding this year and half funded next year, so they're going through the exercise of decided who and what because there's also no point buying equipment for a crew that's not hiring.

Cork asks if there's a max length on offload delays. Dewar says 12 hours was as ugly as it got in 2023, but they haven't seen that in 2024, the longest has been four hours, but that's the

exception now not the rule.

The four being hired now are going to Centre Wellington, and the four for the fall are expected to be added to the City. fyi from Dewar in response to Q from Cllr Duncan.

Motion to receive report for information approved.

Next, Housing with Mark Poste, Director.

Overview:

Fedgov - download much of responsibility to province, CMHC is responsible now for much of what's left. Housing Strategy released in 2017 to incentive housing creation to cut homelessness by 50%.

ONgov - also starting downloading in the 90s, but they still have legislative responsibilities, but actual responsibility is on the municipalities.

Local - funding housing stability programs and social housing, setting zoning and planning.

Wellington is one of 47 service managers in Ontario responsible for carrying out list of housing responsibilities common across all the managers, incl. social housing options and what we call the by-name list.

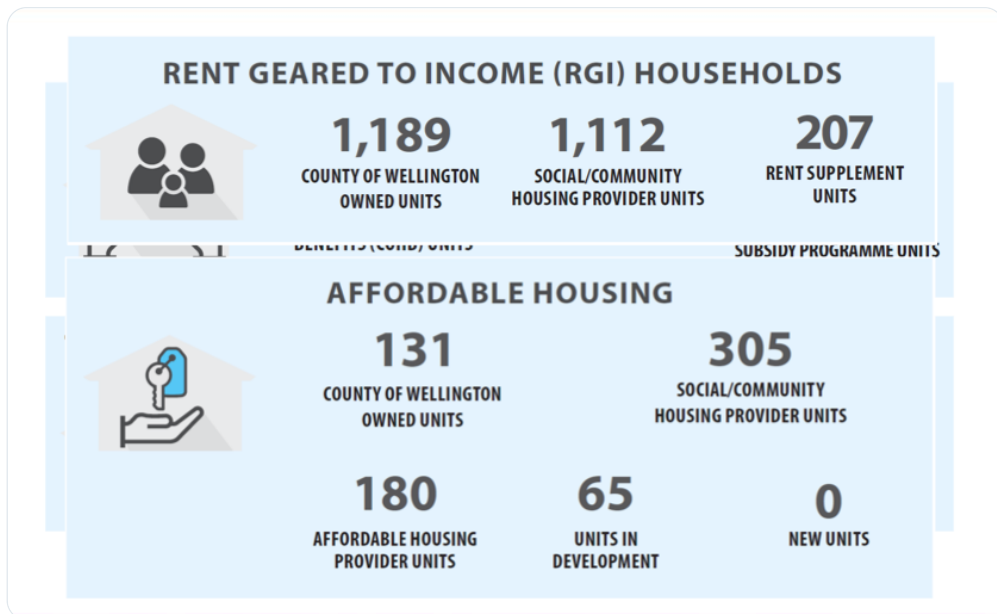
Here's the housing continuum:



Here are the 8 goals of the Housing and Homelessness Plan, the newest version of which is expected to come out in June.

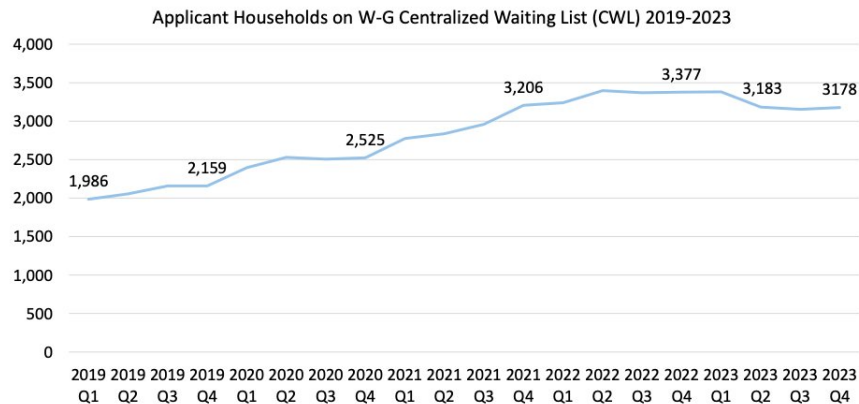
1	To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses.
2	To provide a range of housing stability supports to assist with housing retention and homelessness prevention.
3	To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions.
4	To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households.
5	To end chronic homelessness.
6	To promote client-centred, coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system.
7	To support the sustainability of the existing social and affordable housing stock.
8	To foster access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples.

County housing supply:



Housing stabilisation is an issue because the lack of affordable units in the private market means it's harder for people to leave their accommodations in social housing because they can't move somewhere new. Tenants are staying in place longer.

# County of Wellington Housing Needs and Demands



Byname list lets County track people's progress to housing placements and Wellington was the 4th community in Canada to establish one. Work is constant to make sure it's as accurate as possible.

Point in time count, an intensity effort to update the byname list, was originally schedule for the fall of 2023 but both the feds and ONgov asked for a delay. Poste says that it's given them the time to review processes.

The Future!

- ▶ Update of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan
- ▶ Continue to support the sustainability of existing social housing stock
- ▶ Continue to support the increase of supply and mix of affordable housing options across the continuum

Guthrie asks about Point in Time Count, isn't that volunteer driven, or are there costs? Poste says there are costs and it is part of the requirement from other gov's. About 70 volunteers involved, but it's a good audit of the system.

Guthrie asks if they've considered not waiting for the feds of prov. Poste says they talked about that, and 2 years is good, but they are frustrated with the delay in getting the new one going.

Downer asks if that \$9 mn received in budget, is all of it going to Kindle project? Poste says that they (County) don't lead that one, but that money supports general operation of Kindle, but there's money to support other projects too.

Cllr Downer asks if people in hotels now been successful in finding housing? Poste says some have been housed, but there will be a full report in June on the results of those federal funds.

O'Rourke asks about wait list wait times and increasing stock. Poste says it's a long list and it take a long time to work through it. To expand, it will take all level of government and a lot of capital funding. They look at course housing need, which is at about 7k in community.

Social Services Admin Artuso adds that they're seeing an increase in the priority list with 89 people who are experiencing intimate partner violence or sex trafficking, used to be able to house them in 4 months, now it's 1.5 years.

Artuso: 450 seniors over 65 waiting for housing on the list too, and on average they're waiting for 8 years. She says these are the priorities included in the 3,000 on the list now. She says these are the unseen in our community.

Busuttill asks about how the County works around understanding housing stock issues. Poste says they meeting with City staff, and county planning staff to look at where they can encourage progress.

Bulmer asks why City of Guelph doesn't seem to own housing stock. Poste says there's no legislative barrier, but development in 80s 90s largely done through non-profits.

Lennox says it's \$1.5 billion investment to solve the problem of 3,000 units needed. They need the help of other levels of government, all hands on deck, and it's not just a local issue because people are mobile.

Anderson says that's why they need to be proactive. They have so many great programs in place, but they need more help, more funding. We've got the partnerships in place to capitalize.

Guthrie asks if there's a policy position that council can take to prioritise women's shelters or seniors housing. Artuso says the ONgov has a priority waitlist, so housing goes to trafficking & IPV victims first. The issue is the lack of new stock, can make call if there's flex

Motion to receive the housing report approved.

Next, it's Children's Early Years Division with Mandy Koroniak, Director.

Fun chart: Population of children in the county (incl. Guelph) -

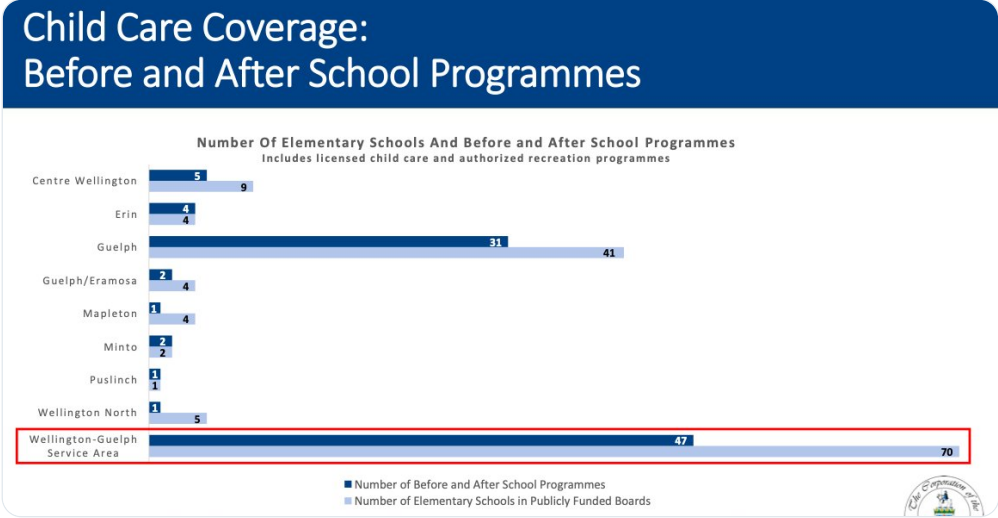
<b>Population of Children in Wellington</b>		
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Birth up to Age 4</b>	<b>Age 4 to 12</b>
<b>Centre Wellington</b>	1,300 (13%)	3,300 (13%)
<b>Erin</b>	415 (4%)	1,095 (4%)
<b>Guelph</b>	5,875 (58%)	14,480 (57%)
<b>Guelph/Eramosa</b>	495 (5%)	1,460 (6%)
<b>Mapleton</b>	755 (7%)	1,765 (7%)
<b>Minto</b>	475 (5%)	1,070 (4%)
<b>Puslinch</b>	230 (2%)	695 (3%)
<b>Wellington North</b>	655 (6%)	1,415 (6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>25,280</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

Operational funding for childcare:

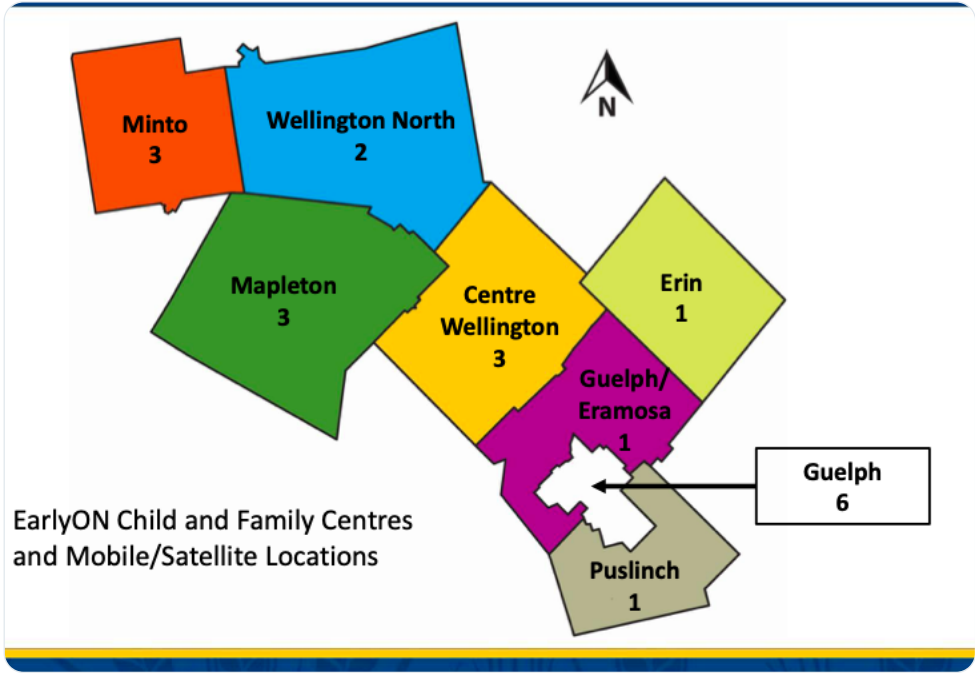
- ▶ Wellington General Operating Grant (WGOG)
- ▶ Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG)/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCEG)
- ▶ Minor capital and repairs:
- ▶ Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System

Dark blue bar is the number of Before and After School programs and light blue is number of schools:



There are 338 children that are in childcare thanks to a fee subsidy in the region. 82% of people accessing the program were looking for work and that's split between 4-1 city to county.

EarlyON service delivery area by municipality:



The Future!

- ▶ Continued implementation of CWELCC w/ increasing fee reductions
- ▶ Directed growth of affordable licensed child care spaces
- ▶ New child care workforce funding, funding formula, and transition to a cost recovery model (expected later in 2024)

Busuttill asks about ECE staffing and the difficulty finding and retaining people. Koroniak says it's a huge challenge, and they try to support programs where they can including a bursary at Conestoga. There is a new initiative in development.



Busuttill asks about the money for value audit. Koroniak says it is being mandated by the ONgov and there is some concern it's a first move to privatise. Artuso says that she's heard concerns too about move to private sector (where there's no value for money audits required).

O'Rourke asks if there's any data going back to the ONgov about childcare and productivity. Koroniak hopes so noting that there are places in the County where if there wasn't that one centre, they would be no care at all and the has an impact.

Motion to receive childcare report approved!

Next, Ontario Works with Ken Harvey, Acting-Director.


Overview:

- ▶ provides temporary financial assist to ppl in need while they're being actively assisted in achieving self-reliance.
- ▶ Designated by the province to deliver income support to residents in County & City
- ▶ Offices in Guelph, Fergus + itinerant services in Mt Forest

Understanding poverty locally and Service rates:

## Understanding Poverty and Low-Income Thresholds

Approximate Income Thresholds 4-person Family in Guelph Census Metropolitan Area (2021 Census)	
Average Income	\$140,200
Median Income	\$125,000
Living Wage (2 adults full time)	\$80,256
Minimum Wage (2 adults full time)	\$63,550
Low Income Measure	> \$62,500
Official Poverty Line (Market Basket Measure)	> \$49,290
Low Income Cut-Off	> \$36,459
<b>Ontario Works</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>



- ▶ **Basic needs and shelter portion**
- ▶ **Amounts vary based on family size and individual circumstances**

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Total Monthly Benefit (Max.)</b>
Single Person	\$733
Couple with 2 Dependents	\$1250
Single Parent with 2 Dependents	\$1057
Couple with 4 Dependents	\$1338

- ▶ Ontario Works currently supports 1,967 households consisting of more than 3,270 individuals
- ▶ Client action plans are required under programme legislation- developed by client and Caseworker  
(cont'd)
- ▶ Caseworkers utilize the full range of benefits and supports available in our service area to support their clients in achieving their life stability or employment goals, serve as a central referral point  
(cont'd)
- ▶ Ontario Works administers and manages specialized caseloads including:
  - Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)
  - Temporary Care Assistance
  - Life Skills

Changes this year:

- ▶ OW is part of the Integrated Employment Services model as of Jan.
- ▶ OW is no longer responsible for direct delivery of employment and training supports to recipients
- ▶ clients referred to Employment Ontario partners for employment assistance activities

OW also covers Settlement Services. Workers assist newcomers to Canada to access community services and adjust to life in their new communities & are available to Permanent Residents, Convention Refugees and Live-in Caregivers. 146 new clients and 67 group sessions helped in 2023

The Future!

- ▶ **Employment Ontario Referrals and Stability Supports**
  - Monitoring referral volumes to EO partners, client employment needs and outcomes
  - Focus on supporting clients to access services and supports for wellbeing and life stabilization

Future (cont'd):

► Social Assistance Modernization

--Centralized intake, risk-based eligibility determination, automatic granting, paperless strategy, enhanced online tools

► Anticipated Caseload Growth

--Forecasted to grow to a monthly average of 2,203 cases by the end of '24

Future (cont'd):

► Financial Pressures for Clients

--Significant gap between social assistance rates and poverty line and rapidly increasing market rents making it increasingly difficult for OW recipients to find and maintain housing and meet basic needs

O'Rourke asks about impact of shift in training supports. Harvey says it's ONgov initiative that moves internal employment services to Employment ON, provider like Lutherwood, Second Chance, et al.

Busuttill asks if the County is a service provider for services anywhere in the area. Harvey says no. She also asks if there will be some kind of advocacy to increase OW rates. Artuso says they've been working on a report, now at Symposium for discussion next week.

Busuttill notes that OW being kept at 2018 rates while they're updating power subsidies.

Motion to accept the report approved.

Now on with the rest of the agenda: 65 Delhi St. Transitional Housing Construction Project - Status Report 4. Kevin Mulholland, Construction & Property Manager, will report.

Mulholland says things are going well with the weather turning. Still in shape to be done by the end of the year.

No questions. Motion to accept the report is approved.

We're going to take a 5 minute break before the next item.

And we're back with the Financial Statements as of March 31, 2024. Treasurer Ken DeHart will present this.

DeHart says everything is tracking to budget though it's still early in the year. No budget concerns at this stage, and capital is proceeding as planned too. Stepping Stone contract awarded at county council and there will be no municipal impact from the added budget demands.

Motion to receive report approved.

Next, Reduction in Reaching Home Funding. Poste is back and notes that the program was created through National Housing Strategy, and is the main program intended to support the strategy and its goals.

There's a large reduction coming in future funding over the next four years, from over \$7 million to \$1.64 million for the next few years to \$325,000 for the last few years. All communities experiencing these impacts.

This money supports staffing at community partners plus rent supplements. Lost funding does mean these roles and programs will be gone, but they will have to try and compensate for the funding. Outreach through groups like AMO and FCM is in the works.

Busuttill says she's "gobsmacked" by this, is there something coming to compensate for the loss. Poste says he hopes that is the case, Fed budget being released next week, but he has no advanced knowledge.

Busuttill asks about advocacy piece. She says she's tired of playing nice, there needs to be action and laying it all out in terms of the direct impact on people. Need to be firm in their demands.

Lennox says he agrees with Busuttill's sentiment. Talked a lot today about growing needs, lots of rhetoric, but we need to know about policy direction and what they're getting in exchange of the cuts. Need to refer that to the three area MPs and extend invitation.

CAO Wilson suggests arranging a meeting after AMO begins its advocacy. County Clerk will extend that info, and Lennox suggests adding local AMO and FCM reps too. O'Rourke suggests equal response to ONgov.

Artuso says that they were hoping that AMO would have had their letter out by now. She says that there could be 80 households and 250 individuals at risk if this funding is lost. That's the local context that could follow up after the AMO letter.

Lennox adds that we should wait and see what the context is from the federal government since they don't know what's in the federal budget yet.

Motion to receive the report is approved.

Next: Memo from the City of Guelph - 2025 Budget Guideline. DeHart explains that they received the budget guideline for 2025. Cap on increases means that the social services budget increase next year can't be more than \$1,475,601. But County is looking at \$3.5 million for '25.

DeHart says it will be impossible to meet those guidelines given the pressure outlined, two new facilities opening before the end of the year. County was able to reallocate \$1 million from capital to operating in 2024 due to a one-time grant, which was accounted for.

In other words, the budget delayed \$1 million in costs for 2024, but they come on in 2025; the original increase for next year was \$2.5 million. DeHart points to the low OW rates as a hidden form of downloading.

Lennox says he appreciates the correspondence from the City, but they need to work through their process and determine where those needs need to be met and make their case.

Downer notes that this is Strong Mayors, not a council decision. Advises Lennox to put that in a letter for council to receive.

Bulmer asks if Strong Mayor Powers are applicable to orgs outside of Guelph. Downer says "No comment." Stewart adds that they're learning as they go with SMP, and perhaps the County should seek out that advise. Similar discussions at other boards.

Stewart adds that it's too bad that Guthrie is not here right now. He stepped out during the break.

Lennox says it's important to highlight that this is new territory and says right now the committee should receive it for info. Anderson says that's the motion included. Lennox/Bulmer move it and it's approved.

Last item, 100% Municipally Funded Discretionary Benefits - 2023 Annual Report. Harvey is back to present and he says it represents a last resort for families and individuals that can't get help elsewhere. It funds emergency health, wellness costs.

Highlights this year:

In 2023, municipally funded discretionary benefits provided health-related assistance to 359 unique individuals/families across all categories, with a total of 1318 requests. The majority of individuals accessing these discretionary benefits are retirement home residents, accounting for 85% of all requests.

Total health-related discretionary expenditures in 2023 were \$284,146; this is a 4.6% increase from 2022 expenditures. The increase in expenditures is largely related to cost categories that are driven by an aging population such as funerals and incontinence supplies.

In 2023, 217 County-based households received Market Bucks vouchers. Market Bucks purchased \$9,810 worth of goods from farmers and producers across Wellington County during the 2023 farmer's market season.

Expenditures went up by nearly 5 per cent year over year, mostly driven by inflation and the post-pandemic return of in-person services.

O'Rourke says that she feels this is kind of low given the need. Is Harvey surprised? He says this is a system of last resort, so it is what it is.

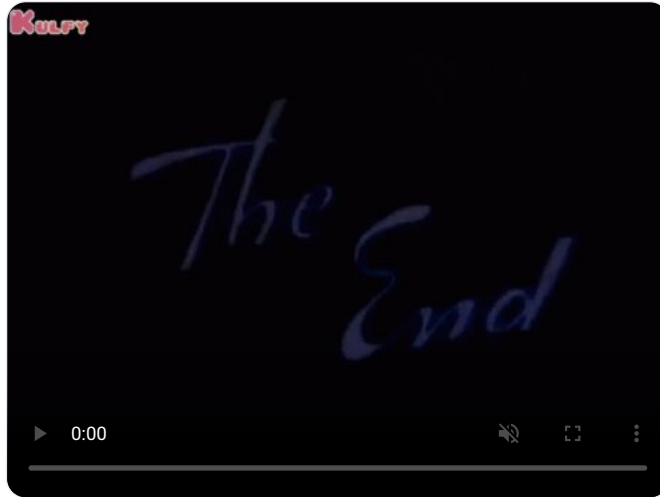
O'Rourke says that there seems to be potential for county having to do more, do they have an idea about trends? Poste says that costs are going up but its difficult to say with the changing nature of some programs and changing face of funding.

Poste adds that this is a program unique to Wellington County, many other service managers have phased out the discretionary budget.

Anderson asks about the fluctuating cost of funerals. Staff says that because of family choice in services, and also the inexact timing of settling estates and government work on award death benefits etc.

Motion to receive report approved unanimously.

No closed session, so meeting adjourned!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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