



EMERGENCY & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT 12-009

9:30 a.m.

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Council Chambers

Hamilton City Hall

71 Main Street West

Present: Mayor B. Bratina
Councillor J. Partridge, Chair
Councillor T. Whitehead, Vice-Chair
Councillors S. Duvall, J. Farr, T. Jackson, B. McHattie, S. Merulla and
B. Morelli

Also Present: Councillors B. Clark and Pearson

THE EMERGENCY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 12-009 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options (CS12020(b)) (City Wide)

- (a) That Report CS12020(b) respecting 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options be referred to the November 7, 2012 General Issues Committee meeting;
- (b) That staff be directed to report on the Community Start-up and Maintenance Program (CSUMP) deficit strategy and offer options for the two related issues at the November 7, 2012 General Issues Committee meeting.

2. The Benefits of Social Services Investment in Hamilton

That staff be directed to assess the economic benefits of social services investment in Hamilton and report to a future General Issues Committee meeting.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL:

Chair Partridge called the meeting to order and recognized Monique Taylor, MPP who was in attendance and the Mayor and Councillors Clark and Pearson who were also in attendance.

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 1)

The Clerk advised of the following changes:

(i) ADDED DELEGATION REQUESTS

- 3.1 Tom Cooper, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.2 Bob Wood, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.3 Trish Balardo, Executive Director, Seniors Activation Maintenance (SAM) Adult Day Service Program, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.4 John Mills, Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.5 Dave Cherkewski, 603-69 Herkimer Street, Hamilton, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.6 Peter Hutton, 23 Main Street, Unit 403, Dundas, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)
- 3.7 Deirdre Pike, HOPE (Hamilton Organizing for Poverty Elimination), requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Copy attached.)

(ii) CORRECTIONS TO ITEM 4.1

- 4.1 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options (CS12020(b)) (City Wide)

- Correction to page 2 of Report CS12020(b) (Copy attached)
- Corrections to page 3 of Appendix A to Report CS12020(b) (Copy attached.)

The agenda was approved as amended.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)

There were none declared.

(c) DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 3)

The following delegation requests were approved and the rules of order waived in order for the delegations to address Committee today:

- (i) Tom Cooper, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.1)
- (ii) Bob Wood, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.2.)
- (iii) Trish Balardo, Executive Director, Seniors Activation Maintenance (SAM) Adult Day Service Program, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.3.)
- (iv) John Mills, Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.4.)
- (v) Dave Cherkewski, 603-69 Herkimer Street, Hamilton, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.5.)
- (vi) Peter Hutton, 23 Main Street, Unit 403, Dundas, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.6.)
- (vii) Deirdre Pike, HOPE (Hamilton Organizing for Poverty Elimination), requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.7.)

(d) STAFF PRESENTATIONS

**(i) 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options (CS12020(b))
(City Wide) (Item 4)**

Bill Atanas, Director of Benefit Eligibility, provided an overview of the Report with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation and copies of the hand-outs were distributed.

His comments included but were not limited to the following:

- Discretionary Benefits
- Our challenges
- Key Considerations
- Recommendations (a) and (b)
 - Operate under \$10 cap
- Recommendations (c) and (d)
 - Full reinvestment of Municipal savings
- Alternatives
- Impact
- Moving Forward

Staff responded to questions from Committee.

Committee thanked staff for their work on this issue and, on a motion, received the staff presentation.

1. Tom Cooper, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, respecting the proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added Item 3.1)

Tom Cooper addressed Committee. His comments included but were not limited to the following:

- He recognizes the difficulty faced by staff to address the budget cuts;
- In 2003, in a similar situation, Council deferred making budget cuts pending the outcome of the Provincial election;
- The recent cuts impact the most vulnerable;
- He requested that Council consider holding off making any cuts to the budget;
- A one year deferral would help the situation;
- He will use the current political situation at Queen's Park to advocate for the reversal of the Province's decision.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

2. **Bob Wood, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.2.)**

Bob Wood addressed Committee and read from a prepared statement copies of which were distributed. He spoke of the Clinic's experience from working with clients regarding the discretionary benefits for OW and ODSP recipients. A copy of his statement was also placed in the Clerk's file and has been uploaded for viewing by the public.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

3. **Trish Balardo, Executive Director, Seniors Activation Maintenance (SAM) Adult Day Service Program, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.3.)**

Trish Balardo addressed Committee and read from a prepared statement copies of which were distributed. A copy was also submitted for the Clerk's record and has been uploaded onto the City's website.

Ms. Balardo also provided a Guide to Hamilton's Adult Day Services copies of which were distributed. She noted that many clients would not be able to afford the fees if they are not subsidized. The budget cuts would impact the number of clients they would be able to serve.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

4. **John Mills, Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.4.)**

John Mills addressed Committee on behalf of the Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits. He read from a prepared statement, a copy of which was submitted for the Clerk's record. He requested that Council continue to put pressure on the Province with respect to the cuts. Eliminating the benefits will not only result in hardships but will more than likely also result in deaths. This is a rich Province despite its debts and should not make the most vulnerable pay.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

5. **Dave Cherkewski, 603-69 Herkimer Street, Hamilton, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.5.)**

Dave Cherkewski addressed Committee and referred to the delegation he made to Committee on December 7, 2011 and reiterated the three requests that he made at that time:

- 1) Being Strategic with Social Investment;
- 2) Matching Resources with Need; and
- 3) Engaging the Community for Better Results.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

6. **Peter Hutton, 23 Main Street, Unit 403, Dundas, requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.6.)**

Peter Hutton addressed Committee. He advocated for transportation affordability and noted that money put into subsidizing bus passes goes back into the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). Long term solutions are required for these budget problems.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

7. **Deirdre Pike, HOPE (Hamilton Organizing for Poverty Elimination), requesting to address Committee today respecting Proposed Discretionary Benefits Options which is Item 4.1 on the agenda. (Added 3.7.)**

Deirdre Pike addressed Committee and asked the Committee on behalf of HOPE to not cut the discretionary benefits. She noted that the Province has given up its part in poverty elimination. It is not doable any more to hold onto a zero task rate increase. Cuts to these benefits impact the most vulnerable and have negative health related effects.

On a motion, Committee received the delegation.

The Chair thanked all the delegations.

On a motion, Committee referred the staff Report to the November 7, 2012 General Issues Committee, together with the (CSUMP) deficit strategy as outlined in Item 1 of this Report. Committee noted that a Special meeting of Council will need to be convened prior to the General Issues Committee meeting in order to approve the referral.

(e) Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative (Item 5.1)

Councillor Merulla withdrew his motion respecting the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Initiative and presented another motion as outlined in Item 2 of this Report.

(f) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Emergency & Community Services Committee meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Partridge, Chair
Emergency & Community Services Committee

Ida Bedioui
Legislative Co-ordinator
Office of the City Clerk