

Kenora District Services Board

Ontario Works / Child Care Committee Minutes of the February 26, 2007 Meeting Conference Call

Attendance: Kim Thain – Chair
Joyce Timpson, Sten Lif, Dianne Apland, Toni Thurbide

Regrets: Ray Leray

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m.

Purpose of the meeting was to review the recommendations of the Finance Committee in relations to the Child Care, Best Start and Ontario Works Budgets.

Although approval of the minutes of the two previous meetings was on the agenda, this was a special meeting of the committee, and the minutes could not be approved at this meeting.

Kim provided the Committee with a summary of what had occurred at the Finance Committee meeting and the discussions which took place. The Child Care budget, coming in under budget and the Best Start budget, funded 100% by the province were not the primary concern of the committee but the Ontario Works budget, representing an overall increase in net local costs of 3.37% over the 2006 budget was. The increase is largely representative of the anticipated increase in client benefits (\$49,800 or 6.02% over 2006 budget). This portion of the Ontario Works budget cannot be controlled by the KDSB as it is legislated by the Ontario government and as a service provider; KDSB is mandated to provide financial benefits to those clients who are eligible under the Ontario Works Act.

The operational budget for Ontario Works results in a slight decrease to net local costs. The Employment Plan initiative is \$193,799. The shift from income maintenance to the employment plan initiative also shifts costs from 50/50 funding to 80/20 funding. The net result is the ability to proceed with the employment plan initiative without increasing the net local cost.



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Sten provided members with the Finance committee's recommendations:

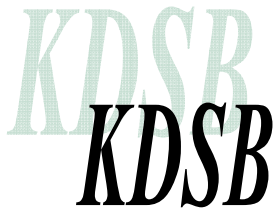
Take out of budget \$75,000 for operational review. Funding will be sought elsewhere.

- No reduction in reserves
- No increase to reserves
- Look at contract position for Life Skills Trainer if required
- Land ambulance redistribution of responsibilities
- Hiring freeze in place at this time

The hiring freeze point presented a problem as the employment plan of approximately \$193,000 was left in the budget. The Finance Committee's suggestions that the Life Skills Trainer be a contract position and that employment services be sought by other agencies within the district were brought forward by Kim.

Dianne explained that the employment funding envelope from the province had increased by approximately \$400,000. The plan was downsized to the present \$193,000 as the least amount of investment needed in order to access future 100% funding from the province. The province has brought forward Outcomes Funding which reinvests savings achieved by creating outcomes for Ontario Works clients. This means that if the KDSB is successful in delivering Ontario Works and achieves outcomes, there will be additional 100% funding from the province to invest in future employment endeavours. Inclusion of Ontario Disability spouses in the OW employment program may also garner additional savings and 100% funding. These funding opportunities are dependent on an enhanced employment program for the Kenora district.

Some of our OW offices have partnered with other agencies to deliver certain components of our employment program. However many of the programs available are not suitable for our clients or are too "high end". As we continue with our employment strategy, our caseload is made up of primarily the "hard to serve" clients who require the more basic services and "one on one" counseling. Many of the main stream employment agencies are not geared to service this type of client.



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Joyce reiterated her support for the increase in the rent for the Sioux Lookout Ontario Works office, stating that the rate requested by Sioux Lookout for 2007 was in line with what other sites were charging. The problem with the rent increase was that it represented an increase of approximately 270% at a time when municipalities were requesting a 0% increase in the KDSB budget. The comparison between the rent provided for the Sioux Lookout office and the rent provided for the Dryden office prompted a request for the OW Director to write the City of Dryden. The letter would request a review of the rental rates charged by the City.

The Committee requested that the chair indicate to the Finance committee that the employment plan was an investment in people, which would generate future 100% funding from the province and it could only be carried out with additional staff.

Meeting adjourned 5:00

Minutes Approved by Committee: [April 25, 2007](#)

Moved by: [Joyce Timpson](#)

Seconded by: [Ray Leray](#)