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OCCUPANCY AGREEMENT FOR THE YORK REGION SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 21, 2005, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize entering into an occupancy agreement for five years, between the Region and the York Region Speech and Language Program (YRSLP), for their occupancy of the Region's various leased facilities located in Georgina, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
2. Regional Council authorize the charging of an occupancy fee to YRSLP, in the amount of approximately \$55,000.00 per year. Such amount includes base rent and operating charges for all the occupied leased facilities.
3. The Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk be authorized to sign the necessary agreement with YRSLP for the occupancy of the Region's various leased locations, subject to review by Legal Services.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain authorization from Regional Council to enter into an occupancy agreement between the Region and YRSLP for its occupation of the Region's various leased facilities, and to charge the YRSLP an occupancy fee.

3. BACKGROUND

YRSLP is a community program delivered through the Markham-Stouffville Hospital, offering speech and language services for children with special needs. The program is funded by the Ministry of Health. In 1998, YRSLP co-located with York Region Early Intervention Services (EIS), with no occupancy costs being charged to YRSLP. Initial space requirements for YRSLP were two staff in each of the four York Region EIS offices. YRSLP now have eighteen staff co-located in five EIS offices, utilizing a total of 2,557 square feet of office and program space. The Region continues to provide office and program space to YRSLP without occupancy charges.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Co-location Rationale

Currently approximately 57% of the children enrolled in EIS are also enrolled in YRSLP. Co-location is beneficial and convenient for both staff and clients. It creates good customer service to the residents of York Region. The benefits include:

- a single telephone number for joint intake and screening telephone calls by EIS staff
- one service plan
- joint service delivery in the offices, client homes and child care settings
- opportunities for joint and cross-training
- a “seamless” service for families with children that have special needs

This unique partnership has been cited as being a “best practice” in the *Integration of Human Services Report* (March 2000) by the Provincial-Municipal Services Realignment Social and Community Health Services Implementation Project of the (then) Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The Community Services and Housing Department support the continuing EIS/YRSLP co-location arrangement.

4.2 Justification For Charging an Occupancy Fee

Office space is at a premium throughout our Regional facilities, and additional space must now be leased from the private sector at market rents to satisfy growth requirements. Since 1998, YRSLP has added staff and increased service. They now have eighteen staff in five offices, a 125% increase in staffing levels. Their spacing requirements pose a monetary burden on the Region.

An occupancy agreement will set out terms and conditions of YRSLP occupancy in our various leased locations. The occupancy revenue will offset the occupancy costs that EIS is expending for YRSLP space.

An occupancy fee will not be charged to the YRSLP for their occupation of the Newmarket facility. The Region owns this facility and therefore doesn't pay any rental costs. YRSLP occupy a small amount of space at this facility and their operating expenses are minimal.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

Continuance of the partnership between EIS and YRSLP support the goals detailed in the Vision 2026 document, such as Quality Communities for a Diverse Population and Responding to the Needs of our Residents.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Attachment 1 summarizes the proposed occupancy charges to YRSLP for the various leased locations. This occupancy revenue of approximately \$55,000 will be applied directly against EIS occupancy costs.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Services will continue to be provided within five Regional communities.

7. CONCLUSION

This occupancy agreement will provide a more formal framework between the respective partners which will help solidify the partnership of children's services by the York Region taxpayer.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the October 6, 2005 Committee meeting.)