



District of Sault Ste. Marie

Social Services Administration Board

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

SOCIAL HOUSING COMMITTEE

Minutes for Wednesday March 5, 2003

Civic Centre, Plummer Boardroom at 3:00pm

Attendance: Brent McHale
Debbie Amaroso
Pat Mick
Gary Avery
Rick Cobean
Jim Crawford
Kim Streich-Poser (notes)

Regrets: Peter Vaudry

Meeting called to order 3:35p.m.

The committee was advised that D. Amaroso would be chairing the meeting on behalf of P. Vaudry.

1. Review of the Minutes from the December 19, 2002 Social Housing Committee Meeting.

The Minutes from the December 19, 2002 Social Housing Committee Meeting were reviewed. There was one correction on page 2. The 72 modified units should read 74 modified units.

The minutes were accepted.

2. Housing Programs

A/ Revision of Directive 2002-09a

Rick provided an overview of the directive. Corrections were made to the original directive to include b,c,d,e. The directive deals with the definition of disabled/handicapped in regards to modified units.

The revision was accepted.

B/ Liuna Local 1036 Non-Profit Housing Corporation Update.

Rick provided an update on the status of the amalgamation of Liuna and Cara Community. Cara Community has put a hold on the amalgamation due to some financial difficulties that Liuna is having.

Liuna has been getting more in debt due to inaccurate budgeting for hydro costs. Their current accumulated debt at the time of devolution is \$14,115. They are running a further deficit due to the increase in hydro costs and being under funded historically on this line item.

Rick Cobean has met with Liuna. They have developed a plan to address the accumulated deficit and the budgeting. The plan was reviewed with the committee. Rick will monitor their expenses closely.

If this plan is approved by this committee and by the Board, Cara Community will be involved in the management of the deficit and the new budget. This will help facilitate the amalgamation.

Committee members wanted to know why Liuna wants to amalgamate. Rick stated that the Liuna cannot get Board members replaced and the current members are burning out. There are some potential benefits of the amalgamation including possible savings for administration costs (\$20,000-\$30,000).

A Resolution recommending approval of this plan will be brought to the next Board meeting.

C/ 2002 SMAIR (Service Managers Annual Information Return)

Finance is completing their section on how much was spent on each program. This will be brought to the Board for their information. It must be submitted to the province by March 15, 2003.

3. **Social Housing Division**

A/ Overview of Social Housing Service Corporation

Gary Avery provided a brief overview of the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) and its relationship with the Sault Ste. Marie Housing Corporation and the Non Profit programs.

The following services are mandated to the SHSC in the Social Housing Reform Act.

Bulk Natural Gas Purchasing – benefits from being a larger buying group (rebate of \$5,000 for Housing Corporation in 2002).

Group Insurance- inherited policies that province set up prior to devolution. Looking at getting a new policy. Responding to some of the criticisms of the old insurance program.

Single policy from two policies (housing corporations/non profits) Federal programs can join this as well.

Capital Pooling of Non-Profits – Capital Reserves have to be invested with Phillip Hager North. They are the designated Investment Company for Non profits. There are four funds that can be used with varying risks. This is only for provincial providers. Federal Providers can access this also. Many fears have been addressed.

Best Practices for Social Housing providers

Very little has been done to date. Initiative from pre-devolution, they are looking at who is doing what well and sharing this.

Q. Impact of Hydro costs going up? This has not impacted on the Housing Corporation or the Non Profits significantly to date because of the contract the PUC has with the City. The costs of hydro may go up once PUC contract is finished.

B/ Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Resolution RE: Public Services Pension Plan Contributions

Gary Avery provided an overview of the issue. The Employees of the former Housing Authorities belonged to the Ontario Public Service Pension Plan. At the time of divestment to the Upper Tier Municipalities, the enabling legislation did not allow the employees to transfer their pensions to OMERS. It is held by OPS.

Employees with long service will have pensions in two parts. The OPS pensions are frozen at Dec. 31, 2000 levels with no adjustments. This will result in a significant loss to the employee for pension income, particularly since pensions are based on the best five years.

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation is requesting that the legislation be amended to allow for the employee to transfer their pension credits to OMERS. This will reduce the loss of pension income for the employees who have been divested. This issue affects all Housing Authority Employees across the province, including those employees locally.

The committee supported bringing a resolution forward of this change in legislation to allow the transfer of pension funds from OPS to OMERS at the next Board meeting.

4. **Other Business**

A/ Letter to MMAH Minister regarding Federal Funding Shortfall.

As per direction from the Board in January 2003, a letter has been sent under the Chair's signature to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the Federal Funding Shortfalls. This was sent the first week of February. There has been no response to this letter to date. The committee agreed that the letter should be sent again to the new Minister.

5. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in June 2003. DSSMSSAB staff will confer with P. Vaudry, Chair of the committee regarding his schedule prior to setting the meeting.

6. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned 4:35 p.m.