

**Draft Minutes for the  
STRATEGY MEETING - DSSMSSAB  
And the CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE**

**Wednesday, April 28, 2004 - 12:00 PM  
Thompson Boardroom - Civic Centre**

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**Present:** D. Amaroso D. Edgar  
W. Pickard R. Tyczinski J. Fratesi  
L. McCoy D. Overboe K. Streich-Poser  
A. Nanne (notes)

**Regrets:** D. Jones P. Vaudry P. Mick B. Hayes

**Facilitator:** P. Hawn

District of Sault Ste. Marie Administration Board Chair, Debbie Amaroso, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

D. Amaroso informed everyone present that the purpose of this meeting is to combine all of the information attained at past Strategy Sessions. Previous strategy meetings have been held with both the DSSMSSAB as well as the City of Sault Ste. Marie. D. Amaroso then identified this meeting as a "follow-up" for the stakeholders of the DSSMSSAB.

At this point, the meeting was turned over to facilitator, Paul Hawn. He used a PowerPoint presentation to guide the meeting. Topics covered by the PowerPoint introduction included a review of the current mission, objectives, policies, practices and organizational structure of the DSSMSSAB. P. Hawn then discussed the previous strategic planning sessions and progress made to date. He also reviewed the DSSMSSAB Board's expectations derived from these previous sessions. The Board hopes to complete the strategic review, seek stakeholder input and more closely examine the human side of the delivery of services. P. Hawn commented that the DSSMSSAB is an anomaly and as a result is different from any other Northern Ontario DSSAB. The DSSMSSAB employees involved in delivering the services are provided by the City of Sault Ste. Marie and are not directly employed by the DSSMSSAB.

### **What Do We Do Well?**

Discussion questions were provided to those in attendance. Along with each question were responses gathered from the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Prince Township, Ministry of Community and Social Service, Ministry Of Health and Long-Term Care and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The first question discussed was "what do we do well?"

The responses from the various stakeholders were reviewed. It was pointed out that the Board and the City as the Service Deliverer received some very positive feedback. J.

Fratesi requested clarification regarding the responses provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Were the responses from the Municipal Affairs side or from Housing side. Given that DSSMSSAB is responsible for Social Housing, only staff from the Housing side provided feedback. J. Fratesi stated that past communication with MMAH would like to see Sault Ste. Marie amalgamate with Prince and the Northern Townships and as such they should be consulted on reviewing the DSSAB model in our area.

### Ways to Improve Service Delivery / Operations

A second handout was provided with the discussion topic heading "ways to improve service delivery / operations". Concerns were raised regarding the comments provided from the City of SSM, MCSS, MOHLTC and MMAH. Statements could be misinterpreted in and taken out of context when reading the handouts provided. K. Streich-Poser said that representatives from the various Ministries were invited to participate in this meeting but where unable to attend.

Discussion followed regarding the fact that the Ministry of Community and Social Services was the previous service delivery agent and that they need not try to direct the DSSMSSAB on how to run their operation. P. Hawn noted that the comments made by the MCSS need to be taken in context and that they were asked for their responses taking into account goals previously determined by the DSSMSSAB.

J. Fratesi stated that it is the DSSMSSAB's duty to deliver services at the level mandated by the province. To provide services at a higher level is not a choice that the DSSMSSAB can make. It is up to the taxpayers and other elected officials to make such decisions and we need to separate the entities in this case. It was noted at this time that the DSSMSSAB board consists of elected officials representing the taxpayers.

D. Amaroso challenged the group as to the best use of the political will of the DSSMSSAB, NOSDA and other entities to improve or exceed service standards. She also raised the question about the DSSMSSAB's ability to help our service providers to surpass standards. D. Overboe responded that he views the DSSMSSAB as fundamentally effective in service delivery and asked the assembly "who gets the say" when it comes to requests for other issues?

J. Fratesi posed three (3) questions at this time:

1. Why are we talking about measuring higher performance when we don't have to?
2. Who has the authority to decide to go beyond provincial standards?
3. Who is going to pay for it?

W. Pickard responded that he sees the DSSMSSAB as the entity with direct authority to make these decisions. He noted that although the DSSAB's were formed as a different level of government, they are now here and are the decision-makers. J. Fratesi disagreed with W. Pickard stating that he does not think that the DSSAB's have the responsibility to make decisions that could increase levied amounts to the member municipalities.

It was noted by D. Edgar that in general Provincial Standards are low and the DSSMSSAB board is interested in offering better service within the current funding envelope. J. Fratesi was opposed to this view and felt that any budget savings should be sent back to the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Prince Township and not invested in better services. D. Amaroso and D. Overboe commented that much of the funding is program based and cannot be sent back to the city. D. Overboe discussed the fact that enhanced funding was received for O.W program that exceeded the DSSMSSAB mandate. He said that the Province wants to see these enhancement funds used for very specific purposes addressing human service needs.

K. Streich-Poser proposed developing a strategy whereby the member municipalities would be advised of any decisions the Board was looking at making which may impact on the levies. It was noted that some of these decisions are beyond the Board's authority, specifically when Program changes and decisions are made by the province to be instituted by the DSSABs. She suggested that a joint committee be formed to address the decision making process.

### **What Have We Failed to Ask?**

The third and final handout was distributed with the topic heading "What Have We Failed to Ask?" D. Overboe expressed concerns that comments made by the MCSS are both political and incorrect. He feels that they are not aware of the actual service delivery models used by the Ontario Works Division and Child Care division.. The MOHLTC responses were viewed in the same light as the MCSS comments. K. Streich-Poser stated that many of the issues are not exclusive to the DSSMSSAB and Sault Ste.Marie..

K. Streich- Poser affirmed that legislation dictates that the DSSMSSAB cannot be dissolved. J. Fratesi suggested that conversations held with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs might suggest otherwise.

He told everyone that the he'd just returned from a meeting of the Northern Chief Administrative Officers of a number of Single Tier municipalities and that there had been lengthy discussions regarding the dissolution of the District Social Services Administration Boards. He sighted the City of Timmins as an example. They are currently very active in the movement to dissolve DSSABs. J. Fratesi also noted that City employees direct both the Thunder Bay and Sudbury DSSABs. J. Fratesi commented that DSSAB Boards are required for outer regions and unorganized territories but not municipalities. He wanted to make members in attendance aware of the fact that there is an discontentment in the province regarding the DSSABs.

Although there is legislation dictating the fact that there needs to be a DSSAB Board there are always options about how it should be structured. He suggested changes such as having the Director of Performance Standards and administrative support directly supplied by the City of Sault Ste. Marie may be more viable solutions.

At this point, P. Hawn reviewed the fact that the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the DSSMSSAB had many shared objectives. He felt that it was apparent that the DSSMSSAB Board and the City of Sault Ste. Marie would continue to work together to

examine issues further and build upon their shared objectives. P. Hawn commented that there are a number of issues that need to be examined and strategies determined arising from the questions asked during this session.

1. Can the DSSMSSAB be dissolved
2. What mechanism could we install to replace the DSSMSSAB

In a discussion regarding the evaluation of the service levels provided by the DSSMSSAB, members disclosed difficulties in benchmarking these services. The definition of the parameters for assessment are not clearly defined. The DSSMSSAB wishes to act in an advocacy role for the client rather than deal with the day to day issues facing service users. There is a need to identify the key indicators in addition those used in Provincial Standards.

### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

P. Hawn asked the committee "where do we go from here?" All agreed that the formation of a Joint Task Force consisting of representatives from:

- ◆ The DSSMSSAB
- ◆ The City of Sault Ste. Marie
- ◆ Prince Township and possibly
- ◆ The various Provincial Ministries.

The Joint Task Force could then make recommendations for future option, actions and strategies.

P. Hawn noted that he sensed that a consensus was forming about the exploration of the formation of the DSSMSSAB. D. Amaroso commented that the DSSMSSAB does not want to exist merely for the sake of existing and that it has always been open to different ways of conducting business. J. Fratesi agreed that there are other options for the DSSMSSAB. He suggested that the City of Sault Ste. Marie could continue to provide Social Services and that the DSSMSSAB link with other DSSABs. In this format the Board could meet quarterly and purchase services from the City. K. Streich-Poser remarked that she also wants to ensure that legislation is maintained in whatever alternatives the Task Force recognizes.

The objective of the Joint Task Force will be:

1. To establish the mandate of the DSSMSSAB
2. To explore all feasible alternatives for the delivery of Social Services for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Prince Township and the Sault North Planning Area.

J. Fratesi said that the existence of the DSSMSSAB is a non-issue, as it must be present, however how it exists is flexible.

D. Amaroso and J. Fratesi were both satisfied that the basic issues were addressed and identified during this strategy session.

DSSMSSAB Chair, D. Amaroso, adjourned the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

