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NEW EMERGENCY HOSTEL PER DIEM AGREEMENT

The Community Services and Housing Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, October 28, 2004, from the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region enter into a new Emergency Hostel Per Diem Agreement with emergency hostel operators in York Region and that the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing be authorized to execute these agreements on the Region's behalf, subject to the prior review of the Regional Solicitor.
2. Staff be authorized to take all necessary steps to give effect thereto.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Region to enter into new Emergency Hostel Per Diem Agreements with emergency hostel operators.

3. BACKGROUND

The Emergency Hostel Program provides temporary housing for individuals and families who are homeless due to a range of issues including financial hardship, medical and mental health concerns and loss of employment.

Funding for the Emergency Hostel Program is provided through Ontario Works. It is cost shared 80/20 between the Province and the Municipality. Individuals and families receive shelter, basic needs and a personal needs allowance while in an emergency hostel. They may also receive prescription drug coverage and transportation costs to attend medical appointments.

Emergency Shelters are not licensed by any governing body but must comply with regulations pertaining to health and fire as well as Municipal building codes and zoning requirements.

There are currently three Emergency Hostels operated by Transitional and Supportive Housing, a York Region based not-for-profit agency. Porter Place provides 29 beds for single men, Leeder Place provides 25 beds for families and the Youth Shelter provides 10 beds for single males between the ages of 16 to 24 years. Our policy established with the current emergency hostel operator allows for a maximum length of stay of six weeks at Porter Place and Leeder Place and four months at the Youth Shelter. Service agreements exist with each of the three Emergency Shelters to allow provision of the cost of board and lodging in the shelter.

In 2003, the Emergency Hostel Program provided shelter to 1,490 individuals (including two-parent and sole support families) in Emergency Hostels under Per Diem Agreements with the Community Services and Housing Department.

A Per Diem Agreement was last approved by Regional Council in 1999 as a result of the absence of regulations governing Emergency Hostels and the need to ensure accountability of operators in maintaining standards of residential care and operational accountability.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 New Per Diem Agreement Including Compliance

The proposed new agreement for Emergency Hostel operators includes increased standards of financial reporting and accountability as well as enhanced standards of resident care.

Some of the enhancements are as follows:

- Potential recovery of the Region's payments if the agreement is breached.
- Retention of operator records for seven years.
- Inspection of the hostel premises.
- Clarity of client services and standards of care through operator guidelines.
- Establishment of maximum length of stay.

The proposed per diem contract will include a compliance mechanism whereby per diem payments may be reduced or the contract with the operator terminated in cases where the operator is not in compliance with the terms of the Per Diem Agreement. The Per Diem Agreement will require increased accountability from the operator in order to be eligible for purchase of service funding.

4.2 Monitoring and Enforcement of Agreement

A standardized checklist will be used by Community Services and Housing Department staff to monitor operator compliance with the terms of the Per Diem Agreement. The checklist will be administered on a semi-annual basis and by exception throughout the year. The operator will be provided with a form indicating areas of non-compliance and the requirements to gain compliance. The operator will be required to gain compliance by a specified date or risk one or all of the following:

- Cessation of funding of any new residents.
- Cessation of any further per diem payments for existing residents.
- Termination of the Per Diem Agreement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional financial impacts related to the new Per Diem Agreement. The administrative cost will remain the same.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

There is no direct impact on local municipalities from this report.

7. CONCLUSION

The Emergency Hostel Program provides temporary housing for homeless individuals and families through a current Per Diem Agreement with emergency hostel operators. The new Per Diem Agreement includes standards of care outlined in new Operator Guidelines as well as increased financial accountability and regular compliance monitoring.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.