



# 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, March 7, 2005 at Noon.**

**Social Housing Board Room – 464 Albert St. E.**

**Present:** V. Burns B. Hayes S. Butland D. Edgar

**City Staff:** K. Streich-Poser C. Rosso

**DSSMSSAB Staff:** A. Nanne

The meeting was called to order by committee chair, V. Burns at 12:00 p.m.

### **Review of the Minutes from the December 06, 2004 Ontario Works Committee Meeting.**

The Ontario Works Committee took time to review the minutes. There were no questions or comments and the minutes were accepted as prepared.

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

C. Rosso informed the committee that they are currently examining the traffic flow at the main desk / front counter at Ontario Works. There is a high volume of clients. They are also in the midst of a major revamping of switchboard operations as well. Bell Canada is participating and helping to find the best upgraded system for our Ontario Works needs. Committee members agreed that there is a definite need for a customer friendly system.

C. Rosso discussed the many changes coming from Provincial government. He noted that they are looking to streamline operations and may even change the name of Ontario Works. C. Rosso and K. Streich-Poser are participating in a number of teleconferences to keep up-to-date with the changes and expectations.

The 3% raise for the clients is now in place and the Ministry is also looking to make changes to compensate for Chiropractors, eye examines, drug coverage and other items that are no longer covered through OHIP. B. Hayes would like to see these tracked, so that the Provincial Government can be made aware of the need. K. Streich-Poser noted that one of the barriers to employment is the discontinuation of benefits after leaving Ontario Works.

C. Rosso and Ontario Works Managers are reviewing current staff levels and upcoming maternity leaves, as the Intake Screening division will now require designated staff. Changes and simplification of staffing may free up time for other internal needs.

Addictions Services Initiative program is now in full progress. A combination of the addition of full-time personnel and reassignment of current staff should alleviate assessment backups experience previously. ASI is progressing through the Province. We are funded for the remainder of the year and will reassess this program at that time.

Domestic Violence training packages for Ontario Works staff have been provided. Victims of domestic violence currently receive special priority and K. Streich-Poser would like to share the information with other social service areas. The training package has impressed the staff members that have reviewed it. Manual applications and same-day-processing are all part of the special priority considerations for domestic violence victims.

### **Intake Screening Proposal**

C. Rosso distributed the Local Implementation Plan to committee members.

K. Streich-Poser provided background information regarding the NISU (Northern Intake Screening Unit) operations and protocol. This was originally implemented to save administration dollars for each of the Northern Ontario Works units however, upon review it was determined that it created redundancy and duplication. As of June 2005, each Ontario Works office will be responsible for screening their intake units. We plan to start our own intake as of May 1<sup>st</sup> rather than the designated June 1<sup>st</sup> date. Sault Ste. Marie has contacted Elliot Lake and are awaiting the okay from the Provincial Government to proceed with the May 1<sup>st</sup> implementation. Elliot Lake is starting to lose staff now as they look for new employment before the June 15<sup>th</sup> layoff date.

B. Hayes asked what our share of funding the NISU was. K. Streich-Poser responded that it was approximately \$236,000 on a 50/50 cost share with the Provincial Government. Local intake will be much less expensive than the NISU was. This will remain a separate item on Financial Statements so that we can track the costs associated.

There will be a videoconference tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. and C. Rosso will attend. More information will be provided at that time.

### **Caseload Profile Information**

C. Rosso distributed a Caseload Profile report. K. Streich-Poser has requested statistical information be provided regarding the Ontario Works caseload. The

Committee reviewed the statistics together and K. Streich-Poser provided information about the background for each statistic. The statistics gave a good profile of who the people are on Ontario works and enlightened the committee to what is going on in the community.

B. Hayes asked for a refresher regarding the basics of Ontario Works funding. K. Streich-Poser provided information and stated that income support is given on a 80% Provincial /20% DSSMSSAB cost share basis. Administration costs such as eligibility review, finance, etc is split 50/50 and the ERO, Family Support Workers and Addictions Initiative are 100% Provincial funding. The administration budget is capped and the cap hasn't changed in a number of years.

### **Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

### **Next Meeting (June 2005)**

The next Ontario Works Committee meeting will be on Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at noon.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.