



Ontario Works & Ontario Disability Support Program

Premier Dalton McGuinty announced recently that the Ontario government will begin uploading over \$900 million in social service costs starting in January, 2008. The Province is uploading the total cost of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) which will be phased in, with completion in 2011. In addition, the costs of the Ontario Drug Benefits (ODB) program for social assistance recipients will be uploaded as of January, 2008.

The RRDSSAB has been responsible for 20% of ODSP and ODB benefit costs and 50% of ODSP administration costs. The RRDSSAB municipal share of ODSP in 2007 was \$1,022,369.00. Mildred Beck, Acting Manager of Finance is attempting to confirm the actual reduction in our municipal costs with the Ministry of Community & Social Services.

We have been strongly encouraged by the Ministry of Community & Social Services to submit a proposal for the Employment Innovations Fund, a program to promote and increase employment opportunities for OW and ODSP clients throughout the district. We have submitted an expression of interest at this time and are awaiting further details from the Ministry.

Land Ambulance

Kenora, Thunder Bay and Rainy River District ambulance operators have been invited by the Northwest Health Network, a group representing various health care providers, to participate on a team addressing concerns with inter-facility ambulance transfers. Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager, will be our representative.

The Ministry of Health & Long Term Care has confirmed previously announced funding for the 2007/08 fiscal year for the unincorporated area (\$250,927) and First Nations (\$210,245). The Ministry has also approved our proposal for one-time funding of \$61,722 for implementation of mobile computers and automatic vehicle locator (AVL) equipment, and a base funding adjustment of \$9,990 for ongoing maintenance.

Social Housing

As announced by Minister Gerretsen in July, 2007, Service Managers are being allowed to convert all or a portion of uncommitted Affordable Housing Program (AHP) Housing Allowance/Rent Supplement (HARS) funding to an AHP capital component. We have formally requested that our HARS funds be converted to our Northern Home Repair Program. We await approval from the Ministry.

The media event for the official announcement of the Northern Homeowner Repair Program, planned by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, was cancelled due to the unavailability of MP Joe Comuzzi. As an alternative, the province distributed a formal press release throughout the area.

We look forward to working with Dianne Faragher in her new capacity as RRDSSAB Housing Manager! Dianne is a well respected member of our finance team who has extensive knowledge of social housing, having had primary responsibility for that department for the past few years. Her educational background and work experiences will assist her in managing RRDSSAB housing on our behalf.

Across the province, service managers are concerned with the impact of subsidy reductions to Section 95 Private Non-Profit Housing Programs; in our district, this includes Flinders and Golden Age East. Mildred Beck and Sandra Weir will provide specific information on this at the Social Housing Committee and Board meetings.

Provincial Land Tax Reform

We have not received any information on the impending provincial land tax (PLT) reform over the past year. *Provincial Land Tax is a property tax levied on all land in areas of the province without municipal organization; revenues contribute towards the cost of provincial services in the unincorporated areas.*

We did contact the Ministry of Finance this month to follow up and were given the following message:

- PLT is moving forward for implementation in 2009; the legislation was passed in the fall of 2006.
- A reassessment of properties in the unincorporated area outside of school board boundaries was to occur this year. (At the inception of the RRDSSAB in 1999, we were told that property outside the school board boundaries in our area was minimal, less than 5%.)
- Owners of unincorporated property will receive their current assessment in December of 2008 and beginning in 2009, current value assessment will be the base used to determine PLT.
- At this time, we are not aware of the actual impact on municipal service managers, i.e. DSSABs and CMSMs.

Building

Our elevator is being installed and we look forward to full accessibility for our RRDSSAB clients. We are awaiting installation of a mirror in the accessible washroom, in order to satisfy the requirements of our occupancy permit; Ross assures me that we will satisfy all requirements by the end of the week. We have some outstanding painting, electrical and flooring work, primarily due to the delayed elevator installation. RRDSSAB staff are all very happy to be in their new surroundings! We have received a great deal of positive feedback from our clients and visitors.

Homelessness

We have received a 2% increase in base funding for homelessness prevention for the 2007/08 fiscal year; this amounts to \$1,639.00 in additional funding for program and administration. Given the demand in our area, we welcome any new funding.

Human Resources

Since the last board meeting, we have seen the following HR activity:

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	EFFECTIVE DATE
Dianne Faragher (internal)	RRDSSAB Hsing Manager	replacement	24 Sept/07

We are presently advertising internally to replace Dianne in the finance department.

Respectfully Submitted,

/D. Dittaro