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## **Presentation to Emergency and Community Services Committee**

Hamilton City Council  
May 8, 2017

The Bridge from Prison to Community (Hamilton) provides reintegration services to hundreds of the thousands of ex-offenders emerging from detention every year. These services are provided on the ground floor of the Bridge House, located at 319 Barton Street East. The Bridge also provides transitional housing for up to six men at a time, on the second and third floor of the Bridge House. The average stay is just under four months.

The Bridge House is requesting **\$14,972.50** from the City to deal with serious infrastructure problems for which it needs emergency assistance:

- A major roof leak that is causing extensive dripping of water in the administrative office, and water damage to the walls, ceilings and floors at different levels of the building. Please see the photos in Annex A; the dripping on April 20 was so intense that the surface of the water in the blue tubs was actually churning. The total capacity of each of the tubs in the photo was 65 litres or more. Seven tubs were used, and had to be emptied 8-10 times in the course of the downpour. This is of course happening again, due to this week's downpours.

As well, it appears that there may be a crack in the stack from the second floor roof to the ground. This may account for some of the water dripping into the administrative area and also into the basement. We have asked for a plumber to investigate and provide a quote. (They are scheduled to arrive on Monday, May 8; we will inform the Committee and City staff as soon as we have a quote for repair to the stack, if indeed it is cracked.)

- Long-standing water pressure problems that cause the water to cut out abruptly while Bridge residents are showering. This frequently leaves the unfortunate resident in the shower stall at the moment the water cuts out standing there with soap lather on his body and shampoo in his hair, shivering in the stall for up to 25 minutes while he waits for the water to cut back in. This happens on a daily basis.

Our Building Committee has requested quotes from builders for the work needed, and has received the following quotes:

### **Roof repair/replacement:**

<b>\$ 8000.00</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$ 1040.00 (HST)</b>	<b>\$ 9040.00</b>
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### **Plumbing work to increase water pressure:**

<b>\$ 5250.00</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>\$ 682.50 (HST)</b>	<b>\$ 5932.50</b>
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We also have flooding in the basement (please see photos in Annex B). Some of the water there has dripped down from the administrative area above, but given the age of the foundation, it is also possible that some of the water is seeping in through the sides and floor of the foundation. The Bridge is trying to obtain a quote from a contractor for this.

Please note that the Bridge will also likely be facing costs to repair warping of the floors, and damage to the walls and ceilings resulting from the roof leak. It would be helpful if Council would authorize City staff to release funding for the repairs to the floors, walls and ceilings that will be necessary after the roof leak has been repaired.

The Bridge also has other long-standing needs for the following:

- Increased staffing in order to provide an appropriate level of support to the hundreds of ex-offenders needing our services in order to reintegrate successfully and avoid re-offending. We need the following:
  - a part-time addictions counsellor
  - more discharge planning with offenders slated for release from the Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre
  - someone to conduct systematic outreach to potential employers, potential landlords and the public to reduce the exaggerated reluctance to employ or rent to ex-offenders or to have ex-offenders reintegrate into the community.
  - a qualified social worker to counsel family members on how they can best support the reintegration of their relative in conflict with the law, and on how to mitigate the negative impact of incarceration on other members of the family.
- A revamping of the space at the Bridge House in order to make both the programming spaces and the residential spaces more supportive of mental health, and to provide more adequate administrative space. Due to financial constraints the Bridge has not been able to reconfigure either the spaces in which the programming is offered, nor the spaces in which the residents live, to make them more functional and more pleasant to be in. As a result, programming is delivered in an enclosed space without natural lighting, because that is the only space large enough to allow several people to gather for discussions or a workshop. However, with some shifting of walls, it might be possible to shift the programming to the front of the building where there is natural light. The clients' mental health would also likely benefit from a shift away from the drab paint colours and décor that abound throughout both the programming and residential areas of Bridge House.