

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER 1999

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

9:00 A.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Munter

Members: D. Beamish, W. Byrne, L. Davis, C. Doucet, D. Holmes, H. Kreling,
A. Loney, M. McGoldrick-Larsen

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the meeting of
2 December 1999.**

CARRIED

REGULAR ITEMS

1. UPDATE ON LAND AMBULANCE SERVICES
- Medical Officer of Health verbal report

The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. R. Cushman, began by saying staff are dealing with many unknowns regarding ambulance service and the uncertainty around dispatch is compromising the ability to set up a service in Ottawa-Carleton. Dr. Cushman circulated a graph from the Ministry of Health entitled "Comparative Response Times in Ontario Cities @ 90th Percentile". The graph illustrates that Ottawa-Carleton figures in last place when compared to the "Gold Standard" of 8:59 minutes, 90% of the time and ratings get progressively worse throughout the area municipalities that compose the RMOC.

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- Notes: 1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by Committee.
2. Items requiring Council approval will be presented on 22 December 1999 in Community Services Report No. 39.

Dr. Cushman said Ministry figures do not include data from the City of Toronto and this probably results in there being three standards in Ontario: Toronto, Ontario excluding Ottawa-Carleton and Ottawa-Carleton. He added there are also concerns about how quickly new and superior technology will be made available in Ottawa-Carleton. He indicated staff will report back at the earliest opportunity in January because hard decisions will need to be made as to how the RMOC will pursue its goal of providing a quality ambulance service to its residents.

Councillor A. Loney asked whether Dr. Cushman could be more specific about the timeframe for a decision on dispatch. He replied that, while the Land Ambulance Implementation Committee endorses the “one solution doesn’t fit all” theory, it is dealing with the issue throughout Ontario all at the same time. The consequence is that municipalities such as Ottawa-Carleton and Niagara, who have come rapidly to the forefront, are being grouped with other municipalities. Dr. Cushman posited it will be the end of winter before the issue is resolved. He added that some municipalities want dispatch whereas some of the smaller ones may not want it, but they all have to go through the machinations throughout Ontario before arriving at a solution. Responding to a further question from Councillor Loney, Dr. Cushman indicated the Region will need to make decisions by January in order to get into the real process.

Councillor D. Holmes asked whether there has been any discussion about separating smaller centres from the larger ones for dispatch. The Director, Land Ambulance Service, Joanne Yelle-Weatherall, informed the Committee that a sub-committee of the Land Ambulance Steering Committee has convinced the Province that one size doesn’t fit all, and is working on a number of options. The sub-committee’s work will end in January and will be presented to the Land Ambulance Implementation Steering Committee, a joint committee of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Ministry of Health. The Ministry has indicated it will make a decision only after a recommendation from this joint committee. Councillor Holmes said she thought AMO, representing “small town Ontario”, would weigh-in on the side of smaller municipalities. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall expressed the belief AMO is convinced that “one size doesn’t fit all” and has committed itself to putting forward a number of options. She added that, while staff are confident in the outcome, there are a number of issues to be considered, for example, under what conditions will dispatch be handed down, and what will be the terms or conditions of the Province’s pledge to continue funding 100% of dispatch.

Councillor L. Davis asked whether staff had to resort to Access to Information legislation to get the information it needs. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall replied that every possible avenue is explored. She added that the fact that more and more Upper Tier Municipalities (UTMs) are making decisions puts more pressure on the Ministry, and this also helps municipalities get the information they need. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall pointed out there is now a provincial Ambulance Directors’ Committee and all its members received the same Comparative Response Times data the Region received.

Councillor Davis wanted to know whether there had been indications in the different communities that response times were so poor. Joanne Yelle-Weatherall indicated there

was no public reporting in the past: people based their assessment of the care they received on the treatment they got from Paramedics. She added that any future service will be accountable and will be based on results, not on activities. Councillor Davis commended staff for the excellent work that they are doing on this issue.

The Committee Chair, A. Munter, asked whether a report would be presented to the Committee on 20 January 2000, making recommendations to Council on the next steps. Dr. Cushman reiterated that time is running out and the intent is to bring forward a report upon which decisions will have to be made. Chair Munter said he wanted the report out to the community well in advance of the meeting, to ensure it is aware of the issues and can provide its input.

Chair Munter spoke about a strike vote being taken by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) locals beyond the City of Ottawa. He said OPSEU is looking for a commitment that paramedics working in this community will continue to work in this community, along with other issues. He asked if staff knew whether this is operating province-wide. Dr. Cushman replied there are two issues: job security and methods of operation. He noted that he was not in a position to comment on the latter. With regard to the former, he said it is thought this area is under-served, and the demand for service will be greater than the supply, thereby contributing to job security through labour market forces. Chair Munter expressed the belief that Council should be able to make this commitment to OPSEU and he asked that staff examine whether there would be an impact from a province-wide strike on any such commitment.

That the Committee receive the update for information.

RECEIVED

2. **2000 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW**

LAND AMBULANCE SERVICES BUDGET

(p. 49, Draft Operating Estimates, p. 119 Draft Capital Estimates)

Ms. Joanne Yelle-Weatherall, Director, Land Ambulance Service, presented the draft estimates. She began by noting that the Operating budget increase of 11% is due to increased estimates from the Province, and the Capital budget is a one-year, transition budget. She mentioned that Upper Tier Municipalities (UTMs) are facing uncertainty about the definition of the "approved costs" which are to be 50/50 cost-shared with the Province. The Minister of Health has said this will soon be clarified. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall said that, should the Ministry base the 50/50 funding on the level of service received in 1996, the Region will pay 75 or 80% of the costs to get close to the gold standard of 8:59 minute response time.

Ms. Yelle-Weatherall presented the Capital budget, which calls for expenditures in the areas of identification (logos), maintenance investment, ambulance purchases. On the latter, Ms. Yelle-Weatherall advised an immediate decision will be required, since staff

have been informed it will take a year to have the vehicles built and delivered. Other requirements include new regional radios, defibrillators, medical equipment for new and existing vehicles. The new system will need a Global Positioning System (GPS) that will be fully integrated with the existing regional Geographic Information System (GIS) and with the new Computer-Aided Dispatch System. In addition, on-board data collection systems are strongly recommended by industry experts and have been endorsed by regional Corporate Fleet Services. Advanced medical priority dispatch is an absolute necessity and will be essential to improve response times in Ottawa-Carleton. Funding is also recommended for consultants and for communications purposes.

Ms. Yelle-Weatherall informed the Committee the Ministry has said it will not fund any transition costs. Staff have been told to take the ambulance system as it is, since there is nothing wrong with it. She posited the Region will have to invest \$3.5 million in the system before taking it over. Council should recommend to the Province that, as a minimum, it should fund 100% of the costs to bring the Region in line with other urban centres in the Province, 100% of the transition costs and 100% of the cost of other items that must be brought up to standard before downloading the system. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall said staff's best estimate is that the Province will approve \$1.16 million, leaving a net requirement for the Region of \$2.4 million.

Councillor W. Byrne pointed out that it is crucial for the Region to have control of dispatch because it wants to improve response times. She asked how much time remains for the Ministry to respond positively to the Region's request. Joanne Yelle-Weatherall replied that, if the RMOC is to meet the new legislated deadline of September 3rd, it needs to put out the Request for Proposals by February 2000.

Replying to further questions from Councillor Byrne, Ms. Yelle-Weatherall indicated that response times have worsened steadily since 1996: this is because of higher call volume and no additional resources. The Councillor wanted to know the maximum time that someone with cardiac arrest can wait for a response. Dr. Cushman replied that, in this community, someone with cardiac arrest has a one in twenty-five chance of survival, compared with a one in four chance in Seattle, Washington, and the rate of survival is even higher in Toronto

Replying to a question from Councillor A. Loney, the Finance Commissioner, J. LeBelle indicated the provincial subsidy is identified as Revenue in the amount of \$1.16 million. Councillor Loney asked why staff are assuming the Province will not provide 50% of the real costs of transition. Ms. Yelle-Weatherall reiterated the Province's contention that the ambulance service is in good shape and that the Region should take it as is. In addition, the Province has said on numerous occasions that it would not fund transition costs.

Councillor Loney suggested staff request the Province pay half of fixed assets totalling \$3.3 million. This should be done to ensure the Region doesn't acquiesce to the Province too quickly, that it make its argument for 50% funding and include it in the books. Should the Province not agree to pay the full amount, the Region will have to cover it but not

putting it in the books takes the pressure off the system for the full 50%. Councillor Loney proposed a Motion to this effect.

Responding to a query from Chair Munter, Mr. LeBelle confirmed that, under the new legislation, infrastructure already purchased or constructed could be charged to the Health Regional Development Charges (RDC), once these are approved. Chair Munter posited that approving these by mid July 2000 would be a way to fund the purchase of new ambulances.

The Committee heard from Mr. Nicholas Patterson, a citizen of Ottawa-Carleton. He advanced the view that ambulance service in Ontario started deteriorating when it was taken over by the government, resulting in its current status as the worst inefficient business in North America. While this situation is sometimes attributed to dispatch, or to other factors, the specific, identifying causes relate to government take-over. Mr. Patterson stressed the need for the tendering process to be done in a competent manner. He posited that the planning process underway is extremely incompetent, inequitable and “dumb”, one where the government competes with the private sector and it is the government that judges the result. Mr. Patterson called for common sense to be applied to the situation.

The Committee then considered the following Motions:

Moved by A. Loney

That the Land Ambulance Transition budget (Project 900453, pg. 119) be amended by increasing the Revenue line from \$1,166,000 to \$1,784,000.

CARRIED as amended
(D. Beamish dissented)

That the Land Ambulance Operating budget (p. 49 2000 Draft Operating Estimates) and the Capital budget (p. 119, 2000 Draft Capital Estimates and 10-Year Capital Forecast) be approved, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended

HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUDGET
(pp. 3 to 51, 2000 Draft Operating Estimates)

3. **MANDATORY PROGRAM PRIORITIES FOR YEAR 2000 BUDGET**

- Medical Officer of Health report dated 14 Dec 99
- *(Reference Item 1, Agenda B, 16 December 99)*

The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. R. Cushman, presented the report. It calls for the addition of 10 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions and for \$880,000 to be allocated from within the Community Services envelope to address pressing needs and obvious gaps in public health mandatory guidelines in the areas of Access and Health Priorities.

Dr. Cushman drew Committee's attention to Annex A of the report, which provides details on the requirement for additional street outreach, social crisis intervention, dental health promotion and tuberculosis outreach to address gaps in Access. He spoke about Health Priorities, noting this category focuses on school aged and youth populations and addresses specific mandatory program gaps in sexual health, tobacco control and injury prevention. Dr. Cushman outlined the program requirements. He concluded his presentation by reiterating that the recommendations provide a direct service response to pressing community health needs. In addition, the Region will be able to begin addressing a number of areas where it is not fulfilling its mandate under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

Chair Munter asked whether the funds requested, \$880,000, represent an addition to the numbers already in the draft estimates and whether the Social Services Department caseload decline will cover this amount. Both Dr. Cushman and the Social Services Commissioner, D. Stewart, replied in the affirmative.

Councillor W. Byrne wanted to know whether this increase will help the Health Department meet its mandatory requirements. Dr. Cushman responded by saying it represents a good first step. He added that the Department is looking for 11 F.T.E.s and the report recommends the establishment of 10 positions.

Wendy Alexander, Board Member, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

Ms. Alexander presented statistics about teen deaths related to drinking and driving. She said MADD believes that youth are the key to reducing the amount of death and injury caused by drunk drivers. She spoke about being encouraged by the growth of Ontario Students Against Drunk Driving (OSADD). She noted MADD is a partner with the Health Department in building more OSADD groups. Recently MADD received a \$20,000 Trillium Grant to assist the Health Department in developing a Smart Grad Guide for high school students. She urged the Committee to continue the collaborative support for local initiatives and she expressed her gratitude to regional staff for the work they do.

Nancy Langdon, representing Sheila Mongeon, Trauma Nurse,
Coordinator of PARRTY Program, Ottawa Hospital, General Campus

Ms. Langdon said the goal of the PARRTY Program is to Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth and reduce preventable injury. This is done by:

- providing teens with positive alternatives and strategies that encourage smart choices;
- empowering them to recognize and manage risk;
- increasing their awareness of personal responsibility for their choices;
- increasing their knowledge of the impact that serious injury has on quality of life.

Since it began in 1993, more than 5,500 students from 50 schools have attended the program, and more than 9,000 have benefited from outreach. Many of the outreach initiatives have been with community partners such as the Health Department. Working with partners allows the PARRTY Program to reach a wider audience. It also ensures a consistent message is sent to the youth population. The local snapshot of trauma patients illustrates there is still much work to do around the issue of alcohol use and road safety. The PARRTY program would benefit by the Health Department continuing with and increasing its activities through social marketing campaigns on this issue.

Ms. Tony Sirko, Manager, Grace Parish Nursing Program. Ms. Sirko described the Parish Nursing Program, putting forward the view that placing a Parish Nurse in a faith community can create dynamic health promotion and disease prevention programming. A review of nursing summaries for September and October indicates parish nurses spend many of their hours on individual contacts with illness management and psycho-social concerns. The Community Health Nurses (CHN) at the regional Seniors and Adult programs assist with health and social crisis cases; they have linked parish nurses to current research, coached and mentored staff and directed the nurses to senior support services. In turn, parish nurses have facilitated the introduction of CHN to local pastoral care teams to develop supportive environments for the elderly at risk. Their professional expertise, their passion and their time are needed and vulnerable community members in high-risk situations also need their assistance.

Jan Loveless, Building Superintendent.

Ms. Loveless described a personal experience with a tenant in a crisis situation who benefited from the assistance of a Health Department team consisting of regional Health Inspector and a Public Health Nurse.

Cynthia Callard, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada

Ms. Callard spoke in support of increased funding for tobacco control programs, offering statistics about the numbers of teenagers who smoke, having become addicted in childhood. She said that 2 million crimes are committed through cigarette sales, since this is the number of packages sold to children. For every 50,000 offence, only one charge is laid. Children in Ottawa-Carleton spend over \$7 million per year on cigarettes: Three

point five (\$3.5) million of this is returned to the federal and provincial governments in the form of taxes, while only \$88,000 is currently spent to protect children from tobacco. Another important aspect is retailer education. Retailers are historically resistant to enforcement and legislation; having someone talk to them on a frequent basis is an effective way of reducing access to, and demand for cigarettes from youth.

Lewis Levy, a volunteer from the Ottawa-Carleton Council on Smoking and Health

Mr. Levy expressed his concern about youth smoking, and he said society should do everything it can to prevent this from happening. Legislation such as the *Ontario Tobacco Control Act* is critical to ensure kids can't get cigarettes in the first place. Mr. Levy said that having only one Tobacco Enforcement Officer in the Region is totally inadequate. This work requires a presence in the community so that tobacco retailers know selling tobacco to kids is too risky. The request for one additional person is modest, and deserves the Committee's approval. More resources are needed for enforcement.

Superintendent Judith Hoy, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Superintendent Hoy spoke in support of the Dental Health Promotion program and the Tuberculosis Testing program. She said too many children are coming into schools with incredibly bad teeth and this is both a health and social issue for them. The hope is that through the school family welcome centres, partnerships can be created with families and younger siblings. Ms. Hoy called the increase in TB testing excellent. She made reference to the parenting and pre-parenting programs, saying many children are having children, and schools deal with the resulting poverty issues every day. She commented there must be parent and pre-parent training in the high schools and she asked that the Committee support this program.

Wendy Muckle, Sandy Hill Community Centre, spoke in support of enhancing the budget for TB Outreach. She noted that while rates are increasing, the Region has one of the best surveillance and treatment programs in the country. She said the Health Department has worked pro-actively with the community to develop this approach, there are successful models that work, care is delivered to clients in complex situations with good outcomes. Ms. Muckle recalled that community health centres received funding from the Province in 1999 for health care for the homeless. A portion of that funding was allocated to tuberculosis outreach, a priority for the homeless community. The intent was to create a full-time position cost-shared 50/50 between the health centres and the Department, but this did not come to fruition because of budget constraints. Ms. Muckle expressed the hope that the requested increase will mean an enhancement to the successful models already in place.

Denise Valley, Director of Ottawa Services, Youth Services Bureau

Ms. Valley manages the Downtown Services on Besserer Street, a program for street-involved youth from 12 to 20, with an average age of 17. Up to 300 young people visit on a monthly basis, they are vulnerable to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD); young women are at increased risk of becoming pregnant. More than 15 community partners provide services to youth. The Sexual Outreach Team operates a clinic twice weekly for a total of 10 hours and street outreach is also provided in the downtown core. From January 99 to the end of October, 406 young people received the following services:

- 138 STD tests;
- 171 counselling and support sessions;
- 48 hepatitis vaccinations;
- 15 pregnancy tests;
- 8 emergency first aid services;
- 77 teaching sessions.

Ms. Valley said street outreach has had an impact. Of the 138 youth who returned to get their STD test results, 6% tested positive for chlamydia and gonorrhoea: two years ago the report back was 10 to 14% testing positive. Ms. Valley stated that, clearly, the service is making a difference. She challenged the Committee to consider what could be done with additional outreach workers.

Subsequent to the presentations the following Motion was considered:

Moved by C. Doucet

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve that \$880,000 be allocated from the Community Services envelope to address pressing gaps in Public Health Mandatory Programs.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That the Community Services Committee approve the 2000 Draft Operating Estimates for the Health Department, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended

4. **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT BUDGET**
(pp. 89 to 109, 2000 Draft Operating Estimates)

The Social Services Commissioner, D. Stewart, presented a document entitled “Now is the Time to Invest.” He said the 2000 budget is one that comes infrequently, as the Region’s economy is strong and is poised to become one of the strongest economies in the country. Mr. Stewart pointed out that 800 clients per month leave social assistance to work, and there is documented evidence that 44% of all case closures are because of employment. The majority of these clients are earning \$12 dollars an hour or less; 21% are actually earning less than \$8 dollars an hour. They may be independent of the social service system, but they remain challenged financially even though they are working. Mr. Stewart said that, while economic growth is strong, there is still a sustained and unacceptable level of poverty in the community, as witnessed daily by the Department and its partner agencies.

Mr. Stewart continued by saying there has been steady caseload decline since 1995, with occasional “bumps” in the decline. The most recent variance in late 1998 and early 1999 reflects the transfer of almost 4000 sole support parents from the Province to the Region. Once this group was integrated, the caseload began to decline, up to and including November 1999. The Department’s belief is that the caseload will continue to decline in the year 2000. Based on this, a monthly average caseload of 26,000 was projected, however that number can be reduced to 24,600, potentially freeing up an additional \$2.1million of anticipated expenditures. There has also been a significant decline in the number of applications per month in last few months.

Mr. Stewart spoke about a number of upward pressures which are accounted for in the Draft Estimates and described on p. 95 of the 2000 Draft Operating Estimates. Some of these include:

- the reallocation of the National Child Benefit Supplement (\$1.4 million);
- an adjustment in Essential Health and Social Supports (\$341,000)
- a contribution of \$1 million for the Task Force on Poverty.

On the last item, Mr. Stewart said the proposed measures will address the following priority areas:

- community-based position for public participation co-ordination;
- Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS), transportation assistance and dissemination of information to help with the transition to work and sustaining employment;
- printing and distribution of literature on how to choose informal child care.

Commissioner Stewart spoke about Ontario Works (O.W.) Child Care, noting that an incredibly high number of parents with young children need child care to participate in O.W. This leaves the Department in the position of having more children in the program than it can sustain.

The Province has been informed it will need to increase the O.W. child care budget or the Region will have to refuse entry into the program of parents with young children, ask them to wait or perhaps to leave the program. Mr. Stewart said staff want to sustain this momentum.

Speaking to Community Relations and Employment Development, Commissioner Stewart said \$1 million is earmarked to increase grants to agencies; specific allocations are described in Item 3 of Agenda B. The Department has received accumulated budget increase requests totalling \$1.54 million, a 22% overall increase; the recommended funding represents 15.4%. Mr. Stewart recalled that Council already approved an additional \$100,000 for Community Houses, bringing the total envelope requirement to \$1,100,000. With regard to regionally-funded provincial programs, Mr. Stewart highlighted the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan as requiring \$1.2 million, in anticipation of costs increasing in the coming year. There have also been \$489,000 worth of reductions in administrative overheads, leaving a potential \$2.2 million in unallocated net savings from social assistance.

Speaking to the Child Care budget, Mr. Stewart said it represents over \$2 million net. He indicated funds have been set aside should the Committee want to increase per diem rates for a wage increase for Purchase of Service agencies. The Department will have to find an additional \$923,000 in lost subsidy to maintain the current level of subsidized spaces; should these funds not be found, the number of subsidized spaces would have to be reduced by 175 spaces immediately.

Mr. Stewart spoke about upward pressures related to land ambulance services and Social Housing and the loss of provincial subsidy, noting these have been accommodated from the \$2.2 million unallocated net savings. The result is that \$70,000 remains unallocated from the Draft Estimates. An additional \$2.16 million from the projected caseload decrease is also available and some of the following items could be funded from this source:

- an additional \$580,000 for child care agency rates, to bring salary rates to the same level as regional child care workers;
- pressures in the Domiciliary Hostel Program (as described in Item 2 of Agenda B).

Speaking to this item, and referring Committee to Item 2 of Agenda B, Mr. Stewart pointed out that program providers have not had a per diem increase in seven years. Several of the facilities are experiencing financial difficulty and one large facility is in receivership. Commissioner Stewart spoke about the 800 residents of Domiciliary Hostels the Department subsidizes, noting they are predominantly individuals with histories of psychiatric illness. He called the program the foundation of housing for the psychiatrically ill in the community. As part of its review of supportive housing, the Province has launched yet another review of Domiciliary Hostels, led by the Ministry of Health, but there is no indication of when recommendations are expected.

Mr. Stewart made reference to the need for a strong lobby to the Province for immediate action, noting that many other municipalities have similar concerns, and are expected to lend their support.

The Committee deferred consideration of the Social Services Department budget to the afternoon session.

5. **SOCIAL HOUSING BUDGET**
(p. 113, 2000 Draft Operating Estimates)

The Special Advisor on Social Housing, Joyce Potter, began by saying that, in 1999, the Social Housing subsidy was \$60.2 million. Current figures from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicate this amount has increased to \$60.6 million. While this represents a potential increase in the 1999 budget, there are offsetting factors, for example, rent supplements in federal co-operatives are no longer paid by the Region and mortgage rates have decreased. Ms. Potter expressed the belief this will contribute to the 1999 figures being close to the estimates.

Ms. Potter reminded the Committee that the new Federal/Provincial agreement on social housing was signed in November 1999. Some elements of program reform will be carried out in 2000, including a due diligence review of federal stock, to ensure that the Region is getting is in good physical and financial situation. The same review will be done later in the year for provincial stock. Ms. Potter spoke about consulting work being done for the Province on a provincial migration strategy and local implementation framework. Staff anticipate this will be ready by April to allow legislation to be tabled in the Spring and approved by the Fall. Ms. Potter said the Region's organizational structure will need to be put in place in the latter part of 2000 in order to take on administration by the beginning of 2001.

Ms. Potter spoke about a review of alternate service delivery arrangements for property management with Ottawa-Carleton Housing, expected to take place by February 2000. She indicated this will have an impact on how the Region decides to handle housing generally. It is expected that municipal restructuring will also have an impact since nine of the eleven area municipalities have non-profit housing units in place.

Ms. Potter said staff have requested an increase in the operational budget, primarily to start putting in place the organisational structure required to take on administration of the program. This amount, \$745,000, represents 1% of the total budget, for an overall cost increase of .06% on the budget page.

ADDITIONAL ITEM

6. FUNDING FOR HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVES TEAM

- Medical Officer of Health, Social Services Commissioner and Special Advisor on Social Housing report dated 16 Dec 99

(Reference Additional Item 5, Agenda B, 16 Dec 99 - Tabled)

Ms. Potter provided a brief history of events leading to the Community Action Plan to end Homelessness. She noted that the Region has been designated as the Consolidated Service System Manager (CSSM) for homelessness and plays a role in co-ordinating and managing all homelessness-related services within Ottawa-Carleton. She spoke about the team that was assembled, as part of the Community Action Plan, to work on the implementation of initiatives, noting these are five persons borrowed from regional departments and other areas. While this arrangement will end in February 2000, the Region will still have ongoing responsibility for implementing the many initiatives dealing with homelessness. The Team's the key functions are described in the supplementary report circulated to Committee.

Ms. Potter continued by saying the Allocations Group is reviewing the proposals submitted by the community. During this review, it has become clear that the Region will need to assist with the financial component, to help the groups, to co-ordinate and ensure there is no duplication in the services being provided, to evaluate how the projects are going. In anticipation of the approval of 8 to 10 new housing projects, there will need to be a significant degree of oversight, the careful allocation of funding and monitoring of projects. As there are health-related projects in the Action Plan, staff want to ensure good outreach to the community, as well as good advocacy. In recognition of these activities as ongoing operational requirements, staff feel it is important to establish ongoing funding at this time and this is the rationale for the requested \$300,000.

Councillor H. Kreling commented on the scarcity of information concerning requests for funding that go from almost zero to the current amounts. In response to this comment, Ms. Potter described the various funding arrangements related to the Community Action Plan to End Homelessness. Chair Munter added that the requested additional funding deals with issues beyond the \$1.7 million allocated for homelessness initiatives. The Region must not only manage the projects but also undertake the work described by Ms. Potter in her presentation: the \$300,000 requested is for the management of the entire homelessness system.

Councillor D. Holmes asked whether the narrative on the second page of the report is broken down by position or is simply a gathering of the functions. Ms. Potter replied that current Team members have backgrounds in housing, in social services, in health, and it is expected that similar skills sets would be required.

Councillor Holmes wondered why seconded staff could not just be kept on. Commissioner D. Stewart explained that a portion of the Social Services Department's staff person's time was spent managing shelters for homeless families. He would have to be replaced in that capacity if he was kept on the Team and the department would need to evaluate the implications of this change.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the allocation of \$300,000 from the Community Services envelope to provide ongoing funding for the continued operation of the Homelessness Initiatives Team.

CARRIED

A. Loney dissented

That the 2000 Draft Operating Estimates for the Social Housing Budget be approved, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended

7. **HOMES FOR THE AGED**
(pp. 57 to 85, Draft Operating Estimates)

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the Homes for the Aged Operating and Capital budgets for the year 2000.

CARRIED

At this juncture, representatives from approximately 30 community agencies made presentations to the Committee. A summary of the presentations appears at Appendix 1.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Councillor L. Davis presented a Motion calling for \$50,000 in funding to be allocated to the Forward Avenue Family Shelter, to provide programming for children living in that facility. She described the situation in the shelter, a converted school which houses families with many children, saying it came to her attention as a neighbourhood issue. Prior to the involvement of the community, a number of deficiencies were identified and corrected, including the installation of air conditioning. The Councillor said another deficiency is the lack of programming for the children residing in the shelter. Conditions of overcrowding exist; programming, assistance and additional staff are required to deal with some of the issues resulting from that overcrowding. Councillor Davis asked whether the Commissioner would comment on the situation.

Mr. Stewart confirmed there is a large number of children of all ages and families remain in the shelter for longer periods of time because of the lack of affordable housing. There is tension in the facility, and additional resources are required to ensure a stable environment and services for families with children. Councillor Davis assured the Committee she is working with her community to find new ways to deal with problems. Commissioner Stewart indicated, in response to a question from Chair Munter, that the funds could be found within the hostel "envelope".

Moved by L. Davis

That the resources in the amount of \$50, 000 be allocated to Forward Family Shelter for the purpose of providing programming support surrounding children housed in this facility. That this amount be taken from within the Social Assistance, Hostels and Residential Care envelope.

CARRIED, as amended

The Committee next considered the proposed increase to Community Relations and Employment Development (Community Funding Recommendations: Item 3, Agenda B). Chair Munter pointed out that the actual amount for consideration is \$1.1 million, given the recent Council approval of an additional \$100,000 for Community Houses.

Councillor W. Byrne proposed that \$45,000 be allocated to the Aphasia Centre to provide base funding. She pointed out that its funding from other sources has been cut, and that they provide an unique service to persons who have suffered head injuries or strokes. Some of the services provided include counselling and personal support programs, workshops and seminars, and these are provided at three locations in Ottawa-Carleton. The Aphasia Centre also interacts with Community Health and Resource Centres. Councillor Byrne said the services offered do not represent a duplication. The agency has various sources of revenue, including a fee-for-service on a sliding scale, ensuring no one is refused service. As a result, funds coming from this source are not as high as anticipated. Both the Social Services and Health Departments have provided one-time funding in the past, however the agency needs stable, base funding or it will have to close in three months. Councillor Byrne asked for the Committee's support to provide the Aphasia Centre with stability in the coming years.

Councillor Davis asked whether the agency had availed itself of other processes in place to secure funding. Commissioner Stewart indicated it had not applied for a one-time Project Grants for the year 2000, and staff have received no material to substantiate the request made today.

Councillor H. Kreling felt the Motion suggests the Committee can arbitrarily make changes to the Department's caseload reduction estimates and fund every request received. He asked how this request would be handled. Commissioner Stewart replied that the proposed amount is minimal in a budget of \$125 million, however it would establish sustaining funding for an agency outside the normal process.

Councillor A. Loney asked why the agency had not been recommended for funding, given that they twice received one-time grants and likely expected to have an ongoing relationship with the Region. Commissioner Stewart replied that the direction from Committee was to work with the organization to connect it with the Community Resource Centres to minimize the cost of providing service. Efforts at this were not successful. Commissioner Stewart said he agreed with Councillor Byrne that the services are valuable, adding that, in staff's opinion, the agency would more appropriately be funded by the Ministry of Health and the health care system. Since this is not the attitude of the Province, the agency is caught in the middle.

Councillor Loney indicated he could not support sustaining funds, but could agree to funding for one more year, to allow staff to continue working with the agency to bring it into the system. The Councillor said he thought it made sense to use the Community Resource Centres as a conduit, noting this would represent more service for the dollar. Councillor Byrne agreed to accept Councillor Loney's suggestion for one-time funding as a "friendly amendment" to her Motion.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen asked whether the Aphasia Centre has applied for funding from other sources. Gillian Gailey indicated that an application was made to the Trillium Foundation for \$100,000, but since this body does not fund direct professional services, the amount was revised to \$25,000. To date, no reply has been received. Ms. Gailey added that the Coalition of Community Resource Centres offered space and infrastructure, but this is not what the agency needs, since it benefits from low rental costs at the Bronson Centre: what it needs is funding for professional services.

Councillor Holmes spoke in support of a one-time grant, and for putting the agency under the aegis of the Health Department. Funding could come from the Social Services Department and staff could report back after one year as to whether or not the funding should continue.

The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. R. Cushman, when asked to comment, indicated that the Health Department's mandate is primarily prevention. He pointed out that rehabilitation services in the community have been substantially cut back over the past 10 years, and while this is a reasonable request, it does not fall within the mandate of the Health Department.

Chair Munter proposed the Aphasia Centre be part of the Health Department's community grants stream. He spoke about another organization, the Living Room, citing it as an example of a service that didn't fit classical definitions and consequently fit nowhere. He said decisions need to be made on the basis of whether or not a service is valuable, affordable, and whether the consequence of inaction is the loss of a community service.

Moved by W. Byrne

That the Aphasia Centre receive one time funding of \$45, 000 for its continued operation and that the welfare caseload be adjusted to accommodate this grant, and that this grant be placed under the jurisdiction of the Health Department

CARRIED

(L. Davis dissented)

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen put forward a Motion calling for a reduction of \$700,000 in the community funding envelope. She said she is aware of the support needed in the social services sector, however many of the programs presenting today receive 80% cost-sharing from the Province. The Councillor expressed concern about the Region taking on more and more of the provincial mandate and the impact this will have on property tax payers. She said she wholeheartedly agreed pressure must be maintained to get the Province to raise its per diem rates for agencies and programs, something it has not done for several years.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen explained she chose the amount and its source because the proposed funding represents an investment over and above the previous years. She made reference to other pressing needs across the Corporation, and in public transit. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen spoke about the possibility of another recession or of caseload increases, pointing out that the taxpayer would have to cover off the investments anticipated by these estimates. She suggested this was not reasonable and that a more modest approach could be taken to support community agencies.

Councillor Holmes wanted to know how the "freed-up" \$700,000 would be utilized. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen said this could be discussed by Council, since both the Transportation and Transit Services Committee need additional funding. Councillor Holmes said she would not take from people living in poverty to give to the rich, and nothing should be taken from the most fragile to build roads or even for transit purposes.

These costs should be covered by infrastructure funding from the federal and provincial governments, and through a share of the fuel tax for transit purposes. Councillor Holmes said those who support infrastructure for the growth areas should have voted for the Regional Development Charges, but this was not done. She spoke in favour of continued lobbying for funds from the senior levels of government.

Councillor A. Loney expressed the view none of the budgets are sacrosanct, and he felt there could be discussion about the overall budgetary requirements of the community. He

expressed the view that the agencies recommended for funding do good work and will use the funding wisely. Councillor Loney said that, in his capacity as Chair of the Transit Commission, he is painfully aware of the requirements there. The community agencies serve many people through volunteers, through association with the churches and the Province should recognize, through cost-sharing, the work the agencies perform. Councillor Loney said the overall thrust of putting money into the agencies is fundamentally a sound decision and this should be recommended to Council.

Councillor H. Kreling spoke in support of the funding recommendations, adding that the Region may not be able to support agencies in this manner in the future. He asked that staff provide the Committee with a brief information report on funding comparisons during the last five years, noting such a report would be both interesting and helpful.

Councillor Byrne could not support the Motion, expressing the view it is appropriate that the requests be funded from the area where the savings were realized, that is, caseload reduction. She posited the envelope needs more money than it is being given, as the Region is still not meeting its mandated requirements. She expressed the view it is irresponsible to think savings can be shifted to another envelope when they are desperately needed where they were generated.

The Committee Chair, A. Munter, said the graph presented by Jewish Family Services clearly illustrates that decreased regional funding has contributed to decreased per client funding for the agencies that try to assist people. Chair Munter said he was not prepared, after years of cutting or flat-lining, to do more of the same in this budget.

Councillor C. Doucet pointed out the Region gave up \$220 million in development charges because it was thought the development industry would be hurt by taxing it according to its impact on the Region. In fact, the housing market is over-heated and developers can't build houses quickly enough. The Councillor said he would not agree to take money from what is essentially a regional download to agencies, much the same as the provincial download to municipalities. He decried the fact it is so difficult to apply for assistance that many people no longer try, and they end up looking for help from the agencies.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That the Community Funding estimates be reduced from \$1.1 million to a total of \$450,000 for the year 2000 for Day Programs, Food Programs, Community Health and Resource Centres, Community Houses, counselling and personal support agencies, and that the Social Services Department allocate these dollars amongst the agencies.

LOST
(M. McGoldrick-Larsen
in favour)

Moved by D. Holmes

That should the caseload reductions during the year 2000 be greater than predicted in the budget, a report be brought to the Community Services Committee regarding a 20% increase for Day Programs (rather than the 11% recommended).

CARRIED as amended
(H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-
Larsen dissented)

Moved by D. Holmes

That Centre 454's application for capital funding for their new location be referred to staff for a report back to Committee.

CARRIED, as amended

Moved by D. Holmes

That the African Heritage Centre's application be referred to staff for a report in the new year

CARRIED, as amended

Moved by W. Byrne

That the Year 2000 Community Funding Recommendations (Item 3, Agenda B) be approved, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended
(M. McGoldrick-Larsen
dissented)

Moved by C. Doucet

That Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the priorities for the 2000 budget outlined in the Task Force on Poverty report.

CARRIED

On the regionally-funded provincial programs, Councillor Loney asked that staff provide background information on the substantial percentage increase in this cost centre due to the escalating price of drugs. Commissioner Stewart indicated that staff from the Ministry of Community and Social Services have said these costs are uncontrollable for them as well, and that the Department should expect a further increase in 2000. The regionally-funded provincial programs cost centre was approved.

Responding to a question from Councillor Doucet, Commissioner Stewart indicated the declining caseload and the fact that administrative costs are shared with the Province has contributed to a reduction of 28 positions, half of which are currently vacant. He added that the corporate workforce adjustment policy is in place and will kick-in for any person requiring it. The administrative reductions were approved.

Chair Munter presented a Motion from Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen calling for approval of the recommendations related to Domiciliary Hostels (Item 2, Agenda B). Councillor Loney stressed the importance of living up to the intent of the recommendation, that is, to make the provincial Minister and his colleagues aware of what they are doing to the clients of these institutions, who won't have a home and will be on the street. Councillor Loney said he had contemplated making the regional funding conditional upon provincial funding, to keep the pressure on, but funding must be provided immediately to address a desperate situation. Chair Munter said he has spoken to Minister Baird who was quick to point out that the caseload decline could be used in this instance. Chair Munter felt a co-ordinated effort is needed at the political level, the staff level and the program providers to push this through. Councillor Loney proposed that Chair Munter and Vice-Chair Byrne co-ordinate the approach and involve other Committee members as needed.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That Community Services Committee recommend Council approve an increase in the per diem rate from \$34.00 to \$44.50 for the domiciliary hostel program effective January 1 2000. That the Region's 20% share (\$2.00) be implemented effective January 1 2000 and that Council request that the Province provides its 80% share retroactive to January 1, 2000. The total cost of this increase would be approximately \$ 2,750,000 (provincial cost: \$ 2,200,00 and regional cost \$ 550,000).

CARRIED

Moved by A. Loney

That the 2000 Draft Operating Estimates for the Social Services Department be approved, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended

8. **CHILD CARE OPERATING BUDGET**
(p. 119, 2000 Draft Operating Estimates)

Councillor Loney asked that staff provide Council with information on the current rate of subsidy for child care.

Moved by W. Byrne

That the 2000 Child Care Budget draft estimates be increased by \$580,000 in order to provide the same increase in compensation received by regional child care staff in the year 2000 to Purchase of Service Child Care programs. This amount is to be funded from within the existing Community Services envelope as recommended by staff.

CARRIED as amended

Moved by D. Holmes

That the unallocated 1999 National Child Benefit Fund (approximately \$1.4 million) be directed to the Child Care Capital Fund

CARRIED, as amended

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen put forward the view it is logical to place these funds into Child Care Capital, in light of the numerous requests for capital funding anticipated in the new year. Replying to comments from Councillor Loney about the Child Care Contingency Fund, Commissioner Stewart indicated to Committee that a balance of \$2.4 million remains in that envelope. The Committee may also want to use some of those dollars to meet capital costs requirements in the coming year.

Moved by H. Kreling

That the Community Services Committee approve the 2000 Child Care Operating Estimates, as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED, as amended

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS
MADE TO THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 1999
2000 COMMITTEE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Social Services Budget

Domiciliary Hostels (Reference Item 2, Agenda B)

Jean-Guy Nadeau, President, Ottawa/Eastern Ontario Residential Care Association, introduced the Vice President, Yuri Bushkov, and thanked the Committee for hearing hostel operators' concerns. Mr. Nadeau described the clientele as mostly mentally-challenged people, who cannot live in their own apartment or in emergency shelters and who are referred to domiciliary hostels by hospitals, the community or come from the street. Services provided under the Purchase of Service agreement with the Social Services Department include:

- 24 hour care, 3 meals a day, snacks in-between meals, supervision of all medications;
- a one-to-five staffing ratio, a minimum of 10½ staff hours per resident weekly;
- housekeeping, laundry, recreation, counselling and advocacy in social or legal matters;
- budget management and development of skills towards independent living;
- supervision by social workers, the health care unit and the fire department.

Mr. Nadeau called domiciliary hostels the most competent and cost-effective providers in delivering the needed care to these clients. He pointed out that per diem rates have not been revised since 1993 and remain at \$34.50 per day. In order to continue providing the same services, \$44.50 per day would be required (this translates into \$1.85 per hour).

Dr. Michael Birmingham, Executive Director, Carlington Community Health Centre, spoke in support of increased funding to domiciliary hostels. He expressed concern about any cuts to housing at this time and the effect these would have on residents of the existing facilities, saying cuts would likely move many of them back onto the street. Dr. Birmingham indicated that the Carlington centre has almost one-quarter of the domiciliary housing beds in the Region. The centre's professionals are actively involved in providing services to this clientele.

Dr. Birmingham posited there may need to be changes to domiciliary hostels in the future, and he expressed interest in the Carlington centre being involved in those discussions.

Tom Howcroft, representing the Ontario Residential Care Association, said that providers have been trying to operate the facilities with 10-year-old rates. Some homes have gone into receivership and others are having great difficulty making ends meet. Domiciliary hostel operators want to continue partnering with the Region to lobby the provincial government to provide its share of the funds, or to let operators know whether or not Ontario has the political will to keep the facilities going. Mr. Howcroft spoke about the fact there has been correspondence with the Ministry of Community and Social Services over the past four governments, the past six Ministers, with virtually no response. The current Minister, John Baird, visited his facility in August 1999 and made a commitment to do something, but, to date, nothing has happened. Mr. Howcroft noted that, while operators and providers and partners in service delivery, they are also business people and must have a business plan. He pointed out that domiciliary hostels keep a lot of people out of long term care beds, and off the street, and operators need to know if the program is going to survive

Councillor A. Loney asked whether the conditions imposed under the Purchase of Service agreement are similar to those in centres across the Province and whether the level of care has remained the same, deteriorated or improved over the last ten years. Mr. Howcroft replied the conditions would be basic in all facilities. As to the level of care, it has changed dramatically going from being primarily focused on the frail elderly with limited income in 1973 to people suffering from mental illness and trying to survive in the community in 1999.

The Committee Chair, A. Munter, thanked the speaker and the other operators who serve the most vulnerable people in the primary housing program for mentally ill persons. He asked what the prognosis was for the other facilities. Mr. Howcroft replied that all domiciliary hostel operators are in trouble at this point. He added that, with this kind of facility, one simply cannot just “pack one’s tent”: these are privately-owned facilities with guarantees, and smaller facilities that don’t have the ability to compete with private retirement facilities have to compensate. Many operators are not accepting new clients.

Community Funding Recommendations (*Reference Item 3, Agenda B*)

Community Resource Centres

Lise Corbeil, Board Member, Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre, speaking on behalf of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, said that the gap dividing the rich from the poor in Ottawa-Carleton is the most important in Canada, according to government statistics. In spite of an economy that is booming, the proportion of low income persons keeps increasing. Twenty-seven (27) percent of children in the Region live in poverty and this represents a 12% increase since 1986. Ms. Corbeil continued by saying that the basic needs of low income persons have reached an unprecedented level and many can barely feed and house their families. After several years

of daily struggle, families experience breakdown giving rise to violence and alcohol or drug abuse. This is complicated by the lack of affordable housing and low vacancy rates for housing. When people have to leave their homes because they can no longer afford to live there, or because they are fleeing domestic violence, the Community Resource Centres attempt to limit the negative emotional and psychological effects. The centres at Pinecrest-Queensway and in Kanata, Goulbourn and West Carleton offer an anti-violence program, and this is just one example of what is offered in the centres.

Phil Brown, said service requests alone increased by more than 20% last year; in Kanata Goulbourn and West Carleton the increase was 25%, in an area known for its economic growth. In Cumberland, crisis cases increased 47% in two years and Gloucester experienced a one year increase of 32%. The Nepean centre reports a 12% increase in information and referral requests in one year, but the complexity of the cases is represented by a 27% increase in short-term counselling sessions. Mr. Brown said many centres are stretched thin. Salaries have been frozen for years, and increasing costs for rent and equipment are often overwhelming, particularly in centres lacking provincial health funding. Many francophone centres are experiencing a huge turnover in critical human service staff, because they cannot offer competitive salaries. He said it makes fiscal sense to support low income persons attempting to escape from welfare dependency and to provide basic support for those who cannot. Council needs to help organizations respond to the needs in under-serviced areas, and to contribute to the development of new programs. In a recent poll, 38% of Ontario residents rated the loss of social programs as the most important issue in the province. Mr. Brown expressed the hope that Council can hear the voices of people in Ottawa-Carleton as they echo this concern.

Counselling and Personal Support Agencies

Natalie Plante, Board Member, Entr'aide budgétaire, introduced H  l  ne M  nard, the agency's Director. Ms. Plante said the agency offers consultation on budgets and provides education on how to prevent indebtedness in individuals. She indicated that, during the past few years, base funding has remained stationary while operating costs have increased. Until April 1995, the agency received indirect funding from the City of Ottawa in the form of accommodation, including heat and light. The facility was sold in 1995 and occupancy costs have risen to \$11,000 in 1999. Ms. Plante expressed the belief the agency cannot continue to absorb escalating costs. She asked that the Committee approve the recommended funding for 2000 so that the agency can concentrate on the delivery of service.

Peter Tilley, Acting Executive Director, Ottawa Food Bank

Mr. Tilley introduced Ms. Sheila Birks, Board Director, the Ottawa Food Bank. He said there are four main reasons why a grant to the Food Bank represents a sound investment on the Region's part:

- the agency currently supplies 76 agencies, including soup kitchens, hamper programs, recovery homes and women's shelters. Ten new applications for assistance are

- currently on file and it is estimated that 80 new agencies will have been added by Spring 2000. Thirty thousand people per month are fed, half of whom are children;
- food donations and distribution are at an all-time high; they increased by 36% last year and 84% over the last two years. The Food Bank had to move to a larger warehouse in 1999 and begin paying rent at a cost of \$70,000 per year. The Region is asked to make at least the same commitment it made in 1999 towards rental costs;
 - all the growth over the last few years has occurred while reducing the staff complement from 9 to 7. The Food Bank could not manage without the help of its many volunteers;
 - supporting the Food Bank is a good investment. On top of the generous supplier donations of food, the agency spent over \$400,000 last year on food purchases, its single largest expenditure by far. This assures the Food Bank considerable buying power, and the benefits of buying from large distributors; there are also savings from picking up locally-grown produce.

Mr. Tilley concluded his presentation by asking that funds not be diverted from any of the Food Bank's sister agencies. He said the agency wants to continue its work and needs the Region's support in order to do so.

Day Programs

Pat Connolly, Director, The Well/La source Day Program

Ms. Connolly pointed out that, although Day Programs provide core services at a rate of 181,000 visits per year, they are finding it more difficult to keep up with increasing demands. On behalf of the Day Programs Committee, she requested a 20% increase in the funding envelope; this amount totals \$191,272 or \$1.06 per visit. Ms. Connolly continued by saying the population served has been directly impacted by social program cuts and the subsequent changes to the social assistance system. For many, basic survival has always been a challenge: now it seems to be an all-consuming effort to meet daily needs. As a result of this, program operators are seeing a high level of despair that sometimes presents itself in the form of aggression or agitation. Staff resources are strained to the limit. Ms. Connolly said some clients, overwhelmed with powerlessness, become violent, they can and have posed a threat to staff. Many programs are inadequately staffed and have not yet reached the minimum core funding identified in day program operators' contract with the Department. Funds were provided in 1998, however the amount was \$23,000 short of what was needed and four day programs are operating below the identified core funding. Ms. Connolly spoke about programs that provide meal components, noting these require a dedicated full-time staff person. Without a dedicated food program coordinator, front-line staff persons or staffing monies for front-line staff positions are diverted to perform this function, reducing direct services to clients and increasing the risk to the safety and security of visitors, staff and volunteers. Ms. Connolly said three meal program co-

ordinator positions, plus benefits, added to the Day Program envelope would cost \$105,000. She concluded by saying that demands have increased dramatically over the last five years, but the same dollar value doesn't seem to stretch as far as it used to. Day Programs are at the breaking point. Day Programs are an essential part of the matrix of services to the homeless in Ottawa-Carleton. It is hoped Council will respond favourably to funding requests so that Day Programs can continue to provide the best to the community of vulnerable people.

Replying to a question of clarification from Chair Munter, Ms. Connolly confirmed her request was for a 20% increase as opposed to the 11% recommended by staff. She pointed out that, for The Well/La source, the recommended increase will only bring the program to the minimum base funding requirement, and this does not represent an increase.

Canon the Reverend Bill Prentice, Director of Program, Anglican Diocese, began by expressing his gratitude for the help that Centre 454, one of the diocesan community ministries, has received over the past years. He said Centre 454 must relocate by April 2000 and has found a new facility it may take possession of by the end of January 2000. This site must be reconfigured to meet the need of the Centre's clients, and the estimated cost of basic renovations is \$160,000. Canon Prentice indicated that an application has been made to the homelessness initiatives funding program to cover the cost of renovations.

Counselling and Personal Support Agencies

Dr. Tim Simboli, Executive Director, Family Service Centre, spoke in support of reinvesting in the social services network. He wanted to reinforce the message that, while the Region is thriving economically, its success is not translating into good, strong mental health at any level of the population. Many people are denied access to the successful economy, and it is difficult to convince people that some individuals are suffering. Dr. Simboli said that, for the past 18 months, family counselling agencies have seen a 50% increase in demand for service and that demand continues to this day.

Franca Dididomete, Executive Director, Catholic Family Services, continued by saying that not only has demand increased but clients are facing more difficult problems. Ms. Dididomete pointed out that, while there are fewer clients on assistance, the stress levels in their families are high. They don't have the resources to retain employment, they need bus passes, medical assistance, and help to defray the cost of medication. She indicated that the increased funding will be used to put more resources into people working in community resource centres where cuts were made in previous years.

Mark Zarecki, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services, began by thanking the Committee for being pro-active and visionary in how it looks at the needs of the community. He pointed out that the agency's numbers have been increasing, not decreasing, and its "caseload" has increased a great deal. Mr. Zarecki presented a graph showing that 49% of clients are welfare recipients, an increase of 24% over the year.

Regional funding has been decreasing, both in proportion to the agency and on a per-capita basis. In 1995, Jewish Family Services received \$126 per client; this amount has dropped to \$62 per client, and does not include how much time is spent with those clients. The drop in funding also creates stresses and strains in terms of facilities and salaries paid to staff. Mr. Zarecki continued by saying there are a number of issues related to the decreasing regional caseload and the increasing agency caseload:

- the clients seen are more psychologically and physically challenged. They require more case management and more support and it is more difficult to reintroduce them into society;
- hospital resources, community supports have been reduced, and all this is being downloaded to agencies that are community-based, highly responsive, less bureaucratic and user-friendly.

Mr. Zarecki said the reality is that people leaving social assistance are probably the ones most able and skilled to do so. Those that continue are the ones that require greater resources and more help to gain self-sufficiency. Mr. Zarecki expressed his appreciation to the Committee for having chosen to increase the social service envelope, as this is what is needed.

Councillor C. Doucet encouraged those speaking today to share their stories with the media, in an effort to counter the perception that all Canadians want are tax cuts, and to tell the real story behind the Province of Ontario's "success" at cutting the numbers of people on assistance.

Anna Bilsky, Board Member, Citizens Advocacy of Ottawa-Carleton began by describing the work done by that agency to help people with disabilities (protégés) by matching them with people from the community (advocate) in a one-on-one relationship. The advocates encourage the abilities of their protégés, help them function as contributing members of society and often assist family members too. The word coined for this is "communitize", which is preferable to "institutionalize". Ms. Bilsky said agency staff consists of two social workers who handle 190 people each. The waiting list for protégés continue to grow, as well as the waiting time for a match, and is now over three years. Citizens' Advocacy would benefit from an outreach worker and from another social worker to find matches and to support new and existing matches. Ms. Bilsky expressed the hope that the funds saved by the Region will be kept in the social service envelope. She indicated that \$33,000 would be needed to bring the agency back to pre-cut levels. The agency continues to seek other sources of funding for the balance of its needs, and also undertakes fundraising projects. Ms. Bilsky concluded by saying that advocates forge strong links in the community and make it a better place for everyone to live.

Donald Shultz, a protégé, said that if it wasn't for his advocate, he would not have made as much progress as he has in the past few years, and he might be in hospital again costing more money for a bed and for medication. Bob Stevenson, an advocate for eight years, said one reasons for supporting the agency's request is that it deals with the major social problem of loneliness. He spoke about one advocate who was given Power of Attorney

by his protégé and this indicates that many have no family and few friends. Advocates deal with many disabilities; some clients have Multiple Sclerosis, some are visually impaired. This is not only a humanitarian thing to do but also a practical thing, because if an advocate can help resolve a small problem, it will mean less costly measures down the road. Ms. Stevenson pointed out that, in the process, the agency changes participants' attitudes and this helps build a better community for all.

Councillor Davis commended Citizens' Advocacy for the work it does, indicating it has her support. Chair Munter congratulated the agency on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Task Force on Poverty (Reference Item 4, Agenda B)

Nicole Danis, a Task Force member representing Lowertown, Vanier and Overbrook said what is before Committee only represents part of the Task Force's work, and the final report will be submitted in January 2000. She spoke about the recommendations relating to Essential Health and Social Services (EHSS), saying barriers are the same whether entering or remaining in the workforce. She highlighted recommendations for EHSS and for Transportation Assistance, noting there needs to be a certain flexibility in distributing these funds: it must be based on the real needs of people.

Reverend Sharon Moon, First United Church, recalled how difficult it was at the outset for participants in the People's Hearings, the precursor to the Task Force on Poverty, to tell their stories, how painful it was to bare to others the balances and stresses in their lives, the choices they had to make between keeping a phone, or paying hydro bills, or repairing old appliances. Rev. Moon said she had been struck by the effect of "poor bashing" by the media, something that still needs to be addressed. She spoke of people feeling drained by their daily struggles, yet coming to speak eloquently and providing a wealth of information about what it means to live in poverty: they did this in the hope of influencing the future of decision-making through sharing their experiences. Rev. Moon indicated there is broad support in the community for what the participants have recommended. They have put forward concrete proposals to work towards solutions, to be part of making a difference. She urged the Committee to support the recommendation to allocate \$1 million to address some of these recommendations. Rev. Moon said she had been struck, in preparing for her presentation, by Scripture references to the re-building of the desolation, the desecration and then destruction. She pointed out those are strong images in these times, and the opportunity exists to do something, to continue a community where all the voices are heard.

Joan Gullen, spoke in support of the Task Force recommendation for a community developer for the entire Region. She said the advantage of a region-wide community developer is to maintain a large representation of the poor; this is the only way to break through some of the prejudices about social assistance. Ms. Gullen related one of the stories that had struck her particularly, and it concerns the attempts made by a two-parent family to access resources for their mildly autistic child. They were trying to pay for services out of their own budget; employment was always precarious, they were being

pushed to poverty and they needed help to sustain their employment and do their parenting. Ms. Gullen pointed out that the Province talks a lot about parenting while doing things to undermine parents. She suggested that the Committee support enhancing EHSS to assist families such as the one she described.

Bill Jay, Minister, McLeod-Stewarton United Church, Chair of the Advocacy Committee, Faith Partners (an ecumenical inter-faith group) and Chair of the Church and Society Committee of the United Church's Ottawa Presbytery. Reverend Jay recalled the beginnings of the Task Force on Poverty, and he declared the time has come to ensure the community doesn't suffer from the paralysis of analysis. Many reports have been making concrete proposals, and now is the time to trust the work done by the groups, to put money to work in good faith. Reverend Jay said whatever can be done to develop decent housing. Essential Health and Social Supports (EHSS) are vital to breaking the cycle of poverty. He added he knew the Committee will continue to break the immorality of the media perception that condemns people to continue living a life of dependency.

Elizabeth Burrell, a Task Force on Poverty member representing the west end of Ottawa, began by saying she enjoyed working with people from various economic strata. She clarified that the community-based position for public participation coordination will support and coordinate public participation from the community of the poor. In the Partners for Jobs report, Regional Chair Bob Chiarelli said the Region would be investing in the long-term health of the community by investing in people, and the Task Force on Poverty agrees with this assertion. The Region needs the community to be an active partner. Resources are needed to build and maintain a demonstrable, broad-based community voice to provide feedback to the Region, identify gaps and successes and work with the community to encourage participation in programs and services.

Candace Beal, Community Member of Task Force on Poverty, said the need for child care as it relates to employment is obvious. Additional subsidized spaces are required, as well as access to information for parents on how to choose their caregivers, what questions to ask them, how to inquire about their qualifications. Ms. Beal indicated that one theme emerged, and it is that the dissemination of information is paramount. Many people lack the right information to make decisions, and it is time to correct this situation.

Cliff Gazee, Co-Chair, Task Force on Poverty spoke about Task Force participants being mindful of the pressures on taxpayers, and he indicated they want to share the load. He reiterated that child care and transportation issues are important elements and they emerged as key issues. Mr. Gazee said there is a need to disseminate information more widely about the EHSS that already exist. He said it was imperative that the Region invest in roads to prosperity, decency and to a better future for families and children.

Chair Munter thanked all those who participated in the work of the Task Force on Poverty.

Counselling and Personal Support Agencies

Diana Carter, Big Sisters of Ottawa-Carleton, began by commending regional staff for their recommendations which she called a good starting point to repairing the social safety net. Big Sisters provide the opportunity to thrive, to participate and to succeed. She pointed out that the Match Program received \$12,000 in 1999 compared to \$25,000 in the early 90's, and the Girls Night Program output is expected to double in the next year. Ms. Carter asked that, should there be any funds remaining, the Region double its contribution to agencies.

Kari Arndt, spoke about the Girls' Night Program for girls 12 to 16, noting that, in 1999, approximately 180 girls participated at the Orléans location. This represents over 800 visits. In 2000, the program will expand into the Bellevue Community, potentially doubling the number of girls served and the number of visits, all without doubling the agency's budget. Ms. Arndt said an increase would be helpful.

Perpetua Quigley, described the Match Program which matches adult volunteers with young girls between the ages of 6 to 16. The speaker shared with the Committee the success story of a mother who was able to return to school to complete her study and find meaningful work. Her daughter had the support of the agency, and she also pursued post-secondary education and graduated from university in the Fall. She is now a Big Sister and wants to give back to the community. Ms. Quigley presented the story of a child conceived in a gang rape to a 13 year-old mother. She was raised by her grandmother who, at one time, had the support of social services, but who lost the means to house her family with the unraveling of the social safety net. Her appeal for support did not have a positive outcome: she was stressed and financially stretched to meet her family's needs. Two weeks ago, the grandmother died after the 16 year old child tried unsuccessfully to revive her. Ms. Quigley appealed to the Committee to mend the social safety net so that the most vulnerable can count on this community to care.

Nancy Worsfold and Derek Fennell, Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organisation (OCISO)

Mr. Fennell, Treasurer, OCISO Board of Directors, described the services provided to clients, especially to victims of torture, war crimes, massive violations of human rights and genocide. For most people in Ottawa-Carleton, these are episodes in the news, things that happen somewhere else, but for OCISO they are painful realities in clients' lives. OCISO a leader in cross-cultural communications and culturally appropriate counselling strategies. It has proven results in dealing with the psychological and physical consequences of its clients' experiences. Mr. Fennell shared with the Committee the experience of "Mary", from Congo-Zaire of the Tutsi ethnic group. When she was referred to OCISO, she was so fragile that volunteers had to accompany her to appointments, she couldn't sleep, and at one point she stopped eating. After several months of counselling, she is doing much better and attending ESL classes. She has regained confidence and is making a realistic plan for life in Canada. Mr. Fennell said the biggest challenges facing OCISO in its counselling program are the waiting list and the limited staff. Currently, clients are

counselled in 11 languages, and one more language should be added to address gaps. Mr. Fennell indicated that, when it comes to employability, counselling has a direct impact, because reasonable emotional stability is fundamental to being a productive member of society, to being able to hold a job or go to school. The counselling provided by OCISO helps clients regain their self-esteem and acquire anger management skills. Most newcomers are doing well but others carry with them the scars of traumatic experience and counselling helps them overcome obstacles and become contributing members of society.

Other

Kevin Kinsella, began by thanking the Department for maintaining Homemaking Services, adding that, without these, he would not have a job, be able to attend school or see the prospect of getting off social assistance in the future. He made reference to the Region's housing report which now includes recommendations on the disabled and he asked that work continue in this area. Mr. Kinsella said he was grateful fact that no cuts are being made to Essential Health and Social Supports.

Sherry Tingley, Chair, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation, made reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, which states that people have a right to adequate food, clothing and housing. She presented a Draft Resolution on Compliance with International Human Rights Obligations, a document which calls for specific action on the part of the Region, to meet its human rights obligations.¹ Ms. Tingley requested that 10% of the National Child Benefit Program savings be earmarked for a shelter fund for families and children. She pointed out that both Toronto and London have moved to allocate all their NCB monies to support families in housing emergencies. The Centre for Equality Rights is working on an eviction prevention project in Toronto, and Ms. Tingley described some of the experiences of families facing this prospect. She posited that helping people facing eviction with funding or with loans could help them maintain their housing and she expressed the hope their needs would be considered, given the NCB's goals.

Rosa Chiombala and Ian Bush, African Heritage Centre

Mr. Bush said the Centre, which started in 1993, is a non-profit organization focusing on the delivery of language arts and culture in the Community Centres and targeting youth and minority women. Its mission is to promote values and tolerance with a goal to social and economic independence. Some of its past successes include:

- implementation of a Youth Adjustment Program for young adults in crisis;
- language training for students going to Africa;
- language support for the African community in the Region;
- workshops on African dance and music;
- a resource centre for newcomers in the community.

¹ The complete text of this document is on file with the Committee Co-ordinator.

Future goals and objectives include continuing the work and building on achievements and providing guidance and support to impoverished youth and women so they can become marketable and get off social assistance. Future projects include hot lunch catering, fiber recycling, tailoring and computer basics. Mr. Bush said the Centre will help in three positive areas: it will reduce dependence on social services, help increase prosperity and help increase diversity in the Region.

Prabah Singh, Board Chair, the Aphasia Centre, introduced Ken Peeke and Gillian Gailey, Executive Director. Ms. Singh expressed her appreciation for the one-time funds received in both 1998 and 1999, but she indicated the agency is looking for annual, sustaining funding from the RMOC. She said the number of referrals continue to grow at a rate of 15 to 20% each year. There are currently 1.5 professionals providing support to over 100 families. No other community agency has the accessibility or the training to work with this population, and the model the agency uses to deal with this condition doesn't exist elsewhere in the Region. Ms. Singh posited it is a waste of precious resources for staff to continue foraging for grants while still supporting clients. She spoke about losing grant support from the University of Ottawa because of budgetary cutbacks there. She noted the total cost for personnel is up to \$200,000 however much work could be done by employees and volunteers with less qualifications than a speech/language pathologist and a social worker. Ms. Singh said that, at a minimum, two professionals are required to provide the direct guidance of service, the supervision and the training at an approximate cost of \$80,000 per year.

Chair Munter asked if the centre was still on the verge of closing. Ms. Singh replied this was the case. The agency by-laws state that, if unable to operate, it must within three months retain sufficient funds to cover its operating expenses. At the moment there is no salaried staff, and the fees received from clients are used to cover the cost of rent, telephones and photocopying.

Councillor Byrne asked about the fee for service and what amount this generated in 1999. Ms. Gailey indicated that the centre will receive approximately \$21,000 for 1998-99. According to the fee schedule, this should be closer to \$35,000 but many clients lack the funds to pay for service; no one is turned away. Much of the operation of the centre is subsidized by clients who can afford to do individual or group therapy. In reply to a further question from Councillor Byrne, Ms. Gailey said two French programs are offered in Orléans, one anglophone program in the west end, and one English program at the Bronson Centre.

Beth Cook, First Vice-President, Ottawa-Carleton Council of Women, spoke in support of the Task Force on Poverty recommendations and called for greater EHSS funding. Ms. Cook said the Council of Women has also advocated on behalf of the Region to the Province of Ontario for additional supplementary assistance and child care funding.

Garry Byrne, Director of Administration and Finance, St Joseph's Parish,

Mr. Byrne described a supper program delivered by St Joseph's Parish, saying it serves a hot meal and other assistance to approximately 100 people, including a large number of men, children, mothers, of varying ages, and many suffering from mental illness. Groceries are also provided to upwards of 150 people per month. The parish also offers short-term work programs where individuals can get money for work performed, allowing them a small amount of dignity instead of just giving them a handout. Mr. Byrne indicated this program has been ongoing for 15 years, and the parish has covered its expenditures (some help is provided by the Food Bank). He noted that, at this time, parish resources are being depleted and there are diminishing revenues from decreased numbers of parishioners. The program shortfall is \$60,000 per year. If funding is not found, the parish will be in the position of reducing or terminating its services, something that would be both unfortunate and a great loss to the community.

Counselling and Personal Services Agencies

Valerie Collicott, Women's Action Centre Against Violence

Ms. Collicott said the Women's Action Centre Against Violence focuses on public safety and tries to address issues brought forward by community organizations through a Safety Audit Checklist. This is circulated free of charge, whereas audits undertaken in workplaces are charged a fee. Some publications include a Safety Audit Guide for those who want to do the work themselves and an Implementation Guide to help organizations follow through and ensure the recommendations they have identified come to fruition. Ms. Collicott spoke about an initiative funded through the Ontario Women's Directorate, addressing the personal concerns of health care professionals in the rural areas, an area that has been identified as important by all the Centre's partners. A publication related to this issue has received national and international recognition. The Centre would like to create a Website to advertise all the work being done in Ottawa-Carleton and do more promotion of the Safety Audit Kit in schools, something that has not reached its maximum potential because of the lack of human resources and funding. Ms. Collicott said the Women's Action Centre also works with local and regional planners to ensure neighbourhoods are safer and with regional councillors on areas of concern identified by their constituents. She spoke of the Centre's work with OC Transpo, calling this a major initiative that will impact on the entire community. This consists of a safety audit at the Blair Transitway Station which, once completed, will be a valuable tool to all at all transit stations across the Region. Ms. Collicott said safe communities attract not only people to live in Ottawa-Carleton but also businesses to set up here.

Joyce Durrett-Ray, Co-Chair, Regional Co-ordinating Committee
to End Violence Against Women, (RCCEVAW)

Ms. Durrett-Ray said that, for the past 14 years, this community-based coalition has met on a monthly basis to bring together individuals, funding agencies, service providers such as emergency shelters, sexual assault centres, counselling centres and community resource

centres, as well as the institutions such as the Police and hospitals that deal with violence against women and their children. Members are dedicated to providing effective services via a coordinated approach and delivering service to victims of intimate partner abuse. The RCCEVAW provides a forum for networking and sharing information on local initiatives and government policies pertaining to violence against women. It works towards coordinating services and facilitating integrated solutions to the concerns brought to the table. It advocates for better government policies through political action, and maintains a grass-roots perspective, based on women's experiences. The RCCEVAW is organized to promote and accommodate a large number of people working together towards a common goal. It encompasses 11 sub-committees which address areas of concern for the agencies that provide services to victims who have and continue to suffer violence in their homes. The sub-committees work autonomously to address issues related to their mandates, and the chairs meet quarterly at the Integration meetings to share information. The sub-committees also report regularly to the coalition at monthly meetings, Minutes of which are distributed to 38 individual members and to 118 organizations. The RCCEVAW is looking at an outreach plan, as its commitment is to continue to promote more inclusive representation of the community served. In order to carry this out, sufficient funds will be required to cover the cost of cultural interpretation, the creation of a brochure, the translation of documents, the creation of an orientation package and a web-site. Ms. Durrett-Ray requested that there be a 20% increase in the agency's 2000 budget and she thanked the Committee for its ongoing support.

Stacey Laurensen, facilitator, Youth Services Bureau, Youth Advisory Council

Mr. Laurensen introduced Ziggy, who said she has been on the street since her parents kicked her out a year ago. She uses the facilities at the youth drop-in daily, where she can get a shower, food, counselling, help from queer support groups, and referrals. Ziggy added this is not enough, because as soon as the drop-in closes, kids are out on the street: the shelters are full, there is no housing and they don't know what to do. Ziggy said no child is immune from homelessness.

Serge Poitras, suggested Anti-Street Projects such as housing for youth living on social assistance be put in place. He proposed that the vacant buildings from the Region becoming one city be converted into apartment units; by adding resources such as counselling, education, rehabilitation, a communal kitchen, a job bank within those buildings, a positive environment for youth will be created. Mr. Poitras pointed out that helping youth will ensure they have a better lifestyle and can make a contribution to society in the future.

Shauna, said that, two and ½ years ago, she found herself on the street and she lived in a variety of apartments, some of which were deemed unsuitable living conditions. Through the Youth Services Bureau she was able to access Housing Help and "Beat the Street", where she learned her rights and responsibilities as a tenant and other assistance when needed. Shauna has since moved back home and has settled her differences with her parents: she has returned to school and is considering enrolling in social worker or child and youth worker programs at Algonquin College. She made reference to the fact that

many youth taken their own lives instead of continuing to live on the street. There are not enough services available for them and they died because they believed no one was there to help them in their time of need. Shauna said many youth need help, and one of the most pressing needs is for affordable housing.

Child Care

Shelley Bond, Chair, Child Care Council, asked that funds be allocated to the Capital funding budget on an ongoing basis. She indicated that agencies face having to repair or replace playground equipment because of new provincial standards. There are the ongoing needs of programs affected by health or safety issues, and new programs will seek capital funding for new buildings. Ms. Bond expressed appreciation for the additional 1.5% 2000 budget allocation for salaries, however she pointed out that regional staff have received a 3.25% increase. This causes a gap in equity and places agency staff farther away from parity. She spoke about the Region's strategic goal of assisting clients reduce their reliance on social assistance and getting jobs, noting that parents need access to affordable subsidized child care to do this. There are currently not adequate subsidized spaces to accommodate those on waiting lists and there is a great need for more spaces for children with special needs. Ms. Bond concluded her presentation by assuring the Committee that the child care community continues to actively seek a commitment from the Province that it will provide its 80% share of pay equity. She requested that any savings from the 1999 budget be reinvested in the social services area. Child care is an integral part of the system, and cutbacks in any part of it have a ripple effect on the community.

Shelley Bird, Education Officer, CUPE 2204, Child Care Workers of Eastern Ontario, and Rachel Besharah, President, Local 2204.

Ms. Bird began by thanking staff for the recommended 1.5% salary increase for child care workers. She said the fact that regional employees received a higher rate increase further confirms that the Region is backing away from its historic, 20 year commitment to high quality child care and its recognition of the principle of wage parity between agency and regional staff. Persons working in the private, non-profit sector do the same work, requiring the same level of training, and receive funding from the same source as regional employees.

Ms. Bird said the community appreciates the difficulty of operating under external political and economic forces beyond the control of regional government, however it does not see how the 20-year commitment to parity can be set aside when it comes to budget deliberations. She made reference to the recent debate about a tax break for the Ottawa Senators, noting that, not once did anyone question the worth of the players or the game; the debate focused on the cultural and financial impact of losing the team and a tax break was approved. Ms. Bird invited the Committee to imagine the impact on the local economy if child care providers withdrew their services to the 70% of parents with young children who either work or study in preparation for work.

Child care workers provide a critical service and an economic benefit to the local economy. They contribute as much in terms of cultural, social and human good and must be judged minimally as valuable as the Senators.

Ms. Bird pointed out that child care staff have worked very hard and have made large gains, with the support of regional government. She asked that Council reaffirm its commitment to parity, and put forward recommendations that will protect the principles used to build an enviable child care system, that Council send a message to the Province that child care is a valuable service.

In response to a question from Councillor L. Davis, the Director, Child Care Services, Gayle Preston, indicated that the \$580,000 alluded to in Commissioner Stewart's earlier presentation would be enough to provide the same increase to purchase of service agencies as was provided to regional staff. She could not provide information about how this would relate to the cost of living. Councillor Davis thanked the child care community for continuing to hammer home the message about the important service it provides in Ottawa-Carleton.

Karen Cole-Thrasher and Joanne Hightower, Co-Chairs,
Ottawa-Carleton Child Care Association

Ms. Cole-Thrasher highlighted three areas of concern:

- the Child Care Capital Fund; she requested that at least a portion of the savings from the National Child Benefit Program be earmarked to cover future requests for new facilities brought on by school closures; she also requested an update on Regional Development Charges.
- uncontrollable costs in child care budgets; last year many centres were refused increases to cover such items as insurance and health benefit premiums and others. Centres have to pay these increased costs and cannot continue to fund annual increases without the support of enhanced operating budgets;
- salary adjustments; once again, regional staff have received a higher increase than their counterparts in the non-profit sector. It is hard to believe this is again being recommended, in light of the many discussions and presentations during the past decade on salary inequities.

Ms. Cole-Thrasher said child care is an integral part of the community. It allows parents to go to work or to school and also enables welfare recipients to leave the system and contribute to the community. The child care community needs Council's support more than ever, and continues to lobby the levels of government to provide funds for quality child care. Ms. Cole-Thrasher expressed the hope Council will join in those efforts.

Councillor Holmes wanted information about the RDCs related to Child Care Capital projects. Finance Commissioner LeBelle replied that, as these funds are collected, they will be deposited in a child care regional development reserve fund, and will be available as growth-related projects come forward. He added that, since August 99, approximately \$100,000 has been collected, and it is estimated there may be as much as \$500,000 in the fund at the end of 2000, depending on building starts.