

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

PHSSC 5-2025

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

**Council Chamber - In Person and Electronic Meeting
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee: Bateman, Bradley (Regional Chair)*, Chiocchio (Committee Co-Chair), Easton, Foster, Insinna, Ip*, Kaiser*, Morocco (Committee Co-Chair), Olson, Rigby, Seaborn*, Siscoe, Sorrento*, Whalen*, Witteveen

Absent/Regrets: Craitor, Diodati, Jordan

Staff: C. Banach, Director, Housing Services, C. Cousins, Director, Homelessness and Community Engagement, R. Ferron, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, R. Hill, Legislative Coordinator, Dr. A. Kasmani, Medical Officer of Health, S. Klair, Director, Children's Services, H. Koning, Commissioner, Community Services, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Sergi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, J. Sinclair, Manager, Homelessness Services, J. Spratt, Legislative Coordinator, R. Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer, P. Varias, Director, Senior Services, L. Watson, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, B. Wilson, Senior Legal Counsel

* indicates participants who attended the meeting electronically, all others participated in person

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

Councillor Witteveen read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.1 REACH Niagara

Carolyn Dyer, Executive Director, REACH Niagara, provided information respecting REACH Niagara. Topics of the presentation included:

- Vision and Mission
- Snapshot of REACH Niagara
- Who We Serve
- Understanding Barriers to Care
- Our Programming
- REACH Across Niagara
- Programs at a Glance
- Impact
- Client Impact Story: Full Circle
- What's Next for REACH Niagara

5. DELEGATIONS

5.1 Preventative Drug Education

5.1.1 Steven Soos, Resident, City of Welland

This delegation request was withdrawn.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 COM 17-2025

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement Update

Moved by Councillor Witteveen

Seconded by Councillor Olson

That Report COM 17-2025, dated May 6, 2025, Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That a gross operating budget adjustment in the amount of \$2,135,544 and \$0 net, fully funded through the Ministry of Education (MEDU), **BE APPROVED** to support Niagara Region's early years and child care system; and

2. That the addition of 6.3 new permanent full time equivalents (FTEs) in Children's Services, one Directly Operated Child Care Specialist position, five (5) Regional Child Care Centre Registered Early Childhood Educators, and a conversion of a part time Child Care Cook to full time FTE (0.3), for a total gross cost of \$673,970 annually, to be accommodated within existing provincial funding **BE APPROVED**, in order to meet provincial requirements for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program.

Carried

6.2 COM-C 12-2025

Motion Respecting Alternative Housing Plans and Service Restriction Notifications

Moved by Councillor Siscoe
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

WHEREAS municipalities across the province, including those in the Niagara Region, face growing challenges related to homelessness, including but not limited to tent encampments that affect community health and safety as well as the local economy;

WHEREAS addressing these issues places significant pressures on Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) as the services required to deal with these pressures (created by service gaps of other levels of government) utilize LAM tax levy support;

WHEREAS LAMs are having issues cleaning up encampments in public spaces as some of the individuals in these encampments are restricted from shelter and cannot be moved into an available shelter bed due to these restrictions;

WHEREAS individuals that have service restrictions from shelter and therefore are deemed to be unsafe to be housed in the shelter system, should also be considered to be unsafe to be housed within public spaces in the community; and

WHEREAS it is the Niagara Region's responsibility to deal with homelessness across the Region.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That, when a client is being restricted from Regionally operated or funded shelter, staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop alternative housing plans for the client; and

2. That alternative housing plans **BE UPLOADED** to Homeless Individuals and Families Information System and local area municipalities and Niagara Regional Police **BE NOTIFIED** about service restrictions and alternative housing plans for each individual who is restricted.

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Bateman

That the motion respecting Alternative Housing Plans and Service Restriction Notifications, **BE DEFERRED** to the Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting being held on July 10, 2025, for staff to provide additional information.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (7): Bateman, Bradley, Easton, Ip, Kaiser, Seaborn, Whalen.

No (9): Chiocchio, Foster, Insinna, Morocco, Olson, Rigby, Siscoe, Sorrento, Witteveen.

Defeated

The following friendly **amendments** were accepted by the Committee Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion:

1. That, when a client is being restricted from Regionally operated or funded shelter, that staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop alternative housing plans for these clients ***and bring the framework for these clients at the Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting being held on July 8, 2025, for review;***
2. That staff **REPORT BACK** on alternative housing plans being uploaded to Homeless Individuals and Families Information System and local area municipalities and Niagara Regional Police being notified about the service restrictions and alternative housing plans for each individual who is restricted; and
3. That staff **PROVIDE** information on the other questions raised on this matter during the meeting.

A request was made to vote on the clauses separately.

The Committee Chair called the vote on Clause 1 of the motion, as amended.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (14): Bradley, Chiocchio, Easton, Foster, Insinna, Ip, Kaiser, Morocco, Olson, Rigby, Seaborn, Siscoe, Whalen, Witteveen.

No (1): Bateman.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on Clause 2 of the motion, as amended.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (9): Chiocchio, Insinna, Ip, Morocco, Olson, Rigby, Siscoe, Whalen, Witteveen.

No (6): Bateman, Bradley, Easton, Foster, Kaiser, Seaborn.

Carried

The Committee Chair called the vote on Clause 3 of the motion, as amended.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (16): Bateman, Bradley, Chiocchio, Easton, Foster, Insinna, Ip, Kaiser, Morocco, Olson, Rigby, Seaborn, Siscoe, Sorrento, Whalen, Witteveen.

No (0).

Carried

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Whalen

Seconded by Councillor Seaborn

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

COM 15-2025

Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report: January to March 2025

COM 16-2025

2025-2027 Niagara Prosperity Initiative Grant and Awards

COM-C 9-2025

Cost and Benefit of Expanding Street Outreach Service Hours

COM-C 10-2025
Shelter System Data and Trends: 2024 Update

COM-C 11-2025
Cold Weather Advisory Response Programs

PHD-C 2-2025
Health Canada – Emergency Treatment Fund

COM-C 13-2025
Correspondence from City of St. Catharines respecting 320 Geneva Street
Bridge Housing Development

NRH 3-2025
Acquisition of Property – 184 Denistoun Street, Welland

Carried

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Vaccination Status Communication

Councillor Bateman requested clarification respecting the communication process regarding vaccination status and raised concerns surrounding language barriers for newcomers. Dr. Kasmani, Medical Officer of Health, advised that Public Health and Emergency Services offer translation services and work closely with schools to identify needs. Dr. Kasmani advised that a report respecting the vaccine process will be presented at an upcoming Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting.

8.2 Supportive Housing and Shelters

Councillor Bateman requested information on staff's efforts in advocating for supportive housing and shelter beds. Henri Koning, Commissioner, Community Services, advised that a supportive housing strategy is currently under development which would be companion strategy to the Housing Master Plan. She noted that once it is finalized, it would be presented at a future Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting.

9. CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Bateman
Seconded by Councillor Foster

That Committee **DO NOW MOVE** into closed session respecting:

A Matter of Labour Relations/Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals Pursuant to Sections 239(2)(d)(b) of the Municipal Act, 2001: Special Needs Program Update

Carried

Committee resolved into closed session at 3:37 p.m.

10. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

Committee reconvened in open session at 4:09 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

Committee: Bateman, Bradley (Regional Chair)*, Chiocchio (Committee Co-Chair), Foster, Morocco (Committee Co-Chair), Olson, Rigby, Seaborn*, Sorrento*, Whalen, Witteveen

Absent/Regrets: Craitor, Diodati, Easton, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Kaiser, Siscoe

Staff: L. Castellan, Human Resources Consultant, R. Hill, Legislative Coordinator, S. Klair, Director, Children's Services, H. Koning, Commissioner, Community Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Sergi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, J. Spratt, Legislative Coordinator, B. Wilson, Senior Legal Counsel

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Others Present: S. Taneja, S. Douglas, Taneja Consultants Inc.

10.1 Confidential COM 12-2025

A Matter of Labour Relations/Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals Pursuant to Sections 239(2)(d)(b) of the Municipal Act, 2001: Special Needs Program Update

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

That Confidential COM 12-2025, dated April 8, 2025, respecting A Matter of Labour Relations/Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals Pursuant to Sections 239(2)(d)(b) of the Municipal Act, 2001: Special Needs Program Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

11. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Councillor Morocco
Committee Co-Chair

Councillor Chiocchio
Committee Co-Chair

Rebecca Hill
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk