



# District of Sault Ste. Marie

## Social Services Administration Board

- Ontario Works
- Child Care
- Social Housing
- Land Ambulance

### ONTARIO WORKS COMMITTEE

#### Minutes for Meeting to be Held on

**Monday, December 6, 2004 at Noon in the  
Korah Board Room - Civic Centre**

PRESENT: V. Burns B. Hayes S. Butland  
CITY STAFF: D. Pauze C. Rosso A. McRae  
DSSMSSAB STAFF: K. Streich-Poser A. Nanne (notes)

The meeting was called to order by committee chair, Vicki Burns at 12:07 p.m.

#### **Review of the Minutes from the August 30, 2004 Ontario Works Committee Meeting.**

The minutes were reviewed and accepted.

#### **Program Manager's Report**

C. Rosso highlighted the report information provided. He informed committee members that there would be a teleconference tomorrow that should provide more information about the upcoming changes to Ontario Works.

The Addictions Services Initiative hasn't been able to process clients very quickly. C. Rosso stated that they hope to make some changes and have added a full time employee to the Addictions Services program. The Provincial Government may still terminate this program and therefore we must changes must be made with caution. A. McRae commented that there is some Provincial interest in continuing the program.

S. Butland asked if the Addictions Services program is successful from a local perspective and C. Rosso responded that it is still too early to tell. He feels that we will be able to make a better assessment in the next six months. K. Streich-Poser noted that the program's success can be measured in different ways and

that the amount of interest rather than actual recovery can also be considered a success.

C. Rosso reviewed client statistics with the committee as well as other department information. He commented that the Call Center Industry has had a positive effect on the Ontario Works client load. K. Streich-Poser inquired about the Ontario Works caseload and C. Rosso responded that there are about 2,300 client at this time and has remained fairly stable.

### **OMSSA Simplification of Ontario Works Report**

K. Streich-Poser commented that last summer, as part of a review of the Ontario Works program, OMSSA gathered recommendations that they would like to make to the Provincial Government. C. Rosso looked at some of the items listed in the report. The committee reviewed the recommendations together and C. Rosso briefly commented on the nature of the problems listed and the changes that could be made.

### **MCSS Service Contract**

K. Streich-Poser commented that the MCSS Service Contract finally arrived about 2-weeks ago. A. McRae felt that the contract was better than he thought and that there were no big cut backs. He added that DSSABs are unable to negotiate contract amounts available and stated that we should be content with the contract funds provided.

### **Homelessness Status Reports**

K. Streich-Poser and D. Pauze agreed that the Ontario Works Committee would be the best place for D. Pauze to report and link back to the DSSMSSAB regarding Homelessness.

**Community Assistance Trust** is the provision of support services and provides assistance on a one-time emergency need for those not covered by other agencies or organizations. They are currently averaging from 600 to 900 calls per month and will help with partial payment or emergency payments for those in need. They and can be used as a community link to help people access different benefits. A. McRae gave the example of the Lions Club working with CAT to provide eyeglasses and eye testing.

Since beginning of Community Assistance Trust the coordinator has held monthly advisory committee meetings to create public awareness. This program is used as a best practice. CAT has taken over the Rent Bank as a result of their best practices.

S. Butland asked about the Travel Grant status and if it is it working? D. Pauze responded, yes and commented that it has been flowing smoothly although it still doesn't cover the total cost. CAT now has the ability to "front" the money to individuals and have it replaced when the travel grant is received.

The CAT Research Assistant position has concluded and they are now looking at bringing in "211" services. These services have been moved to the CAT office so that this individual will be available for CAT duties as well.

The **Mobile Support Worker program** is supported by the John Howard Society and works with tenants and landlord to prevent evictions. They also act as a source of information and make referrals. The Mobile Support Worker coordinates the efforts of clients and landlords and works very well for the transition from shelters to personal accommodations.

**Pauline's Place** is the local Emergency Youth Shelter and has also become a youth transition home. They have had to develop their policies and procedures and tailor them to the needs of Sault Ste. Marie. Pauline's Place has developed partnerships with various organizations such as the Children's Aid Society.

**Vincent's Place** is the much-needed Men's Shelter and provides service for single males over the age of 18 year old. It has 24 beds and since April 2004 over 220 men have accessed the shelter. Vincent's Place also has support services such as a thrift store, food bank and soup kitchen.

The **Steet Smart Guide Report** provided a summary of all of the Homelessness Initiatives was funded mainly through the Metis Organization and still needs to find the funds for placement on a website. The information contained in this report is so overwhelming that they completed two guides. They cannot keep the guide in stock and it is going like hotcakes.

D. Pauze commented that sustainability is always an issue for every initiative and creative fund enhancement is taking place by all groups. K. Streich-Poser commented that 80% of men coming through the men's shelter have mental issues and that 50% of those men are eligible or in receipt of ODSP. Funding will be an issue after to completion of SCIPI two and sustainability could become an issue.

### **Other Business**

A. McRae informed the committee that he has been informed by one of the employees involved with the over-payment system, that we are in very good standing with this process compared to others in the Province.

K. Streich-Poser reminded members that there is a teleconference tomorrow and invited the committee members to attend if available.

**Next Meeting**

The next Ontario Works Committee meeting will take place on Monday, March 7 at noon.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:21 p.m.