

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION**

**PHSSC 2-2021
Tuesday, February 16, 2021
Council Chamber/Video Conference
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber: Chiocchio (Committee Co-Chair), Greenwood (Committee Co-Chair)

Committee Members Present via Video Conference: Bellows, Bradley (Regional Chair), Butters, Darte, Foster, Gibson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Nicholson, Rigby, Sendzik, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen

Other Councillors Present via Video Conference: Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Gale, Junkin, Redekop, Steele

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: S. Guglielmi, Technology Support Analyst, Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: A. Alfieri-Maiolo, Director, Clinical Services, C. Cousins, Director, Homelessness and Community Engagement, R. Ferron, Deputy Chief/Associate Director, Emergency Medical Services, L. Garofalo, Manager, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, S. Kearns, Director, Environmental Health, H. Koning, Director, Senior Services, K. Lotimer, Legislative Coordinator, D. Lorenzo, Associate Director, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, M. Mako, Commander, Mobile Integrated Health, Emergency Medical Services, E. Mozina, Manager, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, K. Smith, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, D. Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Regional Housing

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Chiocchio called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Request for Declaration of State of Emergency for Mental Health, Homelessness and Addiction - Additional Correspondence (COM-C 4-2021 (Agenda Item 6.4))

Steven Soos, Resident, City of Welland, and Wayne Campbell, Resident, City of Niagara Falls, appeared before Committee requesting support for a state of emergency to be declared for mental health, homelessness and addiction.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 COM-C 8-2021

Motion from Councillor Insinna respecting Homelessness, Mental Health and Addiction in Niagara

Moved by Councillor Insinna
Seconded by Councillor Foster

WHEREAS Niagara Region prides itself as being a caring and compassionate community that continually strives to be a place where people want to live, work and play;

WHEREAS providing access to safe, adequate and affordable housing for everyone is fundamental to achieving that goal;

WHEREAS Niagara Region acknowledges that mental health, mental illness, addiction and homelessness, while important issues, are not homogenous, interchangeable or consistently interconnected, and doing so may over simplify exceptionally complex issues that require targeted policy solutions and intervention;

WHEREAS Niagara Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), A Home For All, outlines the Region's vision, challenges, and the actions required to achieve its goals;

WHEREAS Niagara Region has embarked on an ambitious effort to end chronic homelessness through participation in the national Built for Zero campaign;

WHEREAS Regional Council formally adopted Mental Health and Wellbeing (2.2) and Addressing Affordable Housing Needs (2.3) as strategic priorities for the current term of our Council;

WHEREAS a recent KPMG report commissioned by Niagara Region indicated that Council invests more levy funding than its peers into homelessness, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to addressing the issue;

WHEREAS Niagara Region acknowledges that people living in shelters are part of the crisis and not the solution;

WHEREAS Niagara Region has two planned housing projects that would directly address those in Niagara who experience chronic homelessness;

WHEREAS the implementation plan for Council's strategic objectives states that staff will identify gaps within the mental health system to increase the functionality and collaboration within it;

WHEREAS the same implementation plan directed staff to partner with Ontario Health (formally the LHIN) to review the local landscape to identify opportunities, including new investment;

WHEREAS the treatment and supports for mental illness, addiction, and homelessness are predominantly funded and directed by the Province;

WHEREAS the success of the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is dependent on a commitment of sustained and increased funding (both operational and capital) from all levels of government to address the issues of housing insecurity and homelessness in Niagara; and

WHEREAS the needs of the community far outweigh Niagara Region's available resources and funding required to effectively address these issues, and the support of both the Provincial and Federal governments are needed to meet these needs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. That Niagara Region Council officially **ACKNOWLEDGE** that a significant crisis exists in Niagara in regard to the prevalence of chronic homelessness and the lack of affordable housing that far surpasses the Region's ability to meet the vision dictated in its 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP);

2. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send advocacy letters directly to the appropriate Federal and Provincial ministries outlining Niagara's current situation and requesting additional funding be provided to ensure Niagara can meet the vision outlined in its housing action plan;
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to advocate to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for the required operational funding for the planned supportive and bridge housing initiatives;
4. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED**, in alignment with the planned review of Council's strategic priorities, to produce a report specifically highlighting the progress being made and critical gaps in regard to services related to mental health, addictions and wellbeing;
5. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue providing Regional Council updates on the HHAP and Built for Zero initiatives; and
6. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED** to request an update from the Overdose Prevention and Education Network of Niagara (OPENN) regarding the current status of the actions being taken to address addiction related issues in Niagara.

Carried

5.2 PHD 1-2021

Collaborative Action to Prevent COVID-19 Transmission and Improve Health Equity by Increasing Access to Paid Sick Days

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report PHD 1-2021, dated February 16, 2021, respecting Collaborative Action to Prevent COVID-19 Transmission and Improve Health Equity by Increasing Access to Paid Sick Days, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** the Decent Work and Health Network's report Before it's too late: How to close the paid sick days gap during COVID-19 and beyond attached as Appendix A to Report PHD 1-2021;

2. That Regional Council **BE DIRECTED** to send the letter, attached as Appendix B to Report PHD 1-2021, to the provincial Minister of Health; Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development; and the Premier, expressing its support for legislated paid sick days through the Employment Standards Act; and
3. That a copy of the letter and Report PHD 1-2021 **BE CIRCULATED** to local members of provincial parliament, local members of Parliament, and to the Association of Local Public Health Agencies for dissemination to all Ontario boards of health, AMO and the local area municipalities.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Dr. Hirji provided an update to Committee respecting vaccines, variants of concern and re-openings.

Moved by Councillor Witteveen
Seconded by Councillor Gibson

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PHD-C 3-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Health & Emergency Services

COM-C 3-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Community Services

COM-C 4-2021

Request for Declaration of State of Emergency for Mental Health, Homelessness and Addiction – Additional Correspondence

COM-C 6-2021

Improving the Long-Term Care Outbreak Response in Ontario – Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Final Submission to the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission

PHD-C 2-2021

Niagara Emergency Medical Services Temporary Funded Opportunities

COM-C 7-2021

Responding to an Information Enquiry Regarding a Community Request for the Region to Declare a State of Emergency on Mental Health, Homelessness and Addiction

PHD-C 4-2021

Considerations & Context Regarding Declaration of a State of Emergency

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s):

Provide information highlighting key metrics regarding COVID-19, vaccines and re-openings over the next 2, 4 and 6 week periods. Councillor Sendzik.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Social Services Relief Funding Phase 2 Holdback Fund Update

Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness and Community Engagement, provided an update respecting the Social Services Relief Funding Phase 2 Holdback Fund. The information included provincial deadlines and the potential of funds being clawed back if timelines are not met, work being done with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to extend the current timelines and where the process currently stands.

7.2 Board of Health

Councillor Rigby requested information respecting the Board of Health.

7.3 Well Water Testing

Councillor Whalen requested an update respecting water sample drop off locations for residents of Niagara. Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, advised that staff continue to look for options and invited municipalities to reach out to Public Health with possible locations.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Councillor Chiochio
Committee Co-Chair

Councillor Greenwood
Committee Co-Chair

Kelly Lotimer
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk