



MINUTES
of the SPECIAL MEETING of the BOARD
FRIDAY, February 5th, 2010

RRDSSAB Office, Fort Frances, ON 1:00 p.m.
MEETING #02/10

PRESENT: Rick Neilson, Township of Chapple
Dennis Brown, Town of Atikokan
Michael Lewis, Rainy River East
Wade Desserre, Rainy River West
Debbie Ewald, Town of Rainy River
Gary Gamsby, Township of Morley
Linda Armstrong, Township of Dawson
Ross Donaldson, Township of LaVallee
Valerie Pizey, Township of Lake of the Woods

REGRETS: Sharon Tibbs, Town of Fort Frances
Gary Judson, Township of Emo
John Callan, Rainy River Central
Mike Ford, Township of Alberton

STAFF: Donna Dittaro, CAO
Dawn Galusha, Assistant Manager of Finance
Judy Koski, Recorder
Sandra Weir, Housing Manager
Michelle Shute, Assistant Housing Manager
Rick Bliss, Maintenance Coordinator
Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager
Shelley Shute, Ontario Works Manager
Mildred Beck, Children's Services Manager

1. Call to Order

Mike Lewis, Chair, called the meeting to order.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None.

3. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #08/10 MOVED BY R. Neilson and SECONDED BY D. Brown:

RESOLVED THAT the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* approve the agenda of February 5, 2010.

Carried.

4. New Business

a) Provincial Rent Bank Agreement

The CAO advised that this is a housekeeping item. The resolution is needed as a requirement of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Resolution #09/10 MOVED BY L. Armstrong and SECONDED BY W. Desserre:

RESOLVED THAT the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* Enter into an agreement with the *Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing* for the implementation of the grant-based Provincial Rent Bank Program in the District of Rainy River.

Carried.

b) Review of 2010 Draft Budget

The Chair advised that he will be leaving the meeting at 2:30 PM today. If at that time the meeting is still in progression, he will appoint Wade Desserre as Acting Chair for the remainder of the meeting. The CAO will introduce the Budget and the Program Managers are here to present their respective Budgets and to answer any questions.

The CAO advised that this Budget is the result of several months of work. The Managers have consulted with their respective ministries, their staff and each of their Committees. Substantial cuts have been made to date as requested by Senior Management and the Committees. The Program Budgets before the Board today come recommended by each Committee.

The Acting Manager of Finance reviewed the Budget Summary with the Board. She advised that several programs show a 0% increase, with decreases in Ontario Works Administration, Ontario Works General Assistance, Community Placements/Employment Assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program.

There is an increase in Social Housing of 30.03%. The overall budget increase for 2010 is 3.52%, however, the municipal increase is 0%. The Acting Manager of Finance reviewed the draft apportionment summary for 2010. She also reviewed the breakdown of costs and budget overview.

DSSAB Administration – Interest Revenue has decreased significantly from 2009. The paving of the parking lot and the addition of a copier was deferred from 2009 and is now included in this year's budget. Salaries and Benefits have increased due to the negotiated increase per the Staff Agreement.

DSSAB Board Administration – Travel & Training has decreased based on 2009 actuals. Overall the budget reflects a slight decrease.

The Ontario Works Manager reviewed the Ontario Works Budget with the Board.

Ontario Works Administration shows a decrease in revenue which includes a \$4,000 decrease to the municipal share. Capital Acquisitions has been added to the expense line for IT needs which have been identified by the Network Administrator. Capital Equipment is based on actual needs for the year. Both the Travel & Training and Office Supplies lines have decreased.

The Emergency Energy Fund is 100% Provincially funded and reflects no change this year.

Ontario Works General Allowance is determined by the number of clients served. If this budget is underestimated, the municipality would have to pay at the end of the year in order to cover any deficit. Effective January 1, 2010, 3% of the cost of OW General Allowance benefits was uploaded to the Province. The total budget for 2010 has decreased by \$156,000. The municipal share has decreased by \$5,888.

The Family Support Worker Initiative budget remains the same for 2010.

Employment Assistance funding is based on achieving two employment outcomes: earnings and employment. This budget has decreased the municipal share by \$16,429.

The Consolidated Verification Program budget is 100% Provincial funding and has not changed this year.

Ontario Disability Support Program: Effective January 1, 2010, the costs of ODSP income support, including benefits, was uploaded, which reduces the current municipal contributions of 20% to 10%. The municipal share has been reduced by a total of \$376,000 for 2010 due to the upload of ODSP Income Support and Benefits.

The Ontario Works Child Care Budget has stayed the same for several years and continues with no increase for 2010.

The Children's Services Manager reviewed the Child Care Budget with the Board.

Miscellaneous Revenue has increased by \$8,000 due to a contract with Best Start for administrative support. Salaries and Benefits have decreased slightly due to a re-allocation of salaries across the DSSAB. Travel & Training has increased as it is anticipated that several meetings will be held across the District with respect to the Early Learning Program. Subsidies to providers remain the same. There is no increase to the municipal share for 2010. The Children's Services Manager advised that there has been some confusion with the Ministry with respect to what format extended day care will take. At present the School Boards must proceed with the before and after school program. This will affect our budget if this takes place. She will work closely with the Atikokan School Boards to maintain services in the community.

The Best Start Program has realized its first reduction in funding from the Province in the amount of \$90,439. This will have an impact on services, however no services will close. The Best Start Program is 100% Provincially funded.

The Homelessness Program has realized a slight increase for 2010. This Program is also funded 100% by the Province.

The Health Services Manager reviewed the Land Ambulance Program Budget with the Board.

Revenue from the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care has increased and the municipal share this year remains at 0%. Cross Border Recoveries have decreased based on usage. Transfer from Capital Reserves includes the replacement of one ambulance in 2010. Distributed Salaries and Benefits have increased due to a staffing re-allocation across the DSSAB. Program Expense and Capital Equipment have decreased and any anticipated settlement with CUPE has been absorbed. The Health Services Manager noted that this budget does not allow for any arbitration costs. The allocation to capital reserves has decreased and as a result the life cycles of the defibs have been extended from five years to eight years and as well, the replacement of the roof at the Fort Frances base has been deferred. This budget reflects a 0% increase to the municipalities.

It was noted that where possible costs should be moved to the Province as the municipalities are already paying one-third of this budget. Dennis Brown asked if there was any way of cutting service. The Health Services Manager stated that we are at the minimum number of station to meet the performance standards which are being introduced this fall. The CAO noted that she has had conversations with other CAOs who say that their DSSABs are looking at cutting non-emergent transfers and reducing the 24/7 staffing hours.

The Housing Manager and Assistant Housing Manager reviewed the Social Housing Budget with the Board.

The Housing Manager advised that the Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program budget is 100% Provincially funded and the majority of the capital work for 2010 will be funded through this Program.

The Affordable Housing Program Extension is also 100% Provincially funded. The DSSAB has been allocated \$500,000 for twenty units. \$50,000 in administration funding is to be received in 2010. The Affordable Housing Clerk salaries and benefits are split between the AHP and SHRRP Programs at 100% Provincial dollars.

The Rent Bank Fund continues in 2010 and is also a 100% Provincially funded Program.

The Social Housing Budget still operates with fixed funding which was set in 2001. The municipal increase this year totals 30.03%. Flinders Management fee has increased by 3% for 2010. Under expenses both Salaries and Benefits and Travel and Training have decreased. There is an increase of \$466,858 for Service Provider Payments. Val Pizey noted that if the money to service providers is based on mortgages, payments should only change every five years. The Housing Manager advised that market rent revenues and RGI rents also affect these payments. The Children's Services Manager advised that the benchmarks are set by the Province which also affects this portion of the Budget. The CAO advised that the municipalities said that the federally funded programs did come to the DSSAB with monies to offset any increases. The Board can choose to use these funds.

The DSSAB Housing Budget Summary reveals that rental revenue remains the same. Miscellaneous rent revenue is projected to increase based on actuals in 2009. The one time Provincial SHRRP grant in the sum of \$681,876 will be used for capital projects together with a carry over from 2009 in the sum of \$23,460. The Municipal/Federal Subsidies will increase to \$980,126.

Under the Salaries, Wages and Benefits line there are no new jobs. Salary increments of 3% and the annualizing of three positions from last year are included in this line plus the addition of casual staff to cover long term absences.

Transportation & Communications show a slight decrease and Travel has increased by \$2,500. Leased Vehicles & Equipment has increased due to an error in last year's budget. Staff Development & Training has been cut back. Insurance has increased substantially due to an increase in boiler insurance. Under Supplies & Equipment an amount of \$3,378 has been added due to needs identified by the Network Administrator. Capital Costs have changed substantially due to the implementation of PSAB. It was noted that the threshold for PSAB is \$5,000 per unit. Allocation to Capital Reserve in the amount of \$37,230 will be used for IT upgrades and the removal of asbestos containing

material in the DSSAB Housing Units. This will equate to increased costs to operating. The Housing Department is in the initial stages of finding out what the costs are to deal with the removal of asbestos. Due to the age of the units and their deteriorating state this will be ongoing. Asbestos has been found in floor tiles, drywall and caulking. Total Capital Costs include \$681,876 in SHRRP funding and the carry over of \$23,460 from 2009.

Materials & Services Operating has been cut back where possible. Decreases have been realized in many areas due to the use of in-house staff rather than contractors. The overall decrease in this area of the Budget is \$40,500.

Utilities have increased due to the increase in delivery costs. Taxes have increased due to the increase in property values. The Rent Supplement Program has decreased due to the loss of two units.

Val Pizey noted that Salaries & Wages have increased by 59% and Benefits by 75%. The CAO noted that last year we moved away from contract employees. The Maintenance Coordinator and Maintenance II and Painter were made full time positions. There was also a negotiated salary increase of 3%. Last year some staff were not hired until later in the year, therefore this year reflects a full year's salary. Val Pizey stated that she is looking for a decrease in the Budget. The Assistant Manager of Housing noted that the Board will not realize savings until the backlog of work is completed. The Housing Manager added that in the last two years there has been increasing work which needs to be done; the buildings are forty-three years old and work has been deferred over the years. Health and Safety issues are also being addressed. As more work is being done, it follows that it would cost more money. The CAO added that last year the Board was advised that contracts were not cost effective. In 2007 \$46,000 was paid out to painting contractors. Our painter works at an hourly rate of \$23.81 vs a contractor at an hourly rate of ????. Our flooring staff works at an hourly rate of \$23.81 vs a contractor at \$35.00 per hour. The CAO also noted that when Housing devolved there were two full time and one part time staff members which was not enough to do the work, therefore work was contracted out. We have increased staff and the amount of work we are able to accomplish. The Assistant Housing Manager noted that all staff are included on the salaries and benefits lines, not just maintenance staff.

It was discussed that the reduction in the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund has affected the entire district. This issue rests with the Province. The Chair noted that the Building Condition Audits suggested that \$400,000 per year be placed in reserves for the upkeep on our housing units, however, the DSSAB cannot afford to do so.

The Acting Manager of Finance advised that she does not know as yet what surplus will carry over from 2009.

At this point in the meeting (2:30 PM) the Chair left the meeting and appointed Wade Desserre as Acting Chair.

Dennis Brown stated that in order to ease the effect to the large increase in Housing, half of the increase could be taken from reserves.

The CAO stated that this year sacrifices were made in all areas, including deferral of some projects, as it was anticipated that there would be an increase in Social Housing. Gary Gamsby noted that although this year any anticipated increase for paramedics wages will be absorbed, next year there may be increased costs. Debbie Ewald reminded the members that there has been no increase from the Province for Social Housing since 2002. Mortgage rollovers have been used to offset the municipal increases. The Board must go to the Province for more funding. Val Pizey stated that the Ontario Works decrease should go back to the municipalities and asked about restrictions on reserves. The CAO stated that there is a recommendation that the Board approve the amalgamation of the Housing Severance Reserve, the Social Housing Contingency Fund Reserve, the DSSAB Housing Reserve and the Housing Provider Reserve.

The Housing Manager stated that all areas have been considered for possible cuts. Two months of intense work on the Budget has been spent already and she stands behind this budget. This will benefit the tenants of the Rainy River District. Linda Armstrong noted that there have been uncontrollable increases in costs for such things as supplies and Hydro. The Assistant Manager of Housing agreed that there is nothing frivolous in this year's budget and it has been pared down while still following the recommendations in the Building Condition Audits. The CAO noted that if the windows in Atikokan are not changed the cost for heating for the tenants increases. Ross Donaldson stated that the staff should be directed to look at their budgets again, particularly the Land Ambulance and Housing budgets. Debbie Ewald stated that a 0% increase is unrealistic; the issue is with the Province.

Dennis Brown suggested that the staff aim for a decrease of 1% by taking some money from reserves; cut where possible and/or use surplus. The staff was directed to do so by the next meeting.

14. Adjournment

Resolution #10/10 MOVED BY R. Donaldson and SECONDED BY G. Gamsby:

RESOLVED THAT the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* meeting be adjourned.

Carried.

CHAIR

SECRETARY-TREASURER

DATE APPROVED