

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

**PHSSC 7-2025**

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025**

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

Committee: Bradley (Regional Chair)\*, Chiocchio (Committee Co-Chair), Craitor\*, Easton\*, Insinna, Ip, Jordan\*, Kaiser\*, Morocco (Committee Co-Chair), Olson, Rigby, Seaborn\*, Siscoe, Whalen\*, Witteveen

Absent/Regrets: Bateman, Diodati, Foster, Sorrento

Staff: C. Banach, Director, Housing Services, C. Cousins, Director, Homelessness and Community Engagement, R. Ferron, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, M. Franklin, Commander, Quality Management and Performance Standards, M. Gallardi, Executive Assistant, Commissioner, Community Services, R. Hill, Legislative Coordinator, Dr. A. Kasmani, Medical Officer of Health, S. Klair, Director, Children's Services, H. Koning, Commissioner, Community Services, A. Korchok, Chief of Staff, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Sergi, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, C. Sheach, Manager, Emergency Management, J. Sinclair, Manager, Homelessness Services, J. Spratt, Legislative Coordinator, R. Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer, 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

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

Councillor Chiocchio read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

**3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

**4.1 Social Assistance - Learning, Earning and Parenting Program**

Lori Watson, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, provided information respecting Social Assistance - Learning, Earning and Parenting Program. Topics of the presentation included:

- Learning, Earning and Parenting Program
- Community Supports
- Service Delivery Agents
- 2025 Graduates
- Celebrating Success

**4.2 Update on Niagara's Homelessness Strategy**

Jeffrey Sinclair, Manager, Homelessness Services, provided information respecting Update on Niagara's Homelessness Strategy. Topics of the presentation included:

- Canadian Definition of Homelessness
- Homeless Services
- Factors Impacting Tenancies
- How Do We Measure Success?
- Coordinated Access
- Housing Focused Shelters
- Assertive Street Outreach
- Homelessness Prevention and Diversion
- Supportive Housing
- Community Housing
- Attainable Housing
- Partnerships with other Sectors
- System Capacity Building
- How We Are Addressing Homelessness
- Homeless Services Housing Outcomes
- Niagara Homeless Increase Compared to Ontario (2022-2024)

4.3 Homelessness in Niagara: Investment and Impact

Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness Services, provided information respecting Homelessness in Niagara: Investment and Impact. Topics of the presentation included:

- Additional Investments to Support a Resilient Local Community for All
- Current State of Homeless Investments
- Niagara Region Chronically Homeless Individuals Forecasting
- Working Assumptions to Build Solutions
- Enhancements that can be implemented in the short term
- Medium Term (2-3 years) Supportive Housing Investments
- Long Term (4-5 years) Supportive Housing Investments
- Expenditures in Homelessness with New Investments
- Other Considerations

**Councillor Information Request(s):**

Provide information respecting programs that provide relief for property taxes to support individuals to stay in their homes. Councillor Insinna

4.4 Warning System Use at Niagara EMS

Michael Franklin, Commander, Quality Management and Performance Standards, provided information respecting Warning System Use at Niagara EMS. Topics of the presentation included:

- Warning Systems
- Background
- Why Reduce Warning System Use
- How Niagara Emergency Medical Services Has Made Improvements
- Calls Without Warning System Use
- What's Next?

**5. DELEGATIONS**

5.1 Mental Health, Homelessness and Addiction Service Needs in Niagara Region

5.1.1 Steven Soos, Resident, City of Welland

Steven Soos, Resident, City of Welland, appeared before Committee and expressed concerns respecting mental health, homelessness and addiction service needs in Niagara Region, and suggested establishing a mental health and addiction committee with committee members who have lived experience.

**6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**6.1 COM 23-2025**

Approval of Community Services Program Audits

Moved by Councillor Insinna

Seconded by Councillor Siscoe

That Report COM 23-2025, dated July 8, 2025, respecting Approval of Community Services Program Audits, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the 2023 draft audited Long-Term Care Home Annual Reports for the year ended December 31, 2023 (Appendices 1-8 to Report COM 23-2025), **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the draft audited annual reconciliation return for the Community Support Services Program (Appendix 9 to Report COM 23-2025) for the year ended March 31, 2025, **BE APPROVED**;
3. That the draft audited schedule of revenue and expenses for the Reaching Home Program (Appendix 10 to Report COM 23-2025) for the year ended March 31, 2025, **BE APPROVED**;
4. That the draft audited schedule of revenue and expenses for the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative (UHEI) program for the year ended March 31, 2025 (Appendix 11 to Report COM 23-2025), **BE APPROVED**;
5. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditor to finalize the statements as presented; and
6. That this report **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee for information.

**Carried**

**6.2 PHD 6-2025**

Approval of Public Health and Emergency Services Program Audits

Moved by Councillor Siscoe

Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

That Report PHD 6-2025, dated July 8, 2025, respecting Approval of Public Health and Emergency Services Program Audits, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the draft audited schedule of revenue and expenses and the annual reconciliation return for the Public Health General Programs for the year ended December 31, 2024 (Appendix 1 and 2 to Report PHD 6-2025), **BE APPROVED**;

2. That the draft audited schedule of revenue and expenses and the annual reconciliation return for the Community Mental Health Program for the year ended March 31, 2025 (Appendix 3 and 4 to Report PHD 6-2025), **BE APPROVED**;
3. That the draft audited schedule of revenue and expenses for the following programs for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025, **BE APPROVED**:
  - Ambulance Communication Services (Appendix 5 to Report PHD 6-2025)
  - Infant and Child Development Services (ICDS) (Appendix 6 to Report PHD 6-2025)
  - Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) (Appendix 7 to Report PHD 6-2025);
4. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditor to finalize the statements as presented; and
5. That Report PHD 6-2025 **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee for information.

**Carried**

**7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Correspondence Item COM-C 17-2025 was considered separately.

Moved by Councillor Ip  
Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

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

COM-C 16-2025  
2025-2026 Homelessness Winter Plan

PHD-C 8-2025  
Warning System Use in Niagara Emergency Medical Services

**Carried**

7.2 COM-C 17-2025

Emergency Shelter Service Restrictions

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Insinna

That Memorandum COM-C 17-2025, dated July 8, 2025, respecting  
Emergency Shelter Service Restrictions, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

**Carried**

8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 Emergency Shelter Service Restrictions

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Siscoe

1. That staff **REPORT BACK** on programming, services, and/or partnerships that need to be immediately implemented by Regional staff to ensure that individuals who are restricted from shelter are housed in some fashion, rather than sent to the street;
2. That the report **INCLUDE** financial considerations, analysis, and alternatives reviewed to ensure that individuals who are restricted from shelter are immediately housed in some fashion; and
3. That the report **BE PRESENTED** at the September 9, 2025, Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting.

Recorded Vote:

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

No (1): Rigby.

**Carried**

8.2 Motion Respecting Establishment of a High-Level Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Facilities with the Niagara Region - Funded by the Provincial Government

Moved by Councillor Morocco  
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

WHEREAS communities across Ontario, including the Niagara Region, continue to experience a significant rise in individuals suffering from severe mental health issues and substance use disorders;

WHEREAS existing local supports and facilities are under-resourced and are often unable to provide the intensive, wraparound, long-term care needed for individuals with complex or chronic needs;

WHEREAS police services, emergency departments, local shelters, downtown businesses and the broader community are increasingly bearing the burden of responding to crises related to untreated or under-treated mental illness and addictions;

WHEREAS there is a clear and urgent need for a dedicated, professionally staffed facility within the region that can deliver an intensive care for both—comprising medical detox, and long-term residential treatment, psychiatric support, and reintegration services;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council of the Niagara Region, formally **ADVOCATE** for the establishment of an intensive mental health and addiction treatment supportive housing program that includes 24-7 support as well as medication support for clients with complex needs;
2. That Council **CALLS** upon the provincial and federal governments to invest in the planning, funding, and staffing of such facilities to meet the growing needs of vulnerable populations in our community;
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to prepare a report identifying potential partnership opportunities with the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, Niagara Health, community based clinical support services, mental health and addictions service providers, and supportive housing providers; and
4. That a copy of this motion **BE SENT** to Niagara's four MPs; Niagara's four MPPs; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario (MARCO); Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM); and the Ontario and Canadian Associations of Chiefs of Police; The Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Health Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and Niagara Health.

Recorded Vote:

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

No (0).

**Carried**

8.3 Beach Water Testing

Councillor Kaiser requested information respecting the frequency of beach water testing in Niagara Region and how that compares to testing frequency in other regions. Dr. Kasmani, Medical Officer of Health, advised that Committee received a presentation regarding testing at its meeting held June 10, 2025, and any further questions could be directed to him.

9. **CLOSED SESSION**

Committee did not resolve into closed session.

10. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION ITEMS**

10.1 Confidential COM 24-2025

A Matter of Labour Relations/Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals Pursuant to Sections 239(2)(b)(d) of the Municipal Act, 2001: Homelessness Services Negotiated Request for Proposal Award Results – 2025-RFP-38-Housing Focused Emergency Shelters

Moved by Councillor Witteveen  
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

That Confidential Report COM 24-2025, dated July 8, 2025, respecting A Matter of Labour Relations/Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals Pursuant to Sections 239(2)(b)(d) of the Municipal Act, 2001: Homelessness Services Negotiated Request for Proposal Award Results – 2025-RFP-38-Housing Focused Emergency Shelters, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

**Carried**



**11. NEXT MEETING**

Committee Chair Chiocchio announced that, due to a light agenda, the August Public Health and Social Services Committee meeting would be cancelled; therefore, the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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Councillor Morocco  
Committee Co-Chair

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Councillor Chiocchio  
Committee Co-Chair

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Rebecca Hill  
Legislative Coordinator

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk