

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

23 APRIL 1998

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 16 April 1998.

CARRIED

REGULAR ITEMS

1. 1998 DRAFT OPERATING ESTIMATES, COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
- A/Committee Co-ordinator report dated 7 April 1998

Chair Munter stated that the Region is dealing with significant downloading problems from the provincial government. The budget strategy, released to Regional Council yesterday, does not propose significant cuts to human services, but essentially delays the problem into 1999 by using reserve funds and deferring some capital projects.

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- Notes:
1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by Committee.
 2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 13 May 1998 in Community Services Report No. 8

Social Services Budget

Commissioner Dick Stewart presented the budget estimates for the Social Services Department.¹ The Department has three strategic performance goals: 1) to assist clients to obtain jobs; 2) to assist clients to become more independent, and; 3) to assist clients meet basic needs (food, clothing, housing, other personal supports) required to move toward the first two strategic goals.

The Department has gone through a significant transformation in the past two years. Divisions have been reorganized to reflect the strategic goals, the new service delivery model, and implement the Ontario Works Program. The Department is now structured with Directors of Area Operations; Merv Sabey (East), Bob Crook (West) and Luc Legault (Central), providing directorship for Income Support, Employment Support and Child Care Subsidy in these geographic regions. There continues to be a directorship for Child Care (Gayle Preston, Director). There is a newly formed Directorate for Community Relations and Employment Development (Linda Capperault, Director), emphasizing the Department's focus on employment and successful outcomes for clients. Finally, the Department has amalgamated the Finance, Administration, and Planning and Review Division into a new Strategic and Operational Support Directorate (Jocelyn St. Jean, Director).

Commissioner Stewart stated the other areas of transition are related to the legislative changes taking place. The Province is moving away from the *General Welfare Act* (GWA) and the *Family Benefits Act* (FBA), and moving towards the *Social Assistance Reform Act* (SARA). This has resulted in two new pieces of legislation; the *Ontario Works Act* (OW) and the *Ontario Disabilities Support Plan* (ODSP). The intent of the Provincial Government is to proclaim the *Ontario Works Act* and its Regulations by 1 May 1998. The Department has not yet received a formal copy of the Regulations. The ODSP is not due for proclamation until late summer. Although not in writing, both the Minister and Deputy Minister responsible for Child Care have recently indicated that the Government does not intend to make substantial changes to the *Day Nurseries Act*, as previously anticipated.

Commissioner Stewart presented the Department's budget reductions identified by the Budget Review Board (BRB). Reductions include decreases to Operation Support (\$80,000), Caseload (\$705,000) and Special Assistance and Supplementary Aid (\$380,000). The original Budget Estimates were based on an anticipated average monthly caseload of 27,800 for 1998. The Department has revised that Estimate downwards to 27,500, and therefore, a \$705,000 budget reduction. He emphasized that this reduction would not result in any service reduction. Commissioner Stewart stated that the 1998 Forecast for Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance was \$13 million however, expenditures in 1997 were \$11.8 million. The proposed \$380,000 reduction in this item represents 1/2 of the net under-expenditure budget. Notwithstanding this reduction, the Department believes it can sustain the 1997 level of service for the Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance program.

¹ A copy of the presentation overheads are kept on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Commenting on Mega Week, Commissioner Stewart stated that the cost-sharing and program transfers with the Province have resulted in a \$72.34 million increase in the RMOC's net budget. The Region is now obligated to pay 20% of all the benefits delivered by the Region and the Province. The Region is responsible for 100% of Domiciliary Hostel costs and 50% of the FBA administrative costs. For the first time, the Region is paying 20% of the Ontario Drug Benefit costs for all Social Assistance (SA) recipients in Ottawa-Carleton. Effective 1 January 1998, Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance is cost-shared with the Province (80/20) resulting in a \$2.1 million increase in subsidy. Costs for Transition Homes have been transferred to the Province.

The 1998 Operating Estimate for the Social Service component of the Department's budget, including the proposed BRB's reductions, is \$63.427 million (1.2% reduction over the 1997 budget).

Commissioner Stewart stated the 1998 Child Care budget reflects sustaining all of the subsidized spaces, and all the programs as in 1997. The almost \$1 million subsidy increase shown in the 1998 estimate is the result of an amendment to the *Day Nurseries Act*, in which the Province now cost-shares 80% of the gross budget. He commented that "Mega Week" also had an impact on the Child Care budget. There is additional \$3 million cost to the Region which represents its 20% cost-share of wage subsidies, family resource centres and special needs programs.

Addressing GWA caseload, Commissioner Stewart stated that the average monthly caseload has decreased 11%, from 32,900 in 1995 to 27,300 projected for 1998.² He observed that there are a lot of challenges facing the Department and its community partners. One of the major issues will be the transfer of 5400 additional cases from FBA, by the end of 1998. There will be some implications for the 1999 budget in terms of the associated administrative costs.

The Department is not recommending any reductions to Purchase of Service Agreements or Grants. Commissioner Stewart noted that agencies are experiencing unprecedented service demands, increasingly complex issues, and reductions from other funding sources. The Department's priorities continue to be the preservation of funding for Community Resource Centres, Day Programs, and Food Programs.

Commissioner Stewart pointed out that the new terminology in the *OW Act* refers to Discretionary Benefits (previously known as Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance). The intention of the Provincial government is to control the expenditures of municipalities under the Discretionary Benefits program through eligibility criteria and items provided.. After 1 May 1998, only SA recipients (OW and ODSP) will be eligible. In this Region, over 1000 people (working poor, elderly and disabled persons) previously receiving this benefit will no longer be eligible. These benefits provide health care related supports to the elderly and the disabled, without which they would have difficulty living independently. He opined that this will have

² A copy of "Stats and Facts" prepared by the Social Services Department is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

repercussions for the health care system. For the working poor, the implications may be the inability to sustain in a low wage job and return to SA as a full recipient.

Commissioner Stewart explained that the Regulations contain a new limited list of items for which cost-sharing will be available. The new list includes dental services, prosthetics, moving costs, travel, transportation, and training. It does not appear to include beds, fridges and stoves, layettes, and language and cultural interpretation. However, Commissioner Stewart stated that the Department has still not received a copy of the Regulations from the Province, and will seek further clarification. Until told otherwise, the Department will continue to operate status quo, with respect to delivering these benefits .

Commissioner Stewart anticipates that the Province will introduce capping, or some other means to further control expenditures. This appears to be an accountability issue. Provincial staff are working on a Discussion Paper to be presented to the Minister in May, and a decision is expected in June.

In his concluding remarks, Commissioner Stewart stated that the Department and this budget are all about people. He asked the Committee to reflect on the testimony heard at the presentation to Council by the People's Hearings.

Questions to Staff

Chair Munter asked for clarification of changes to Supplementary Aid, particularly as they relate to paying for burials for people who cannot afford a burial themselves, (e.g. recipients of CPP and the working poor). Commissioner Stewart confirmed that such a cutback appeared to be the result of tighter eligibility for Discretionary Benefits, however he stated the Region has an obligation to assist with those burials under the *Hospital Act* and the *Cemeteries Act*. He continued that the Department has not had a response from provincial staff since pointing out this incongruity to them.

Councillor Davis asked if staff had assessed the impact of the Business Occupancy Tax on leasing day care facilities as well as the additional costs to community partners who lease space. Commissioner Stewart stated he was aware of some preliminary work by the Finance Department which was presented in a report to Council on 22 April 1998. There was a place holder, in the report, of approximately \$600,000 for Grants to charitable organizations to deal with this matter. He opined that many charitable organizations are probably not aware of this issue yet. He stated there was a forthcoming policy document for Council which will identify what types of organizations will receive tax relief. He pointed out the legislation permits only partial tax relief up to 40 percent.

Councillor Davis asked if the Department had made any predictions on the effects of rent increases and the subsequent per diem rate increases on the day care community, as a result of the Tax. Ms. Gayle Preston responded that it is an issue that has been identified however, none of the

agencies know what the additional costs are going to be yet. Councillor Davis suggested that the Committee would be interested in the dollar figures when they are available.

Councillor Davis referred to a previous budget decision to remove OC Transpo bus passes for SA recipients. She opined that a difficulty had been imposed on clients trying to get to medical appointments. At the time, the decision was made based on a cost savings of \$1.7 million.. She opined that it was a paper cost; that it didn't really exist. She asked what the actual costs were to provide a bus pass to SA recipients and if there was an opportunity to reconsider this issue. Commissioner Stewart iterated that it was not a bus pass, but rather a transportation subsidy (approximately \$29.00). In 1995, it represented a \$3 million expenditure and was available to only a portion of the caseload (employable clients during their first three months of assistance and clients who had a sufficient number of monthly appointments to justify the subsidy). He stated the \$3 million didn't come close to covering even a significant portion of the caseload and to contemplate a bus pass for all clients, at market value, would be a significant cost.

Councillor Davis opined that there should be a better linkage between Social Services and OC Transpo. Commissioner Stewart stated that he and Mr. Ian Stacey, General Manager for OC Transpo, would be reviewing how to maximize the use of Discretionary Benefits and the use of Employment Support expense money to improve the mobility of clients, particularly those clients participating in the OW program. Commissioner Stewart stated he had communicated to Mr. Stacey that the Department was interested in increasing its purchasing from OC Transpo and negotiating a volume discount. Currently the Department receives a 1% discount on the \$400,000 worth of bus tickets it purchases annually.

Councillor Holmes asked what the net results of provincial downloading were for the Department. Commissioner Stewart stated there was a dramatic net increase of \$70 million (over 1997), mostly tied into the cost sharing for SA benefits.

Councillor Loney asked Commissioner Stewart to quantify the risks associated with continuing to provide Special Assistance. Commissioner Stewart reiterated that the Province had introduced a more limited set of menu items and more restrictive eligibility for Discretionary Benefits. He stated there is a "transition regulation" that permits the Department to continue to provide benefits to the group of people who are now ineligible, as long as they are consistently eligible for that benefit and consistently receive it. The Department will pursue this further with the Ministry. Commissioner Stewart noted that this is a window of interpretation for the Department to continue to provide some benefits for some of the 1,000 elderly and disabled people. He stated that until notified otherwise, the Department will assume it has Director's approval for items such as fridges/stoves, layettes and beds.

Councillor Loney asked how Toronto is handling the situation. Commissioner Stewart responded that the Community Services Department of the new City of Toronto has a team of staff reviewing the new Regulations and are preparing a report to their Council regarding the

implications of the new discretionary benefits. He added that he hoped to acquire a copy of the report to assist in this Region's budget deliberations.

Councillor Byrne asked where the elderly and disabled, who will no longer be eligible for Discretionary Benefits, were expected to turn to for assistance in living and becoming self-sufficient. Commissioner Stewart believed it was the Province's intent that these people would acquire assistance through the Ministry of Health's Assistive Devices Program. He referred to the brief description of the Assistive Devices Program on page 15 of the Special Assistance and Supplementary Aid Primer.³ Commissioner Stewart compared this situation to when the Province said it would no longer subsidize prescription drugs within the discretionary program. People not receiving Social Assistance were expected to acquire their prescription drugs through the Trillium Drug Plan. Commissioner Stewart went on to say that the Assistive Devices Program has two impediments; 1) there is still a 25% co-payment plan which the Ministry intends to eliminate, but has not committed to a date, and; 2) many items under the Assistive Devices Program, in terms of the amount of money the Province would give a recipient, are undervalued. It does not represent the market value of a commodity such as a wheelchair or a hearing device. The Department has been assisting people with 25-50% to purchase high priced items.

Councillor Byrne opined that eliminating accessibility to benefits for the working poor was a contradiction to the objective of assisting people to become self-sufficient. She stated that many people on SA will find employment in contract work, term work or self-employment and will not have access to benefits. She sees this as an impediment to people seeking employment. She asked if the Department had any idea of how many people will return to SA or stay on SA rather than lose access to benefits. Commissioner Stewart responded that it was hard to predict, but that it did increase the risk for people jumping into the low wage economy. As of 1 May 1998, the Province has also cut off a \$250/month benefit to "ex-clients" (people who have just become ineligible for SA because of their earned income). These are policies that work against other government objectives of assisting clients towards financial independence.

Public Delegations

Social Assistance

Grace McCaffrey stated the comfort of being poor is that she is not alone living in poverty. Commenting on the Peoples' Hearings, she stated that some of the issues raised were more than 10 years old and that the situation did not just get worse. Some of the issues that the poor and unemployed are dealing with have been suppressed at the community level, and it has been difficult to get the Region's attention. People who participated in the Hearings were asking for the basics; meat and potatoes, so they wouldn't have to attend the soup kitchens anymore. She opined that there could be less money given to community organizations and instead, given directly to the poor so that they can become self-sufficient.. She opined that bad judgment

³ Information Previously Distributed

resulted in a friend, who is a quadriplegic, having to be admitted to the Civic Hospital for 14 months, at a cost of \$1000/day, when his Home Care was discontinued. She also opined that there is duplication, for example, in a west end neighbourhood there are 4 health centres within a square mile.

Linda Lalonde & Karen Graham, The Anti-Poverty Project. Ms. Lalonde noted that the numbers of people in attendance speak loudly. She stated that organizations are still struggling to deal with the 21.6% cuts of late 1995, and trying to meet increased demands with lower or flat-line budgets. She stated the Project is glad to see that the Community Services budget had not been cut, however believe it should be reinstated to levels of a few years ago.

Referring to the BRB's document, she stated the \$20,000 proposed reduction from the 100% municipal assistance line is going to reduce the Department's ability to respond to the very needs which will be created by such things as the \$37.00 pregnancy allowance cut and the payment of Trillium Drug Plan deductibles, which allow people to say off Welfare. Regarding the proposed reduction in translation services, she hoped that Ontario Works document would be available in both languages, which has not yet occurred. She opined that the "discretionary benefits," that will be cut after 1 May 1998, are going to push the working poor back onto SA.

Ms. Lalonde stated that the proposals put forward to Council, to put off tax increases or programs cuts until 1999, were very short-sighted. She wondered why the Region would want to send a message to the Province, that the Region can and will absorb by the cuts of the provincial government. In closing, Ms. Lalonde stated that this Council has been consistent in its support for people living on low-incomes and asked that Council continue to support the community which elected it, to be morally and fiscally responsible.

Donna Campbell, Royal Ottawa Hospital Health Care Group. Ms. Campbell stated that the ROH Health Care Group provides services to persons with mental illness through the ROH, and persons with physical disabilities through the Rehabilitation Centre. These two populations are among the most vulnerable in the community. The maintenance of program funding, such as Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance and Social Housing, that directly support these people is critical to their ability to function independently in the community. Any future cuts to this kind of funding would compound two previous changes by the provincial government; the 21.6% cut in SA and the implications of Bill 142 which redefined disability.

Specifically the ROH Health Care Group is asking the Region to use the full extent of its discretionary power to maintain current funding levels in two critical areas: Discretionary Benefits and Social Housing/Supportive Housing. For persons living with physical disabilities, cuts to funding for items such as artificial limbs and wheelchairs would create great hardship. A large portion of the Rehab Centre's clients would not be able to afford this equipment through their own means, resulting in lost employment opportunities or forced care in a long-term care facility. For persons with mental illness, previous funding reductions have resulted in a three-fold increase in requests for emergency assistance from a special fund administered by the ROH social workers.

This money is being used to buy basic necessities and bus tickets for patients to attend appointments. Ms. Campbell noted that clients cannot address their mental health needs if their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) are not met first.

Ms. Campbell stated this vulnerable population is drastically short of appropriate, affordable housing, with or without attendant care, and this represents the greatest barrier to successful integration into the community. Currently 50% of those residing in supervised boarding homes are receiving psychiatric services from the ROH. Moving-In Allowance and Start-Up Costs enable these clients to successfully make the transition back into the community.

Mohammed Suleiman, Access Committee. Mr. Suleiman explained that the Access Committee is a network of service agencies, community organizations and individuals concerned with issues of ethnocultural access to services in Ottawa-Carleton. Mr. Suleiman expressed concern about the impacts of funding cuts and budgetary constraints, specifically as they affect the programs and services that cater to immigrant and refugee groups. Because this group tends not to be vocal, Mr. Suleiman stated they must bear the brunt of these cuts. For the Access Committee this raises a fundamental issue of equity and equal access to services and opportunities.

For the past few years, Mr. Suleiman explained, the ethnocultural organizations in this Region have lost meaningful connection with their communities. This is because they do not have the dollars to provide the services that people want them to provide. This creates an extremely frustrating situation for both service providers and clients. Experience working with immigrant and refugee groups has demonstrated how important Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance is to these groups. For example, when immigrants and refugees arrive, they have no family or friends to shelter or support them. Supplementary Aid assists in their integrated into this society by providing basic necessities, that are often taken for granted. Mr. Suleiman emphasized how important social housing is to immigrant and refugee populations, as it is difficult and stressful as first-time renters to find housing.

In conclusion, Mr. Suleiman noted that new Canadians are noticeably absent from this process. This absence is a reflection of the barriers faced by this group. How this community treats immigrants and refugees will have long term social consequences, by possibly creating generations dependent on SA.

*Veronica Anderson, Donald Schultz, Cathy Bainville & Anna Bilsky, Citizen Advocacy.*⁴ Ms. Anderson explained that Citizen Advocacy is an organization designed to help the disabled through friendship and advocacy support. The savings, in terms of social costs, achieved through Citizen Advocacy, she argued far exceeds the \$10,000 Regional Grant received in 1997. The organization has requested a similar grant for 1998. She stated Supplementary Aid is critical to meet the needs of the disabled, for example, eye and dental care.

⁴ Correspondence is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Mr. Schultz shared how he personally had benefited from receiving FBA and assistance from Citizen Advocacy. For example, he did not require a Moving Allowance because he was assisted by his volunteer advocate. Ms. Bainville stated she benefited from receiving Supplementary Aid for repairs and battery replacement for her wheelchair, that she could not otherwise afford. She relied on the services of Citizen Advocacy to continue living independently. Ms. Bilsky, a volunteer advocate, explained that there are currently 134 matches and 88 individuals on the waiting list, and that the needs are far greater than can be presented today.

Chair Munter asked if the changes in eligibility for Discretionary Benefits would affect any of the presenters. Mr. Schultz confirmed that he would no longer be eligible for the benefits.

*David Welsh, President, Social Planning Council.*⁵ Mr. Welsh stated it was important to remember that in the past two and a half years, the provincial government had dramatically cut social assistance benefits, reduced funding to a large number of agencies and downloaded some of its responsibilities to municipalities and to local communities. He also pointed out that in the past year the Ontario Government had introduced legislation which gives the government the power to change just about every aspect of assistance without public debate, legislative review or any appeal mechanism being available to the individuals affected. He stated the government wants people to believe that the poor are responsible for being poor, that the government has only a small part to play in the redistribution of wealth, and that only minimal investments should be made in the welfare system. He stated the punitive measures to reduce the number of persons receiving assistance and to discourage others from going on assistance do nothing to address the root causes of social and economic imbalances which contribute to persons seeking social assistance as a last resort. The economic growth in this Region has very little impact on persons fighting against poverty.

Referring to the *1997 Community Agency Survey* conducted by the Social Planning Council, Mr. Welsh discussed the impact of cuts in Ottawa-Carleton. The key findings of the preliminary analysis show that: 1) agencies are having to close their doors because of funding cuts (15 agencies closed during 1996/97); 2) the loss of \$9.7 million to the community sector is a "red flag" signaling far greater losses; 3) agencies are responding to cuts by increasing their dependency on part-time staff; 4) the cuts are eroding volunteer programs; 5) the cuts are predominately impacting services to low income people, and; 6) agencies are responding to cuts by working more collaboratively together rather than by merging.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Welsh observed that at the community level, there is growing solidarity among the people who are experiencing poverty, and among agencies and groups who work alongside, as witnessed by the People's Hearings. The Social Planning Council does not feel it is sufficient to maintain 1997 budget levels. They would like to see some of the resources and supports, lost over the past two years, restored. The Region must also develop strategies to

⁵ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

allow more its residents to benefit from the economic growth and opportunities that exist in this region.

Bob Mosurinjohn, speaking on his own behalf, stated that a lot of education was needed as to the reasons why people are on SA, such as difficulty finding employment. He shared his own experience of being on and off SA for the last several years. In closing, Mr. Mosurinjohn stated that Canada is at a crisis point, and it will require sober thought to find solutions.

*Dr. Roger Howard & Dr. Ian McConnachie, Ottawa Dental Society.*⁶ Dr. Howard began by stating he was speaking on behalf of the Ontario Dental Society (ODS), the Ontario Dental Association (ODA), and the local dentists who provide the limited care available under the MCSS's Social Service Dental Plans (FBA, Disabled Program, and CINOT).

Dr. Howard stated they would like to propose a way to save scarce Regional funds and meet the real dental care needs of children and the disabled in Ottawa-Carleton. He stated the OW dental plan design effectively downloads provincial costs to the Region. This, he argued, will cut into the limited RMOC funds that could be used elsewhere. Dr. Howard urged the Region to lobby the province to delay implementation beyond 1 May 1998, to allow time to develop a better plan design.

Dr. Howard presented some principles of plan design to help the Region evaluate what the plan mandated by the province. The principles are: 1) a dental plan design from the province will have a great effect on RMOC cost-effectiveness; 2) dollars should go to patient care, not building costs; 3) plans should include an integrated preventive component, and; 4) the provision of low administrative costs to allow more dollars to go to direct patient care.

In conclusion, Dr. Howard stated that the current OW dental plan is not workable - not for patients, the Region, the administrator, nor the dentists. The OW plan will not provide the needed care and will divert limited dollars to clumsy administrative barriers to care. It will require significant dollars from discretionary funds. He stated the ODS can provide expertise to the Region on plan design and expert advice on the realities of providing care and handling administration. Finally, the ODS would like to work with the Region to find a solution that is workable for the RMOC, for clients, and for the dentists.

Chair Munter explained that there was a possibility, after 1 May 1998, that when the province caps Discretionary Benefits, it will remove dental care services. He stated that the first battle was to preserve dental funding, then the Region can decide how it will deliver the program. Chair Munter stated there was a report was forthcoming to the Committee and the presenters would be invited to participate in the discussion.

⁶ A copy of the overhead presentation is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Councillor Davis inquired about the contribution by dentists under the current program. Dr. Howard explained that dentists may provide services even though there is no funding available or receive the fees paid under these programs which are 2/3 of normal fees. For programs administered by the ODA in 1997, they were paid for \$60 million of the \$95 million worth of care provided.

In response to a question by Councillor Davis, Dr. Howard stated the ODA administers the GWA and FBA program for most municipalities across the province. Ottawa-Carleton is one of the few areas that has Regional Dental Clinics, but even in this Region the majority of service under the FBA, Disabled Program and CINOT is provided by local dentists.

Dr. McConnachie expressed concern that the provincial plan design had so many unworkable features that practitioners will no longer be able to care for these patients, because it will take too much subsidization from their other patients, or the download will be too large to handle.

In response to an inquiry from Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen, Dr. Burry confirmed that consultation with the ODS was part of the process in preparing the report to Committee.

Barbara Bareham explained that she chose to speak today because she believes one person can make a difference. She reminded Committee members that each time they vote on a budget item, they are affecting people's lives. She expressed concern that the proposed cuts will negatively affect the quality of life of most residents particularly those on low income. If people are already working, she asked why make it impossible for them to get ahead. She opined that a system, with the appropriate criteria could be devised to provide free or discounted transportation on OC Transpo for low income people. Following the presentation to Council by the People's Hearings, she wrote the poem entitled 'Critical Condition' which she read to the Committee.

Referring to a statement made by Ms. Bareham, Councillor Loney clarified that as of 1 January 1998, the Region does not receive operating subsidies from the Province for OC Transpo.

Sylvie Picciano, Disabled Persons' Community Resources (DPCR). Ms. Picciano explained that DPCR is a community-based organization with the objective of promoting independent living and facilitating the participation and integration of persons with physical disabilities into the community. She stated that the Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance programs provide essential supplies and support services for disabled persons. The loss of coverage for certain items is deeply felt in the community. She expressed concern that as a result of provincial downloading and SARA, the regional government will be further restricted in its ability to provide the basic services and supplies currently covered. DPCR is concerned that the cost of cutbacks will lead to the loss of necessary services for their clients. Many items provided by Supplementary Aid/Special Aid, such as wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, lift systems, and ostomy and diabetic supplies are essential supports for persons with disabilities, and appear to be at risk of being cut. Bathroom and kitchen aids, hospital beds and air mattresses are necessary for people with newly acquired disabilities or degenerative conditions, to return home and be reintegrated

into the community. The alternative may be trying to find accessible housing or placement in a long term facility.

The risk of further items being cut from the programs will negatively affect the independence and participation of persons with disabilities in the community. DPCR strongly recommends that Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance be restored to their pre-1995 levels.

*Marianne Wilkinson & Beth Cook ,Ottawa-Carleton Council of Women.*⁷ Ms. Wilkinson explained that the purpose of the Council of Women was to ensure that society serves the needs of individuals and families. They feel that in whatever decisions are made by Regional Council, the services to individuals and those in need have priority over other types of services, and she asked the Committee to ensure this is considered during final budget deliberations. They will be preparing an emergency resolution to take to their provincial body for approval, to be then taken to the provincial government to lobby on the Region's behalf. Ms. Wilkinson expressed support for maintaining community funding. She opined that these programs are cost-effective and that the partnership between the government and the non-profit sector was critical to getting resources to the people who need it. She opined that "robbing tomorrow to pay for today" is not good fiscal management and advocated for a tax increase to meet the needs of the people in the coming years..

Ms. Cook stated reiterated that the Council of Women has a major interest in the social climate of the region, as does the business and tourist communities. She opined that everyone suffers when the poor are made more desperate. Finally Ms. Cook stated the Council of Women does not want to see the polarization of the rich and poor, especially to the extent that it has occurred in some communities in the United States (i.e. gated communities).

Bob Busby began by noting there were 23,883 social housing units, representing 8.2% of the housing stock in the Region. Since the Harris government come into power, there are more homeless on the streets of the nation's Capital. Mr. Busby opined that co-operative housing was too good to lose. He stated co-operatives are self-managed, cost-effective communities. He argued that Shelter Allowances don't work. During 1994-95, the Province paid \$2.6 billion in Shelter Allowances compared to only \$681 million to all co-operative and non-profit housing. He noted that no new housing has been built by the private sector. Referring to Para Transpo, he stated that people are being refused trips every day. He also expressed concern about the loss of benefits in addition to the 21.6% cuts of 1995.

Kevin Kinsella, President, Coalition for Social Action. Mr. Kinsella observed that the Province was now referring to Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance as discretionary assistance. He stated he did not consider the repair of a broken axle on his wheelchair as discretionary. He stated he was glad to see the Region was attempting to maintain 1997 budget levels. He urged the Region to understand that some of these programs are essential, and therefore it should

⁷ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

budget for possible increases in emergency assistance as a result of downloading. He asked if the Region was prepared to see its disabled population forced into long term care facilities where they do not belong. Mr. Kinsella reiterated that this is not discretionary assistance, but rather life necessities, without which he and others could not contribute to and participate in the community (i.e. school, work, etc.).

Mr. Kinsella encouraged people to contact Mr. Robert Cook, Director of Services, Ministry of Community and Social Services, (1-416-325-5260), who is involved in developing the Regulations for SARA.

In closing Mr. Kinsella acknowledged that the Committee had seen and heard about the needs of individuals, but stressed that none of the members know how desperate the need is, unless experienced first-hand. During the budget deliberations, he urged Committee to make sure the Province knows and Council understands that without these supports and services, the disabled cannot contribute to this community.

Joanne Finn, speaking on her own behalf stated she was not happy with Workfare, and that she thinks welfare does not provide enough money to make a living. Referring to her own situation, she stated that falling into poverty meant losing her autonomy, self-reliance, and the respect and value to which she is entitled. She doesn't believe any one would want the "pittance" that welfare offered if there was fair work for fair pay available. She opined that Workfare is not fair. It means being forced to work for a welfare cheque that doesn't cover basic needs. She questioned why she should not receive the same wage and benefits for doing the same or similar work as other employees. Ms. Finn opined that job training and work placement should be voluntary. She emphasized that welfare is the bottom line defense, and that there is enough stress associated with fitting into a job, without the threat of loss of assistance. And she added, it costs to work, including transportation, child care, and clothing. In closing, she noted that the lack of funding to social activist groups was silencing the poor.

Alan Shain reiterated that Supplementary Aid covers the necessities of life, such a wheelchair batteries, rubberized tips for crutches, and medical supplies. These are things that people cannot do without if they want to be active in the community. For some people they are necessary to live outside a hospital. Supplementary Aid assists many disabled people to finish their education, participate in job training, and look for work. He stated it costs him \$800-\$1000/year to maintain his scooter. Mr. Shain clarified that the Assistive Devices Program does not cover maintenance costs, such as batteries. He opined that it was unfortunate that certain key people in local government seem to be giving a higher priority to tax freezes than to cover these basic needs. He doubted any of the people on Supplementary Aid would benefit from a tax freeze. These are people who are trying to get off Supplementary Aid to become tax payers. Mr. Shain also expressed concerned about the new term "discretionary funding". He requested a Committee member to move a motion for a more adequate title for these funds, such as "basic needs funding". Mr. Shain observed that the Committee seems willing to listen, but he doesn't see any

concrete action, just passing the buck to the province. He concluded saying he would like Regional Councillors to start saying no to the province.

Ron Kellestine, Compu Assist. Mr. Kellestine stated that he was active, personally and professionally, in getting computers to low-income communities. He believes that having access to computers will assist people to get off SA and start realizing their full potential. Through his business Compu Assist, He worked with community groups to set up facilities and train SA recipients. As a volunteer, he had worked with Banff Avenue Community House and Foster Farm Family House. Over the last 3 years, over 300 children and adults have gained access to computers and training.

Mr. Kellestine understands the province is looking at computer training as an allowable use of the discretionary fund. He stated the OW program does provide for training, but there is little or no budget to access training programs. He reiterated that computer training makes sense, as it enables people to contribute at a higher level. He urged the Region to ensure that OW is used to allow people doing things that are valued in the community and are valuable learning opportunities. In working with the Access Centre for Social Justice, Compu Assist has been successful in getting program money to get computers to teach low-income people how to use them and establish centres. He reiterated that there is money to do projects but resource groups in the community do not have overhead support.

Michelle Levett stated she was receiving FBA and according to her 1997 income tax form she earned \$11,000. Her electric wheelchair cost \$10,000, 25% of which was covered by Supplementary Aid. Ms. Levett emphasized the wheelchair was not a frill for her, with it she can go almost anywhere she wants. When it requires repairs, which are very expensive for her, she is confined to a hand-pushed wheelchair. Ms. Levett stated she had made many sacrifices in her life because of her disability. She has dealt with physical pain and has had to fight her own family to get an independent life. She stressed that it was too much to ask her to spend the rest of her life in a hospital bed when she can contribute to the community.

Seifu Demeke, Ethiopian Community Association. Mr. Demeke stated the Association's members largely depend on SA, Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance. As a community leader, he felt obligated to voice concerns of his community, the majority of whom are categorized as the working poor or on SA. Mr. Demeke asked the Committee to consider new immigrants who are experiencing serious transition problems - trying to find employment and integrating into Canadian society. He is employable, but considered overqualified, as a result he is on SA. The SA staff do not have time to assist in helping people find employment because they are overloaded.

Mr. Demeke stated that his family has used the Start-Up Kit, dental services and the Back-to-School Support. He admitted he was not happy to say he was on SA, but he is proud he is a Canadian and is able to voice his concerns. In conclusion, he pointed out that cuts to social

programs are not like other cuts, they affect real lives and build anger. To take away social programs is to take away life.

*Diane Lemieux & Erin Lee Todd, Interval House.*⁸ Ms. Lemieux was representing the women and children who have left abusive relationships. Their request was not to cut Supplementary Aid and Special Assistance programs or other programs that would affect their lives and their children's lives. Financial and social support are important elements in the decision making of women who are leaving abusive, violent relationships. Ms. Lemieux pointed out that they have already suffered the consequences of earlier cuts to social housing, Supplementary Aid, Special Assistance, legal aid and day care. Ms. Lemieux argued that taking away what is left sends a message to women and children who are victims of abuse, to endure; to not protect themselves and their children; and that violence is OK. Violence towards women and children is a social issue and it is the responsibility of the community to respond and support women and children fleeing abusive situations.

Karen Graham explained that she has been doing volunteer work and receiving training, and she is finally finding she is employable. Today, she learned that she may no longer be eligible for the supports she needs as a low wage earner to ensure her children are taken care of, such as a drug card and dental care. She expressed the feeling that, based on today's message, maybe she shouldn't try so hard if it means losing benefits such as Supplementary Aid. She expressed her frustration at having done what she was suppose to do and now being told things have changed. She stated she had raised her children to believe in the work ethic and to try, but now she will go home with a contradictory message, that maybe it is not worth trying so hard.

Child Care Program

Daniel Bourdeau, Board member, Gloucester Child Care Services (GCCS). Mr. Bourdeau asked Councillors to consider the following factors during their budget deliberations: that reductions to the child care envelope will have a significant impact on an already stretched Child Care system, and; that the provision of affordable and accessible child care is critical. Mr. Bourdeau stressed that studies have shown that the system works; that \$1 invested in child care provides up to \$7 in economic return through the recipient parents being more productive and participative in society. Therefore, he concluded, it made economic sense to invest in social programs as these will pay dividends in the future. Mr. Bourdeau encouraged looking at the money put into social services as an investment rather than strictly an expenditure item on the budget.

Mr. Bourdeau expressed support for the department recommendations contained in the Capital Funding report. He encouraged Committee to consider increasing the per diem rates to retain quality child care providers. He also stated it was difficult to retain quality staff in the day care centres because of the low salaries. In conclusion, Mr. Bourdeau stated that meeting the current and future financing needs of the Region's child care system may require a tax increase.

⁸ Correspondence is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

*Suzanne Dugas & Danielle Galipeau, Regroupement des services de garde de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.*⁹ Ms. Dugas explained that the Regroupement is comprised of francophone and bilingual child care services and related children's services. Their role is co-ordinate the dissemination of information related to francophone child care in the Region, to try to identify the child care needs, to participate in the strategic planning, to liaise with various government levels.

Ms. Galipeau explained that they have recently completed a Strategic Plan which includes an evaluation of what the francophone community has accomplished and identifies priority projects for the next five years. They will be bringing it to Committee in the next few months. The Plan has two aspects: to consolidate existing services and to develop new services. Referring to Capital funding for 1998, Regroupement supports the Department's recommendations. She stated the funds must be partly based on funds available in different centres and not on a percentage allocated arbitrarily, because many francophone centres have no contingency funds.

Ms. Galipeau stated the approved projects must correspond to the priorities as identified by the two groups mandated to do planning, i.e., the Child Care Council and the Regroupement. In spite of representing 17 - 18% of the population, the francophone community currently has 11% of the total number of spaces in child care centres and 8% of these are subsidized spaces. She opined that there is some catching-up to do. The Regroupement wants to ensure that the priorities for francophones, as enunciated in its Strategic Plan, become the priorities of this Committee.

Ms. Dugas reminded the Committee that most of the centres have requested a salary increase of 2.21% (\$700,000) to correspond to the salary increase given to the municipal centres, and that the RMOC had previously committed itself to salary equity between municipal and community agencies which has never been realized.

Lori Bonsall, Co-President, CUPE 2204. Ms. Bonsall explained that as a child care worker, she was part of team involved in developing, planning and implementing program activities to support the emotional, cognitive and physical needs of children. She explained that an important aspect of her job was helping parents become comfortable with leaving their child in someone else's care. To do so, a parent needs to have faith and confidence in the child care provider. Ms. Bonsall stated that quality child care is made up of a team of professionals including the teacher, cook, cleaner, co-ordinator and administrator. Quality child care costs money. During budget deliberations, Ms. Bonsall asked the Committee to remember the community's children and that investing in child care is investing in children, families and ultimately in the community.

Ms. Bonsall stated the child care professionals of CUPE 2204 would shortly be entering into contract negotiations, and for the first time in seven years, were hoping to gain a slight wage increase. This, she explained, would help to ensure that the field continues to attract the brightest and the best; to recognize the commitment of those already in the field, and; to acknowledge the value of the work provided.

⁹ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Joanne Hunter, Child Care Council (CCC). Ms. Hunter stated the CCC supported, in principle, the departmental recommendations for Capital Funding. This support is conditional on four items: 1) on Committee supporting the development of a community-based strategic plan for Child Care; 2) on Child Care Capital Funding being included in future budgets (i.e. increasing the tax base to maintain and enlarge the system); 3) on the Child Care Contingency Fund being replenished, and; 4) on the ongoing operational support for programs experiencing unforeseen problems due to the amalgamation and budget restrictions of the school boards.

Ms. Hunter observed that there was financial income not shown during the budget presentation. This was income from full-fee paying parents, including post-secondary students who now have to make a larger contribution. She requested that those financial contributions be shown in future Child Care financial statements as fee paying parents are helping to support a system that is available to subsidized parents. Finally, Ms. Hunter asked the Committee to remember the children during budget deliberations, and the impact their choices will have on the children's future.

Councillor Holmes asked about the status of the community-based strategic plan. Ms. Hunter responded that the plan is something the CCC has been trying to work on for the past few years, but is "on the back burner." The CCC has identified this year as a good time to build a basic strategic plan for the anglophone system. Ms. Gayle Preston, as a representative on CCC, has been helping with the process.

Cindy Magloughlin, Child Care Association. Ms. Magloughlin stated the child care community is facing three budgetary pressures in 1998: the elimination of Capital Grants for Child Care; the downloading due to municipal restructuring, and; the freeze on operating funds at January 1997 levels. Findings of a recent study by Gord Cleveland confirm that good child care is good for parents, children and society. Quality child care requires trained staff, high staff to child ratios, low staff turnover, small group sizes and adequate physical environments. All of these areas are being threatened by provincial cuts. To address the physical environment, capital costs are an ongoing requirement for Child Care. Health and safety upgrades, general repairs and relocation costs all place demands on funding. In addition, changes to education are putting a strain on capital needs. Over half the programs are school based. The probability of school closures and sale of school properties may require a sudden mass relocation of programs. The Contingency Fund can address this problem for a year or two, but this is an ongoing problem that requires a permanent solution.

Ms. Magloughlin also noted that operating costs have continued to rise. In addition, budgets were rolled back 2.1% to preserve the 707 jobs Ontario spaces. She emphasized that no more cuts can be tolerated without affecting quality. Ms. Magloughlin noted that many child care programs have submitted their 1998 budgets with a 2.21% increase (reflects the reduction in OMERS contributions received by Regional employees). She stated that base salary levels have been

frozen since 1991, and while pay equity was suppose to have addressed the gap between Regional staff and the private sector staff it is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.

In conclusion, Ms. Magloughlin stated that Provincial downloading has added \$3 million to the Region's Child Care budget. The savings gained in this change is being used to offset some of the downloading costs, instead being reinvested in the service. She concluded that at some point, levies will have to be increased or programs will have to be cut.

1998 Community Funding

*Dan McIntyre, Executive Director, Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Associations.*¹⁰ Mr. McIntyre stated the Federation works with individual tenants and tenants' associations. The Federation was unsuccessful in receiving a Grant under the Social Services grant program, so they are asking Council for \$21,900 (half the amount of funding originally requested). The Federation is anticipating \$26,600 from the City of Ottawa, but this is not enough to sustain operation. They have been running deficits for the past two years.

Mr. McIntyre informed Committee that the *Tenant Protection Act* will be implemented this summer. The implications for this community will be no rent control on units. He expressed concern that Section 36 of the *Act* appears to condone a practice by landlords to discriminate against low-income people. He emphasized that the implications of the *Act* are so great, that the Federation should be helped to make sure that it can continue its work.

Mohammed Hagi-Aden, Better Beginnings/Better Futures Program and the Somali Centre for Family Services. Mr. Hagi-Aden stated that as a worker, he has had the opportunity to visit the homes of the people who are affected by cutbacks and as a community leader he has advocated on their behalf. The cuts instituted by the provincial government have affected this vulnerable segment of community. Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, Mr. Hagi-Aden stated the common vision they have is to share their concerns, so that the Committee will have clear understanding of what the people are going through and in the long run this will assist Committee make objective, fair decisions. Finally, he expressed surprise that no one has spoken to the benefits of One Year Grants. So many agencies rely on these grants for their existence. In closing, he thanked Commissioner Stewart and the Department staff for their dedication.

Community Resource Centres

*Bob Petrie & Claudette Boyer, Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa-Carleton.*¹¹ Mr. Petrie is the President of the Goulbourn, Kanata, West Carleton Community Resource Centre (CRC), and is representing the Coalition of 13 Health and Community Centres. The CRCs, through paid staff, community partners and volunteers, help those in the community who are unable to help themselves. The CRCs act as co-ordinators of services, train volunteers

¹⁰ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

¹¹ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

and are often the first point of contact in a crisis. Volunteers are an integral part of the Resource Centres' programs. The CRCs work is made possible by grants from the Region. Mr. Petrie emphasized that this is an investment in the community, individuals and their families. The Centres are located within the neighbourhoods they serve and can provide the types of services required. Cuts in previous years have greatly increased the demand for the services of Resource Centres.

Ms. Boyer stated the Coalition supports the recommendation to maintain funding at the 1997 level, however an increase would be very much appreciated. Core funding is a good investment because of the multiplier effect since it generates additional revenues and services for community groups. She noted that the One-Time Grants are essential to introducing new programs and promoting a sense of belonging to clients. These subsidies allow interesting partnerships between the Centres and community agencies. These exchanges also contribute to a reduction in costs and duplication of services. Referring to a earlier discussion of the Business Occupancy Tax, Ms. Boyer stated that the Centretown CHC may be facing an increase of \$30,000 and the Pinecrest-Queensway CHC may have an increase of \$50,000.

Day Programs

*Pat Connolly, Acting Chair, Day Programs Committee.*¹² Ms. Connolly stated the delegation would like to update the Committee on the challenges faced by the Day Programs. They are finding it difficult to keep up with the level of demand with their very limited resources. Approximately 1,000 people visit the Day Programs daily. The population they serve has been directly impacted by the social program cuts. The changes to SA have created a more oppressive and restrictive social climate. Basic survival, she pointed out, for many clients was a struggle even before the cuts. As a result, Day Program staff are witnessing a high level of stress and despair, which presents as increased agitation and digression. Clients feeling overwhelmed and powerless become agitated and sometimes violent, which poses a threat to staff. Ms. Connolly stated that many of the Programs are inadequately staffed and have not yet reached staffing standards as mutually set out during contract negotiations with the Region.

Through their clients, Day Program staff hear about the inaccessibility of adequate child care, the unavailability of adequate mental health services, the lack of food available at the local food bank, the insufficient numbers of Outreach staff, and the constant battles with the SA system.

Day Programs offer a safe environment, where participants are recognized, respected and accepted. The Region has recognized that the Day Programs are a key component to the delivery of services to the vulnerable in the community. These programs provide core services that reduce the use of other more costly services such as hospitals, detention centres, institutions and the criminal justice system. In conclusion, she acknowledged the on-going support of Region, but also pointed out that Day Programs have been trying to manage on flat-line budgets for the past few years.

¹² Correspondence is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

*Garth Bulmer, Faith Partners.*¹³ Mr. Bulmer explained that, as faith communities across Ottawa-Carleton, they assume pastoral responsibility for hundreds of people, many of whom are very vulnerable. Referring to the recommendations contained in the handout, Mr. Bulmer stated the Faith Partners recommend that: 1) the RMOC adopt the recommendations of the People's Hearings; 2) the RMOC's Special Assistance/Supplementary Aid be restored to their pre-1995 level; 3) the RMOC lobby for welfare rates established on a "market basket approach" which reflect the actual cost of basic needs; 4) the RMOC maintain funding for food banks and day programs at least at current levels; 5) the RMOC and community partners work together in establishing a Social Forecast concurrent with any fiscal forecasts and that such forecasts always be presented together, and; 6) the RMOC indicate its commitment to the performance evaluation of public policies by continuing to support ongoing funding for the Ontario Works Monitoring Project as it is the only evaluation tool being used in Ontario to measure the effectiveness of current social welfare reform in Ontario.

Diane Morrison, Men's Shelters. Ms. Morrison began by stating the delegation represented the most vulnerable population in the Region - the homeless population. She was speaking on behalf of The Salvation Army, the Shepherds of Good Hope, the Union Mission, and 3,420 men who stayed in the shelters last year. Ms. Morrison stated that these men did not chose to be homeless, and that 90% of the men were able to leave in less than two months. The shelters are an emergency service, providing food, shelter, clothing, and emergency referrals. They own and maintain their own buildings. Ms. Morrison stated the current per diem of \$25.91 does not cover these basic expenses. The demand for service has risen 10% over 1997, and the demand for meals has doubled in the last five years. She noted that the women's and youth's shelters receive a per diem of \$34.50, and their buildings are maintained by the Region. These shelters also have a higher staff to client ratio than the men's shelters system.

Ms. Morrison emphasized that the men's shelter system has been under-funded for too long. The safety of staff and clients is at risk because there are too few staff to look after too many clients. The evening staff/client ratio is 2:100. Many of the clients have mental health and addiction issues. She noted there were 68 assaults in the last 12 months at the Union Mission alone. In closing Ms. Morrison stated the homeless men in this community deserved the same level of assistance as received by other homeless people. She asked the Committee to approve the maximum per diem of \$34.50 per day for the men's shelter system.

Food Programs

*Heather Colls, Kanata Food Cupboard.*¹⁴ Ms. Colls explained that the Food Cupboard has reorganized its Board structure to become a community-run agency. The Food Cupboard has doubled in size in the past four years, including an increase of 1,000 families in the last year. She

¹³ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

¹⁴ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

stated that dealing with this growth has been a challenge for an agency this size. They operate very efficiently, including seeking community donations. In 1997, excluding the Christmas Program, the Food Cupboard helped 9,615 people by providing food for six days. She noted that there are no school breakfast or lunch programs in Kanata, because there is no school that can be identified as needing it more than others.

Sixty-one percent of families served are single-parent families. The biggest challenge for these parents is finding daycare so that they can participate in retraining. She spoke of other challenges including housing, Workfare, transportation, drug coverage, and dental care. In closing, Ms. Colls reminded Committee that the Food Programs are often the first contact for people in need.

Ann Frederking, Executive Director, Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard. Ms. Frederking urged the Committee to maintain the funding for Food Programs and to defend that funding before Council. Since August 1997, the Gloucester Food Cupboard has served record numbers of clients. Last month, they provided a four day supply of food to over 1800 people. In 1997, the Food Cupboard served over 1300 different families, more than half of those families used the service five or fewer times during the year. With the exception of a very small number, there is an enormous turnover of clients and they use the program only as necessary. She stated that Food Programs really are the end of the line. Cuts to other supports, have place an increased demand on Food Programs.

Greg Joy, The Food Bank. Mr. Joy explained that the Food Bank is a central organization that supplies 70 different programs, such as the men's shelters and school breakfast programs. Through that network, 30,000 people/month receive assistance, 42% of whom are children. He noted that food banks have become an integral part of the social assistance network in this community. The Food Bank distributes approximately \$22,000 worth of food daily, the vast majority of which is support by corporate donations. Because of the growth in demand, the Food Bank is now in a situation of having to lease space for the first time.

Six years ago, the Food Bank received \$128,000 of government funding and was distributing one-third of the amount of food it currently distributes today. The current recommendation for a \$11,350 regional Grant, represents approximately a half a day's worth of food. Mr. Joy concluded by saying the people of this community rely heavily on food banks, that in turn require more support to continue to meet the need.

Kerry Kaiser, Co-ordinator, Centretown Emergency Food Centre. Ms. Kaiser explained that the Food Centre is the main project of the Centretown Church Social Action Coalition, comprised of 26 churches in the Centretown community. The Coalition is committed to social injustice issues. She clarified that people don't choose to be poor; poverty randomly chooses its victims. She thanked the RMOC for its support of Food Programs. The Food Centre is linked to other services in the community such as Health Centres, Day Programs, and school breakfast and lunch programs.

The Coalition also offers free employment counseling and access to regular employment programs through the Food Centre. In conclusion, Ms. Kaiser emphasized the good value the Region gets from directing its funds towards Food Programs and Day Programs, and the importance of the partnership that benefits the whole community.

Counseling and Personal Supports

Kim Armour & Mary Stern, Distress Centre. Ms. Armour stated the Distress Centre answered 22,000 calls and provided 10,000 hours of volunteer peer counseling and crisis service in 1997. Part of the service provided is urgent intervention for issues such as child abuse, suicide, domestic violence and self-mutilation. The Centre supplements the work of the Police Force, Children's Aid Society and 9-11. The RMOC funds are a vital part of the Distress Centre's budget and Ms Armour asked that the Region reinstate the 20% reduction in funding. For the first time, the Board is questioning the viability of the 24-hour service and they have already had to discontinue the Youth Line. In closing, Ms. Armour asked the Committee to make the tough budget decisions required and not pass on the provincial cuts to the Region.

*Gillian Gailey, Aphasia Centre.*¹⁵ Ms. Gailey read a petition signed by over 100 families currently receiving services at the Aphasia Centre. She explained that aphasia is a communication disorder, affecting all aspects of language including speech, writing and reading. Loss in communication can lead to a loss of employability, social isolation, disrupted family relationships and depression. The Aphasia Centre is a unique community-based organization, dedicated to the long term support of all people affected by aphasia. Because of the problems with aphasia, these clients cannot access other services in community.

The Centre is a registered charitable organization and is partially funded by donations. People who use the service are requested to pay fees. For many families, the amount they can afford to pay is severely limited by low fixed income or loss of employment. People with aphasia are seldom able to return to the regular work force due to the communication disorder. Ms. Gailey stressed that core funding is essential to supplement donations and fees.

The Centre received a 3 year grant from the federal government, but that funding finished in July. Since November, they have had to lay off all of the staff, so they are operating totally on volunteer basis now. Ms. Gailey stated they have partnerships in community which enable them to provide a very cost effective program. She concluded by asking Committee to find some way to provide some funding to enable the Aphasia Centre to continue to provide services.

In response to questions from Councillor Byrne, Ms. Gailey stated that the Aphasia Centre receives over 60 referrals/year. These are whole families requiring support for extended periods. Over 70% of referrals come from health care agencies such as the Rehab Centre and St. Vincent's. The Centre provides a bilingual service across the Region. They are requesting \$47,000 from the Region.

¹⁵ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Ahmed Saeed, Somali Centre for Youth, Women & Community Development. Mr. Saeed stated that the Centre provides a variety of services including settlement programs for newcomers. In addition to a very vital youth program, the Centre also offers Life Skills training, leadership training, youth counseling, and time management skills training.

Mr. Saeed noted that approximately 60% of the families in the Somali community are headed by single mothers. He observed that many of the Somali youth are in trouble with the law. There is also generation gap between parents maintaining the traditional Somali culture and youth wanting to assimilate into the Canadian culture. The community is facing another problem with a large number of Somali students graduating from high school but unable to continue with post-secondary education because of immigration barriers. For these reasons, the Centre focuses on program for youth.

Mr. Saeed stated that the Centre has established partnerships with Pinecrest-Queensway CHC, Children's Aid Society, Catholic Immigration Centre, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police, and OC Transpo. In conclusion, he opined that funding priorities should be given to people.

*Mark Zarecki, Family Service Agencies of Ottawa-Carleton.*¹⁶ On behalf of the Family Service Agencies, Mr. Zarecki expressed support for the budget recommendations to maintain the agencies' funding at current levels. The agencies have experienced an overall 25% reduction in funding over the last few years. Operations have been streamlined and downsized to the point where further cuts in funding would threaten their viability. The Family Service Agencies have been working with the Department to ensure that there is a sharing of responsibilities and no duplication of services.

Mr. Zarecki stressed that many welfare recipients require the kinds of services provided by the agencies. He emphasized that people need to be "life-ready" before they can be job-ready. Many welfare recipients find that their personal crises are the very reasons they are trapped in welfare. In conclusion, Mr. Zarecki urged the Committee to consider the human factor throughout its deliberations.

Community Houses

Barb Carrol, Coalition for Community Houses. Speaking on behalf of the Community Houses, Ms. Carrol stated the recommended 20.8% cut in funding will jeopardize the programs and services they offer. Community Houses have an enormous capacity to meet people's needs. For example, the Debra Dynes Family House was created in a community of 180 houses, 800 people, 500 children and youth, 23 different nationalities and where 46% of families are headed by a single mother. It provides food to 1,200 people a month living within its catchment area.

¹⁶ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Ms. Carrol stated that the strength of Community Houses is their ability to respond quickly to needs of families, before problems escalated. They are particularly concerned about the well-being of the children, and ensuring good quality food and recreation. It is more likely that Community Houses will have to accept more and more responsibility as other programs are closing down, including 100-120 school programs. Community Houses have been built successful partnerships with 26 community agencies/groups, and rely on heavily on community members as volunteers. In closing, Ms. Carrol asked the Committee to give serious consideration to maintaining the funding to Community Houses at the 1997 level.

Councillor Loney asked Ms. Carrol to clarify her funding request. In response she requested that the total funding envelope be reconsidered to provide \$15,000 per agency.

Louise Bassnette & Joan Tumbrel, Russell Heights Community House. Ms. Bassnette explained that the Community House Co-ordinator position has been reduced from 20 to 15 hours/week, which is not enough time for soliciting donations and program development. She spoke about the stigma associated with being "low-income" and what the Community House does to overcome these problems. She expressed concern about the viability of programs for disabled children.

Ms. Tumbrel requested that funding be maintained at 1997 levels. She stated the Community Houses play a vital role in the community through volunteers-run programs, and a wide range of services used by many people. The small amount of money that is put into Community Houses is paid back through the skill development and increased employability of people.

Action-Logement and Housing Help

*Rosine Kaley, Action Logement.*¹⁷ Ms. Kaley explained that the departmental report, *Review of Funding for Action-Logement and Housing Help*, was in response to a motion by Councillor Bellemare last year to review the funding formula for Action-Logement and Housing Help. She commended the Department on the preparation of the report. She stressed that it was critical for the agency to have some additional funding. In the past, they have been able to manage staffing with assistance from employment and student programs but those provincial programs no longer exist. As a result, they have a longer waiting list, and have deal with more crises versus prevention. In closing, Ms. Rosine reiterated the recommendations contained in the report.

Questions to Staff

In response to inquiries by Councillor Doucet, Commissioner Stewart stated there was a \$5.00 salary differential between the employees of the men's shelters and the women's shelters. He stated the men shelter system was a bigger system with approximately 225 beds compared to 39 beds in the women's shelter system. In order to provide parity to the men's shelters, effective 1 June 1998, it would cost an additional \$93,000 Net to the emergency shelter budget (\$160,000

¹⁷ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

on an annualized basis). The Department had already put an additional \$200,000 Gross/\$40,000 Net in the base estimates for an increase in the per diem. Commissioner Stewart confirmed that 80/20 provincial cost-sharing would attract \$1 million Gross/\$200,000 Net on an annualized basis. He added that other options might be considered for using the funds for a broader homelessness initiative, if acceptable to Committee, Council and the Province.

Councillor Doucet stated he would be putting forth a motion for equity in the shelter system and his motion would be flexible in allowing the Department to work with the various shelters to serve people living in poverty outside of the shelters.

Commissioner Stewart confirmed for Councillor Holmes that \$11,000-\$12,000 had been allocated in 1997 and budgeted for 1998 to support an evaluation of Ontario Works. Ms. St. Jean added that through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, a group was looking at an evaluation that would allow comparisons between municipalities. She stated there are some requirements in Ontario Works for activity counts but not a full scale evaluation.

Councillor Holmes asked for clarification of the Social Forecast, as recommended by the Faith Partners delegation. In response, Commissioner Stewart cited the example of the recent provincial cut to the \$37.00/month pregnancy allowance as a fiscal decision that clearly had social impacts. He noted there are other public policy decisions that are made extensively for fiscal reasons that have social impacts beyond the scope of the traditional social service environment. Commissioner Stewart stated he was unclear to what extent the delegation intended the social impact review.

Councillor Holmes stated there should certainly be a social impact statement in addition to a fiscal statement relating to other budgets. Commissioner Stewart stated that often the impact of expenditure decisions are experienced in the budget of another department, level of government, or organization. Budget decisions within the Region are usually made in consideration of effects to various other departments. Commissioner Stewart stated he agreed with including a social impact analysis for public policy positions taken by the Social Services Department.

In response to an inquiry by Councillor Loney on how much of Supplementary Aid is legally discretionary, Commissioner Stewart stated that with the exception of vision care and dental care for children, the remaining menu of items is discretionary. He added that through other statutes, there is a requirement to provide funeral and burial for indigent people.

Councillor Doucet stated he envisioned a Social Forecast as a narrative form of what the Region has been doing in the social and community scene during the past couple of years, and a forecast of where it's going in the next year. He asked Commissioner Stewart if something similar already existed. Commissioner Stewart stated that the Department does an environmental scan annually to identify priorities which may not be as exhaustive as what Councillor Doucet described, but is fundamentally similar.

Commissioner Stewart responded to Councillor Loney's observations of the Social Housing budget by stating the Region's social housing funding requirements for 1998 do not reside in the Social Services Department's budget. The Region will need to make some decisions, including structure and how those budgets will be built in, probably through the recommendations of the Social Housing Working Group.

Mr. Sabey explained for Councillor Loney that the province's proposed plan for dental services had been developed through a consultative process. He confirmed that a draft proposal was distributed to a number of municipalities including the RMOC. Municipalities have generally taken the position that, within the procedures that the Province has identified, municipalities need flexibility to determine how best to deliver and administer the services. Ottawa-Carleton is unique in that it has a dental clinic program administered by Health Department. The Social Services Department and Health Department have worked hard over the last four years to achieve a more effective control of dental expenditures and educe costs without substantially sacrificing service.

Mr. Sabey stated that within the proposed dental program, there was a schedule of procedures which will be mandatory for children and may be used for the delivery of discretionary services to adults. The Departments' assessment is that the schedule of services and procedures that the government has proposed will meet any dental need of child or adult. Another element of the proposed policy requires predetermination for a certain numbers of procedures which the Department strongly supports, as it is important to maintain control administratively and fiscally. Mr. Sabey opined it was a reasonable approach to providing dental services.

Councillor Loney suggested the current dental service needs to be evaluated against any proposals put forward by the ODS. Since there is no comparable service being provided by a municipality in Ontario, he suggested one could be found outside the province. He would like to have proof of which dental service plan is going to provide the most dental service for the dollar. Commissioner Stewart confirmed that a business case would be prepared.

Councillor Loney inquired about the quantity of bus tickets to be purchased in 1998, based on the current budget estimates, as compared to 1997. Commissioner Stewart stated it was a difficult question to answer as it required deeming a certain amount of the employment support expenditure portion of Ontario Works as transportation subsidy. If the Department could commit that portion to the purchase of transportation services from OC Transpo, in addition to \$400,000 worth of tickets purchased last year (from Special Assistance), he opined that the Department would need to increase transportation purchases to approximately \$1 million in 1998. Commissioner Stewart stated he had met with Mr. Stacey, and he intended to present a number of business options that would increase ridership and revenues, and would be beneficial to both parties. Commissioner Stewart added that discussions were mainly linked to Ontario Works because most of the funds available must be used for that purpose.

Commissioner Stewart confirmed for Chair Munter that \$65,000-\$70,000 per annum had been allocated within the draft budget estimates to pay the deductibles for the Trillium Drug Plan. Chair Munter requested that next year this item be listed in the budget estimates.

Chair Munter inquired about the status of the Rooming House Information and Education Network program. In response Commissioner Stewart stated that the \$70,000 financial support from the City Of Ottawa for the Network and the positions of Community Worker and Eviction Prevention Worker had been confirmed for the remainder of 1998. The Department had received a written request from the City of Ottawa to finance the program. In response, Commissioner Stewart suggested raising the matter with the Province, particularly the Provincial Task Force on Homelessness, as an innovative way to sustain an important housing network that provides relief for people. If the Province does not provide funding, the Region will need to consider it in its 1999 budget.

Referring to Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance, Chair Munter asked if there was a way to assist people with the purchase of assistive devices similar to the way the Department currently pays the deductible for the Trillium Drug Plan. Commissioner Stewart emphasized that there was a distinction between the purchase of assistive devices and their maintenance. The Assistive Devices Program only provides a subsidy towards the purchase of an item. A considerable portion of expenditures for the disabled had been towards the repair and maintenance of these devices. He suggested that pressure should be put on the provincial government to live up to its commitment to eliminate the 25% co-payment. The Department will prepare an assessment of this, and other regulatory changes. He suggested that the Department could adopt a program, similar to the Trillium Drug Plan, to assist people with the acquisition of items.

In response to questions from Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen, Ms. Levere explained that there was a \$2200-\$2400 maximum for funeral expenses and \$1000 for burial expenses, which is cost-shared by the province until 1 May 1998. In 1997, this represented a \$620,000 expenditure. Mr. Sabey added that there were no other expenditure options available within the provincially-imposed constraints. He stated the whole issue of costs related to funerals/burials is problematic for municipalities across Ontario. Increasingly, funerals are not always consistent with Christian traditions, which creates challenges for staff. The Department's policy is to impose some limits that can be approved, and for staff to investigate the financial circumstances of family and the deceased person to identify other sources of accessible funds. Chair Munter requested the costs for providing funerals and burials for indigent people be included in the budget.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen asked for staff to comment on the proposal from the Aphasia Centre. Ms. Capperault confirmed that a meeting with the organization was already arranged for later in the month. She stated the normal procedure was to outline the Council-approved criteria for funding to ensure the organization met those criteria, and then review some of the funding options available.

Committee Deliberations

Moved by D. Holmes

That a report be prepared regarding the effects, to the working poor, the disabled and the elderly, of the Provincial changes to Discretionary Benefits and that this report include measures the RMOC can take or facilitate to deal with these gaps.

CARRIED

Moved by A. Munter

WHEREAS the government has re-named the essential health and social supports of Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance with the highly-misleading label “Discretionary Benefits”.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this label only be used for the purposes of communicating with the Province and that for the purposes of all other communication this program be identified as the “Essential Health and Social Services Supports”.

CARRIED

Moved by C. Doucet

That the Commissioner of Social Services meet with the General Manager of OC Transpo to discuss improved ways of maximizing the use of OC Transpo by Social Assistance recipients and report back to the Community Services Committee with a menu of options including increased funding.

CARRIED

A motion was put forward by Councillor Holmes that the Social Services Department work with the Health Department, OC Transpo, Regional Police, Homes for the Aged, and community partners to establish a Social Forecast, concurrent with any Fiscal Forecasts, and that they be presented together.

Speaking to her motion, Councillor Holmes stated that when Committee has a fiscal discussion, (i.e. at budget time) that a social impact statement be presented at the same time. For example, the social impact of moving towards Ontario Works and providing resources for only employables was never stated. Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen stated her support for the motion, adding the long term costs of decisions must be examined.

Councillor Beamish inquired how the Social Forecast would be presented. Commissioner Stewart suggested a Forecast would be prepared when there was a policy change. He opined that when a fiscal or economic forecast is prepared, a dollar sign is easily understood. Preparing a social forecast is not as clear because conclusions have to be drawn and assumptions made. For comparability, the approach that should translate into costs or a change in the social condition. He suggested an opinion section, that readers would be required to review before reading a document, that discussed a public policy change primarily rooted in economics.

As an example, Councillor Holmes suggested it would be beneficial for the Police Force to comment on the implications, for their department, of cutting Community Houses' funding. Commissioner Stewart referred to the current report format that includes a section for financial implications. He suggested that an additional section could be added for social implications.

Chair Munter referred to the practice related to development applications, where the application is circulated to every agency in the province (e.g. gas, hydro, fire, schools, cable, etc.) to comment of the implications. He opined that a similar, scaled-down exercise would be appropriate when considering reducing funding for community programs.

Councillor Doucet suggested that the annual forecasts provided by the OECD would be an appropriate model for the proposed Social Forecasts.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the Social Services Department work with the Health Department, OC Transpo, Regional Police, Homes for the Aged, and community partners to establish a Social Forecast, concurrent with any Fiscal Forecasts, and that they be presented together.

CARRIED

A motion was put forward by Councillor Loney that the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the 1998 Draft Operating and Draft Capital Estimates (Social Services Department) as tabled with Regional Council on 11 February 1998, including the 1998 funding allocations to community organizations as described in Annexes A to E of the staff report.

An amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Davis that the Community Services Committee and Council approve the provision of monthly bus passes. This should be done by maximizing the cost shared Discretionary Benefits and Ontario Works budget. Passes should be available to all Social Assistance recipients requesting and requiring bus transit according to current departmental practices.

Chair Munter noted that a dollar figure would be needed if a budgetary provision was to be made. Speaking to her motion, Councillor Davis stated would be impossible to attach a dollar value because what this motion is trying to capitalize on the Ontario Works budget and an opportunity for cost-sharing with the province. She stated the motion was an attempt to move towards improved accessibility and use of the transit system. Providing bus passes would enable people better access and the ability to move through the Region.

Commissioner Stewart stated that if the Department was literally to provide a bus pass to every SA recipient it would be a \$36 million budget item, which is clearly not the intent of the motion. Departmental guidelines currently focus on transportation for individuals who have some obligations under Ontario Works program to attend courses, appointments, or look for work. He interpreted the motion to mean that as the Department negotiates the final Ontario Works budget with the province, it will attempt to maximize the employment support expenditure item, with particular attention to transportation. Also in negotiations with the transportation commission, the Department will attempt to negotiate for the best bargain for purchasing transportation services (e.g. bus passes or tickets).

Councillor Davis emphasized that what she was attempting to do was improve accessibility for true-need cases or multiple demands for medical appointments. She

reiterated that it goes beyond transferring money from one part of the corporation to another. Commissioner Stewart reminded the Committee that there was a mandatory Medical Necessities Program used extensively by the Department to provide medical transportation, other than ambulance. He stated the issue was to maximize cost-sharing for transportation services.

Councillor Loney suggested it would be appropriate to refer motion to the Commissioner with the request for a report discussing the financial and social implications.

Moved by A. Loney

That the following motion be referred to the Social Services Department and report back to Committee with a dollar amount:

CARRIED

The Community Services Committee and Council approve the provision of monthly bus passes. This should be done by maximizing the cost shared Discretionary Benefits and Ontario Works budget. Passes should be available to all Social Assistance recipients requesting and requiring bus transit according to current departmental practices.

REFERRED

An second amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Byrne that \$47,000 be allocated as a grant to the Aphasia Centre for its counseling and personal support programs, and that this grant be funded out of the proposed reduction of the Supplementary Aid/Special Assistance Budget.

Speaking to her motion, Councillor Byrne stated that because a meeting had already arranged between the Centre and Department staff to discuss the funding request, she would consider referring the motion to staff. She expressed concern that a delay in funding may jeopardize the viability of the program which was already operating on a volunteer basis. She emphasized that the Aphasia Centre provided a valuable bilingual service across the Region in assisting a large segment of the population reintegrate into the community. She opined that this service provided cost-savings for the health care and social services budgets.

Responding to an inquiry by Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen, Ms. Capperault stated that a report to Committee could be available within a short time period. She added that part of the departmental recommendation would include some analysis of how the organization fit into the priorities as determined by Council. She acknowledged that this organization

provided a valuable service, as do many other organizations, and that this request would need to be put in context of other requests from the community.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen stated she would not support the motion for the request for funding, as she felt it unfair to other organizations wanting to be evaluated by the Department to qualify for funding. She stated she would be prepared to move a motion to refer to staff.

Councillor Loney stated his support for the motion to refer, and suggested that the proposal be reviewed by the Health Department and the Social Services Department to identify sources for permanent base funding.

Chair Munter opined that the organization name was misleading because it is not a “disease group”. The organization provides a social service, opportunities for integration and, clients are referred by other social services agencies.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That the following motion be referred to the Social Services and Health Department for review and provide a report to present to the Community Services Committee at its first meeting in June 1998:

CARRIED

- 1. That \$47,000 be allocated as a grant to the Aphasia Centre, for its counseling and personal support programs, and;**
- 2. That this grant be funded out of the proposed reduction of the Supplementary Aid/ Special Assistance Budget.**

REFERRED

A third amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Holmes that the 1998 level of funding for Food Programs be maintained at the 1997 level except for the increase to the Kanata Food Cupboard, for a total budget envelope of \$212,743.

Speaking to her motion, Councillor Holmes stated this represents a \$2,000 increase for the budget envelope (Annex B of 1998 Community Funding Recommendations report), in order to add more to the Kanata Food Cupboard. She iterated that Food Programs are essential, largely volunteer-run, and make good use of the money in this situation.

Commissioner Stewart referred to page 117 of the 1998 Draft Operating Estimates in pointing out that \$16,000 of the \$210,000 expenditure in 1997 came out of the Provision

for Unforeseen and was not carried forward in the base budget. Commissioner Stewart stated if the intent of motion was to increase funding to \$212,743, then \$18,000 would need to be added to the base budget. Finance Department staff confirmed that the motion, as written, was clear that the amount was \$212,743.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the 1998 level of funding for Food Programs be maintained at the 1997 level except for a \$2,000 increase to the Kanata Food Cupboard, for a total budget envelope of \$212,743.

CARRIED

A fourth amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Doucet that the Community Services Committee recommend to Regional Council: 1) that the per diem rate for men's shelters (80% provincial/20% Regional) be increased to \$34.50 from \$25.91, thus ensuring that the men's shelter system receives funding equal to that received by other shelter systems funded by the Region; 2) that the majority of this increased funding go to increasing the staff:client ratio and funding the operating costs of the shelters; 3) that staff be requested to work with the shelter directors to use part of the increase in funding to find innovative ways to serve the non-resident shelter population impacted by poverty and illness, and; 4) that a regional contribution of \$93,000 for these services to homeless people be added to the estimates, attracting a provincial subsidy of \$372,000.

In response to questions from Councillor Kreling, Commissioner Stewart stated the net cost to the Region for all shelters was approximately \$2 million. The Region has made no requirements for certain staff:client ratios, rather the shelters presented arguments for certain ratios. He stated there were no formal standards with respect to emergency shelters because this was not a provincially regulated service. The services are provided through RMOC funding and a network of charitable and religious organizations. Commissioner Stewart expressed concern about staff safety as presented by the men's shelters representatives. He reiterated that a staff:client ratio of 2:100 overnight was potentially a risk issue, particularly in light of the increasing complexity of problems people present with when coming to the shelters.

Councillor Kreling expressed hope that the Region would not impose staffing ratios on an organization with which it had a contractual agreement. He requested clarification of the intent of the third part of the motion. In response, Councillor Doucet stated that from discussions with the Union Mission and Commissioner Stewart it was clear that the Mission served many meals to people living independently but could not afford to buy

food. The intent was not to tie funding to just room and board, but to provide flexibility to serve people in other ways.

Councillor Kreling asked if the Department had looked at ways to improve the per diem for the men's shelter's without having to increase the size of the budget envelope. Commissioner Stewart stated that comparisons between the men's shelters and other shelters was difficult and the \$34.50 per diem for the youth and women's shelters was a derivative of the economies of scale. He noted that the women's shelter system was in a deficit position. Commissioner Stewart referred to an internal staff report that compared the actual shelter costs in 1996 (\$33.00) to what the department was paying. The factors that influenced the decision not to increase the per diem rate, at that time, included successive years of budget restraints and the men's shelters' capacity to raise charitable donations. Commissioner Stewart stated that \$34.50 was an appropriate per diem but reminded Committee that the Region was not the only source of revenue for the men's shelters.

Commissioner Stewart explained that the difference in per diem rates, in addition to factors already identified, historically related to the timing of the consolidation the women's shelters and the introduction of pay equity legislation which lead to the \$5.00 wage differential. Mr. Legault added that there are currently negotiations with the shelters to undertake more work (registration and assessment) on behalf of the Department, and the Department has put an additional \$200,000 Gross/\$40,000 Net into the 1998 budget to accommodate this additional work (this will increase the per diem to \$28.35).

Councillor Holmes stated that it was time that the employees of the men's shelter received the same level of compensation as the employees of the women's shelters. She noted that the Union Mission was located in a heritage building, and there was a community effort to preserve the building. She did not expect the men's shelters to fundraise to bring the per diem up to par.

Councillor Loney suggested the per diem should be raised incrementally, but would support the motion. Commissioner Stewart speculated that the current cost-sharing arrangement with the Province could be capped in the near future.

Councillor Doucet stated that donations from churches for the shelters was down 40% reflecting their own financial strains. He stated that on a recent visit to the Union Mission, he was impressed to see how much it did with so little funding, but it was clear to him that they needed more money. He reminded Committee that this was an opportunity to attract 80/20 cost-sharing from the Province.

Councillor Holmes and Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen stated their support for the motion based on the provincial money it will attract. Chair Munter concurred, noting that municipal downloading had taken \$120 million from this community. He stated that

previous cuts to social services had resulted in more people having to access this essential emergency shelter system.

Moved by C. Doucet

That the Community Services Committee recommend to Regional Council:

- 1. That the per diem rate for men's shelters (80% provincial/20% regional) be increased to \$34.50 from \$25.91, thus ensuring that the men's shelter system receives funding equal to that received by other shelter systems funded by the region;**
- 2. That the majority of this increased funding go to decreasing the staff-client ratio and funding the operating costs of the shelters;**
- 3. That staff be requested to work with shelter directors to use part of the increase in funding to find innovative ways to serve the non-resident shelter population impacted by poverty and illness, and;**
- 4. That a regional contribution of \$93,000 for these services to homeless people be added to the estimates, attracting a provincial subsidy of \$372,000.**

CARRIED

A fifth amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Holmes that Community Houses be funded at the 1997 rate and that Britannia Woods Community Association and the Foster Farm Family House be funded at the same rate as the others for a total budget envelope of \$125,000.

Speaking to her motion, Councillor Holmes stated the \$125,000 represents a \$30,000 increase to the budget envelope. In order to bring on the two new Community Houses, Britannia Woods and Foster Farm, the funding for the other Community Houses has been reduced by 20.8%. She opined that this was one of the most important programs in the Region situated where the people-at-risk live. She reminded Committee that these are families who cannot afford to participate in the cities' recreation programs.

Councillor Loney asked staff why all the Community Houses were funded the same amount (\$15,000) and the Maison communautaire received \$20,000 in 1997. Ms. Capperault explained the rationale for a consistent amount was because the funding was used for co-ordination. The additional money reflected a new program. She opined that \$15,000 was a good base funding for each of the Community Houses. The Community Houses rely heavily on volunteers, and the funding supports the co-ordination of these activities.

In response to an inquiry from Councillor Loney, Ms. Capperauld stated it was the recommendation of the Joint Grants Allocation Committee that the Community Houses be funded by the Department on an ongoing basis for somewhat secure funding. Therefore, the joint committee does not consider additional requests for funding from these agencies. United Way does not provide core funding for co-ordination.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen stated she supported the motion because she believed that the Community Houses, which provide programs such as the Homework Club, assist children to succeed educationally and avoid becoming second generation welfare-dependents. She stated it would be informative for Committee to receive a report or presentation from a Community House regarding their funding sources and accomplishments.

Councillor Byrne stated that the Community Houses are involved in raising funds for themselves and she believed the funding from the Region is well used. She expressed concern that the creation of new Community Houses in high-need areas resulted in decreased funding for all the Community Houses and that this might unfairly lead to conflict and competition.

Moved by A. Loney

That all the Community Houses be funded at \$15,000/year.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That Community Houses be funded at the 1997 rate and that Britannia Woods Community Association and the Foster Farm Family House be funded at the same rate as the others for a total budget envelope of \$120,000.

CARRIED

(dissent D. Beamish)

A sixth amendment to the motion was put forward by Councillor Holmes that \$20,000 be provided for the Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Associations.

Speaking to her motion, Councillor Holmes noted that the Federation had lost its provincial funding and had funding reduced by the City of Ottawa. She stated that the majority of her ward was tenants and the new provincial legislation would affect the Appeal process and rent rates. She opined that there was a real need for this organization to continue to provide a region-wide service.

Moved by D. Holmes

That \$20,000 be provided for the Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Associations.

CARRIED

(dissent D. Beamish, H. Kreling)

Referring to the Budget Review Board's recommendation to remove \$380,000 from Special Assistance, Councillor Loney asked for confirmation that this was based on the actual budget of 1997. Commissioner Stewart confirmed that and pointed out that in 1997, all the approved items were cost-shared. He reiterated that the 1997 under-expenditure was related to a reduced caseload, and taking 1/2 of that under-expenditure from the 1998 budget would not impede the level of service. He also stated that certain items and services to certain people may no longer be cost-shared with the province, which he was not aware of when he made this recommendation to the Budget Review Board. He opined that if the Region wanted to continue to provide some of the benefits, that are no longer cost-shareable, at a 100% municipal cost he suggested it may be wise to preserve some of these funds.

Chair Munter stated that the provincial money coming into this program may be cut off soon and concurred that it would be wise to leave some of the Region's money in the budget to meet the needs of the community.

In response to a question from Councillor Beamish, Commissioner Stewart stated the proposed reduction in Social Services caseload of \$3.5 million Gross/\$705,000 Net represented a reduction of 500 cases/monthly. He confirmed that the reduction corresponds to fewer requests for Special Assistance.

Moved by H. Kreling

That Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the recommendations of the Budget Review Board, as shown on page 16 of the Program Reduction Proposal document.

Line 1: Special Assistance.

LOST

YEAS: D. Beamish, H. Kreling, A. Loney, M. McGoldrick-Larsen 4
NEAS: W. Byrne, L. Davis, C. Doucet, D. Holmes, A. Munter 5

Line 2: Official Languages Translation

CARRIED

Line 3: 100% Municipal Assistance

CARRIED

Line 4: Office/Computer Supplies

CARRIED

Moved by H. Kreling

That the Community Services Committee recommend that Council approve the Budget Review Board's recommendation, as shown on page 20 of the Program Reduction Proposal document.

CARRIED

Moved by A. Loney

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the 1998 Draft Operating and Draft Capital Estimates (Social Services Department) as tabled with Regional Council on 11 February 1998, including the 1998 funding allocations to community organizations as described in Annexes A to E of the staff report, and as amended by the foregoing.

CARRIED

3. REVIEW OF FUNDING FOR ACTION-LOGEMENT AND HOUSING HELP

- Commissioner, Social Services report dated 27 March 1998

1. **That the Community Services Committee acknowledge that a funding inequity exists between Action-logement and Housing Help resulting in a lack of core funding for the provision of primary services by Action-logement, and;**
2. **That should additional funding become available in 1998, that it be allocated to Action-logement up to the level currently allocated to Housing Help, in order to assist the agency to maintain core services at its current level.**

CARRIED

4. CAPITAL FUNDING

- Commissioner, Social Services report dated 23 March 1998

Questions to Staff

In response to an inquiry about Regional Development Charges (RDC), Mr. Kirkpatrick stated the Finance Department's objective was to have a report completed by the end of the year. He was not aware of the percentage of RDC's allowed for child care expenses as it is calculated on a per capita basis.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen asked when the long term strategic plan for the anglophone child care would be available. Ms. Preston explained the timeframe was for community consultation in the Fall, and she anticipated a report to Committee in December 1998 or January 1999.

Councillor Loney proposed an amendment to the third recommendation in the report that the inclusion of approximately \$1.5 million be included in the draft estimates. He opined that it was unlikely for Council to approve a pre-commitment of that amount but stressed the importance of having this item on the table for Council's budget deliberations on 13 May 1998. He reiterated that Council must make a decision of whether or not it is going to fund this capital program and build it into the tax base.

Councillor Holmes stated she was surprised at not finding the child care capital funding included in the 1998 draft capital estimates. Commissioner Stewart responded that the Department interpreted the Committee's previous motion differently and prepared this report for the Committee's consideration of creating a capital program.

Moved by A. Loney

That the inclusion of approximately \$1.5 million annually for child care capital funding be included in the draft estimates in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

CARRIED
(dissent H. Kreling)

Moved by D. Holmes

That Community Services Committee and Council approve:

- 1. That \$750,000 be included in the 1998 budget to fund child care capital projects under the three components of the approved capital funding policy;**
- 2. That an additional \$40,000 be included in the 1998 budget to hire a consultant to work with operators that own their facilities to assist them in developing ten year plans for maintenance and repairs;**
- 3. That the inclusion of approximately \$1.5 million annually for child care capital funding be included in the draft estimates in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002, and;**
- 4. That the total of \$790,000 requested in 1998 be funded from the child care contingency fund.**

CARRIED, as amended

In response to an inquiry from Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen, Ms. St. Jean stated that the Committee, during its budget deliberations, had approved an increase to the Social Services Department budget of \$156,634 plus the approval for \$380,000 in Special Assistance to remain in the budget, for a total of \$536,634.

5. 1998 DRAFT OPERATING ESTIMATES, (HEALTH DEPARTMENT),
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
- A/Committee Co-ordinator report dated 7 April 1998

Health Department Budget

Dr. Cushman presented the budget estimates for the Health Department.¹⁸ In terms of strategic perspectives, he focused on three issues. The first issue was provincial downloading. He noted that the majority of public health programs were now 100% municipally funded. The second issue was the new mandatory guidelines issued in March 1998. He cautioned that next year the Department will be hard pressed to stay within its budget to meet these guidelines. The Department planned to study the guidelines more thoroughly before coming forth with next year's budget. The third issue was health care restructuring and the impact on community services and the role of prevention. With closures of hospitals, he stated there had been increased demands on the Department, Home Care, and Community Health Centres. To date, there has been no reinvestment package for community services.

Dr. Cushman argued that a dollar spent on public health was a dollar well spent. For example, \$1.00 spent on family planning saved \$4.40, and \$1.00 spent on a high school tobacco program saved \$15.40. In terms of the costs of preventable disease: a case of tuberculosis cost \$10,000, a broken hip cost \$33,000, a case of AIDS cost \$100,000, and a preterm birth cost \$600,000.

Dr. Cushman stated that the Region had important role to play in health care reform, and argued that health care services could be better delivered from a regional vantage point than from a provincial vantage point. He opined it would be unwise to retreat from this debate by pulling money out. Referring to the previous presentations, he reminded Committee of the impact that health had on poverty and vice versa. He stated emphatically that money spent on public health saved money in social services.

Referring to the 1997 Health Department budget, \$6.3 million was the Net Regional requirement, \$11.1 million - cost-shared by the province, and \$3.58 million - 100% provincially funded programs. The 100% provincial programs included Sexual Health, Teaching Health Unit, AIDS, CINOT, Anti-Tobacco, and Hepatitis B programs. For

¹⁸ A copy of the presentation overheads are held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

1998, the former cost-shared formula and the 100% provincially funded programs had been downloaded to the Region, for a total amount of \$14.6 million.

Dr. Cushman stated the Department had taken a diligent look at the Teaching Health Unit, and effectively removed the teaching component and retained the evaluation and planning components of the Unit. This reduced the cost of downloading by \$551,000 (including 7 permanent positions).

Within the \$6.3 million Net Region contribution, the Department had accommodated a number of budgetary pressures including salary settlements and increased costs (i.e. mileage and overhead). The Department had reduced the Region's net costs by \$141,000 in terms of rent, performance measures, and technology. He stated it was unfortunate because it means the Department will not have a community presence in the west-end this year; will have trouble contracting out some of the performance measures it wanted developed, and the will lag in terms of technology compared to 111 Lisgar. The overall Health Department budget is \$25.8 million Gross/\$20 million Net.

In conclusion, Dr. Cushman stated this was more than a flat-line budget. It was a budget that reduced the net requirement for the Region \$141,000, reduced the effects of downloading from the province by over \$500,000, and still maintained the level of service.

Public Delegations¹⁹

*Phil Brown & Mary Hegan, Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres.*²⁰ Mr. Brown stated the Coalition supported the budget recommendations put forward by staff.. He explained that the Centres emphasize early intervention, prevention, treatment and wellness promotion as key elements to maintaining healthy communities and keeping long term health care costs down. They work closely with other agencies including the Region's Health and Social Services Departments. The Centres integrate health and social services in their practice because of direct linkage between social well being and both personal and community health.

Mr. Brown stated that the progression of cutbacks over the past several years had placed stresses on the Centres' resources and the communities they served. As primary health care providers, the Centres are faced with the challenges of increased demands for services and also the increased urgency and complexity of services required. He stated that the Somerset West CHC had experienced a 40% increase in demand between 1994-97.

¹⁹ Mr. Steve Clay, Chair, Lowertown Youth Centre, was unable to make a presentation but a copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

²⁰ A copy of the briefing note is held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Mr. Brown concluded by stating it was critical to maintain at least the current level of public health funding, as there is no more room for further cuts without seriously jeopardizing the community's health.

Ms. Hegan stated that the Centres have joint community programs with the Health Department such as Healthy Babies, anonymous HIV testing, and the Needle Exchange Program. She reiterated the support for the budget recommendations as a core financial base, not only for the Department, but indirectly for the Centres which provide a range of public health services. She stated public health and community based services are the wave of the future. Personal health and public health are interrelated; when people feel stress, anger, illness or a lack of services compared to others, the whole community becomes dragged down, threatened and less healthy.

Ms. Hegan stated the Community Health Centres are centrally located in an evolving health care system between hospital services moving into the community and health departments wanting to partner with neighbourhood based services and facilities.

Questions for Delegation

Councillor Davis inquired about the accessibility of the Centres. In response, Ms. Hegan stated that "in theory" the Centres cover the Region in terms of catchment area boundaries. The Centres hope to be doing more outreach in different areas, and looking at youth and emergency concerns. She admitted that for regular health care there was a waiting list. The Executive Director for Sandy Hill briefly added that their mandate was to provide service to those with the greatest need and at highest risk.

Councillor Davis expressed concerned that certain Centres are at full capacity and cannot accommodated new clients. Mr. Brown confirmed that the ratio of clients:professional staff has increased 25 - 30 % over the last four years at the Somerset West CHC. He opined that additional resources were necessary in this community for either existing Centres or for new centres to fill the geographic gaps. He opined that the hospital restructuring had been premature to the necessary community services being put in place prior to the downsizing. He stated he would like to see at least two more centres funded in the Region to address the demand.

Referring to the dental budget, Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen asked Dr. Cushman to comment on the ODA's lobbying efforts and their claim of being able to provide a cheaper dental service to SA recipients. Dr. Cushman stated his reservations about the ODA's endorsement of open-ended spending and there is no issue of managed care. He stated that considering the history of the ODA, there were certain problems in providing this type of service. He reiterated that a report would be forthcoming to Committee.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen recognized staff's involvement in trying to deal with the challenges faced by the Region, including identifying efficiencies and reductions. She stated it was going to be difficult over the next few years, and that senior staff would continue to be challenged to maintain service levels in more cost effective ways.

Moved by L. Davis

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the 1998 Draft Operating Estimates (Health Department) as tabled with Regional Council on 11 February 1998, including the recommendations of the Budget Review Board.

CARRIED

6. SECTION 72 - HEALTH PROTECTION AND PROMOTION ACT
- Medical Officer of Health & Regional Solicitor report dated 6 March 1998

That the Community Services Committee and Council receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

7. 1998 DRAFT OPERATING ESTIMATES, (HOMES FOR THE AGED),
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
- A/Committee Co-ordinator report dated 7 April 1998

Homes For the Aged Budget

Commissioner Garry Armstrong presented the budget estimates for the Homes for the Aged Department.²¹ He briefly summarized the current situation of a waiting list of 1400 for long term care (LTC) beds and a projected requirement for 1016 new beds by the year 2003.

Commissioner Armstrong referred to a recent announcement from the Ministry of Health of 1700 new LTC beds for Ontario, but there are not details yet as to how this will affect Ottawa-Carleton. He pointed out that the Department operated about 20% of the LTC beds in the Region, which is fairly consistent with other municipalities. The handout provided information on the resident and staffing profiles of a typical 40 bed unit.

²¹ A copy of the presentation highlights are held on file by the Committee Co-ordinator

Commissioner Armstrong stated that since 1992, the Department has reduced its operating budget by over \$3 million and has reduced staffing by 20% (115 FTEs). The 15% portion of the budget that is not staff-related (e.g. food & utilities) has also been reduced from 1992 levels.

The 1998 budget, presented to Council, of \$31.626 million Gross/\$\$8.257 Net represents a \$100,000 net reduction over 1997. This budget includes an expansion of 44 beds at Centre d'accueil Champlain and the subsequent staffing increase of 10.7 FTEs.

The Budget Review Board recommended the reduction of \$190,000 representing three supervisory positions. Commissioner Armstrong stated those positions have not been filled.

Speaking to the capital budget, Commissioner Armstrong stated that \$34 million replacement of Island Lodge was underway. The first building, the Peter D. Clark Centre, would be tendered this summer. In addition, there is the facilities retrofit of \$187,000. The replacement of Island Lodge with province support, and in consideration of operational savings, will see a minimum \$1 million net benefit to the Region.

Question to staff

In response to a question from Chair Munter, Commissioner Armstrong stated the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the allocation of LTC beds was intended to be as open as possible. The Ministry will be establishing Advisory Committees to make recommendations to the Minister on the award of those beds. He stated the intent was to maintain a balance in the system between for-profit and not-for-profit operators. He suggested that the RFP process will benefit the not-for-profit sector because it will identify enhancements to the system (i.e. day centres, respite care and additional community program space) based on the bidding process.

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the 1998 Draft Operating and Draft Capital Budgets (Homes for the Aged Department) as tabled with Regional Council on 11 February 1998, including the modifications recommended by the Budget Review Board.

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. Special Assistance and Supplementary Aid Primer
- Commissioner, Social Services memorandum dated 9 April 1998

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

21 May 1998

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR