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MINUTES  
of the SPECIAL MEETING of the BOARD  
TUESDAY, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011

RRDSSAB Office, Fort Frances, ON 6:30 p.m.  
MEETING #04/11

**PRESENT:** Archie Wiersema, Township of Dawson  
Rick Neilson, Township of Chapple  
Ross Donaldson, Township of LaVallee  
Moe Henry, Township of Morley  
Debbie Ewald, Town of Rainy River  
John Callan, Rainy River Central  
Ken Perry, Town of Fort Frances  
Harold Mosley, Rainy River East  
Dennis Brown, Town of Atikokan  
Valerie Pizey, Township of Lake of the Woods

**REGRETS:** Barbara Cournoyer, Township of Alberton  
Gary Judson, Township of Emo  
Wade Desserre, Rainy River West  
Donna Dittaro, Secretary-Treasurer

**STAFF:** Leanne Eluik, Manager of Finance  
Shelley Shute, Ontario Works Manager  
Sandra Weir, Housing Manager  
Michelle Shute, Assistant Housing Manager  
Rick Bliss, Maintenance Coordinator  
Judy Koski, Recorder

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**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order.

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

None.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

Resolution #21/11 MOVED BY J. Callan and SECONDED BY H. Mosley:

**RESOLVED THAT** the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* approve the agenda of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**Carried.**

### 4. In Camera

Resolution #22/11 MOVED BY J. Callan and SECONDED BY D. Brown:

**RESOLVED THAT** the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* now meet in camera in order to discuss a matter pertaining to:

- personal matters about an identifiable individual, including Board employees.

**Carried.**

The Chair reconvened the meeting to its regular session.

#### **In Camera Report:**

The following items were discussed in camera:

- CAO leave.

### 5. 2011 Draft Budget

Dennis Brown asked the Manager of Finance for the global picture first before the budget discussion began. The Manager of Finance advised that Draft #3 of the 2011 Budget reflected a -2.67% overall decrease. This would mean that the municipalities would be paying \$128,520 less than last year.

Val Pizey stated that she would like to see the revenue for ambulance broken down in the budget to show 50/50 funding, TWOMO and First Nations. She also stated that the figures for the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund are not actual savings because we have an apportionment formula. In the first two years of uploading there were only small amounts and we did not reduce levies. Last year was the biggest upload – over \$430,000. The Board did decrease the municipal levy by \$400,000 last year and used \$355,000 from reserves. This year there is a further upload of \$448,000. Dennis Brown noted that we should

not replace reserves if the Board cannot afford it. John Callan stated that there should be some effort made to replace reserves.

The Ontario Works Budget was reviewed once again. The Manager of Finance advised that the changes in staffing were removed from the budget as previously directed. This will affect both the OW Admin budget and the Employment Assistance budget. The Manager of Finance explained that the new cost per case funding for the DSSAB is \$2,016 per case and transition funding will be forthcoming for the next two years to offset the increase to the municipalities. Travel & Training includes mandatory core training for staff. The Ontario Works Manager advised that this is training which cannot be taken via video conference. Registration has increased for the training and also will include airfare. Webinars will also be taken where possible. The Manager of Finance stated that salaries have been re-distributed to minimize the costs to municipalities. There has been no increase in staffing. Training is based on the need for staff to attend. John Callan stated that the message to the managers should be that you do not attending training unless necessary. Any surplus seen in the travel and training lines this year should be used to offset next year's training. The Ontario Works General Allowance budget is based on number of clients for the year therefore it is a "best guess".

Val Pizey noted that in the Child Care Budget monies were transferred from Best Start. She stated that a motion had been passed by the Board some time ago stating that the Best Start program would not cost the municipalities any money. The Manager of Finance stated that previously unconditional grant monies had been used. These monies have now been exhausted.

The Ontario Works caseload for Atikokan for the years 2009 and 2010 was discussed. The Ontario Works Manager stated that the caseworker in Atikokan also carries out additional Employment Support Worker duties.

The Social Housing budget was reviewed by the Board. It was noted that the Social Housing Renovation & Retrofit Program, Affordable Housing Program and Rent Back Program are all funded 100% by the Province. The increase in the Social Housing Program for 2011 reflects 15.3% or \$294,558 to the municipal share. The Social Housing Program continues to receive fixed funding at the 2002 levels. John Callan noted that last week it was decided that no cuts to positions would be made without knowing what those positions entail. The Housing Manager noted that in 2010 the Board used \$354,344 from reserves in order to offset the municipal share. Mortgage savings have also been used to reduce the municipal share for 2011. There is a decrease in salaries and benefits. Most expenses have been decreased. Travel and training dollars have been reduced by \$5,000. Line 50240 Legal has been increased due to a recent Operational Review and resulting request for Ministerial consent. Under Line 42020 the Housing Manager advised that she has submitted a proposal for property management for Fort Frances Municipal Non-Profit and expects to know the result of that submission by the next regular Board meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Rental Revenue has decreased based on 2010 actuals. Sundry Revenue has increased due to an increase in management fees. There are presently some vacancies in DSSAB Housing. Discussion turned to setting aside a unit for visitors. The Assistant Housing Manager stated that the revenue is minimal for this and security issues must also be considered. She also noted that the Municipal/Federal subsidy line has decreased by \$16,000 since the original budget.

The Housing Manager pointed out that the formula for service provider payments is fixed by the Ministry. Debbie Ewald stated that the funding for housing has not increased since 2002 and any increases are on the shoulders of the municipalities. She also stated that the DSSAB should lobby for at least the cost of living each year.

Expenses have increased since 2010. Salaries have increased per the Staff Agreement. Debbie Ewald noted that the Federal subsidy is only \$39,398, leaving the balance to the municipalities. Val Pizey noted that there is a large increase in salaries in the last four years. The Housing Manager stated that this is largely due to the scope of work being done. At present 432 units are managed, including DSSAB housing and non-profit housing. She listed the projects completed in 2010 which included several health and safety issues such as mold and asbestos. The Assistant Housing Manager stated that in 2007 there were ten staff and in 2010 there are nineteen staff. Dennis Brown noted that contractors were used at one time whereas DSSAB employees now do the work. The Assistant Housing Manager stated that there is more capital work being done now than there was in 2007. She also stated that the DSSAB cannot afford not to do this work. The Building Condition Audits carried out in 2008 show that \$470,000 must be spent each year in order to maintain the present stock. Prior to 2005 only \$50,000 to \$100,000 was being spent each year. DSSAB assets are depreciating and the longer the work is deferred, the more expensive it will be in the long run. It is the Board's liability at stake when considering the health and safety of the tenants.

Harold Mosley asked if the eleven maintenance workers were full time. The Assistant Housing Manager confirmed that number and added that they never run out of work. There are not only the day to day maintenance issues but also any extra capital work. Daily checks are required for fire alarm systems. The work also involves travel throughout the district. During the rather heavy snow season, snow removal was important as it is a health and safety issue. Roofs began leaking and although quotes were obtained for snow removal from roofs, we saved \$6,500 by having the staff carry out the work. The Maintenance Coordinator added that the staff is trained in fall arrest to carry out this task. The Assistant Housing Manager noted that routine repairs involving asbestos cost more in time and supplies. The Housing Manager added that some of our buildings are forty-five years old. The Board Chair stated that no one disputes the work however he is not convinced that staff can do the work cheaper than contractors. He also questioned how much really needed to be done and how good do these apartments need to be. The Housing Manager advised that every year the Housing Department does a little bit, however, according the Building

Condition Audits we have only touched the surface. Ken Perry felt that he had a lack of information and the Board should make the decision on the work to be done. Debbie Ewald stated that the Social Housing Committee receives information from the staff and based on that information makes recommendations to the Board. She noted that the member from Fort Frances is new on the Board and therefore assumes nothing is being done and whatever is being done he considers frivolous. The Board Chair disagreed with Debbie and said he personally was not new to Social Housing and he had worked in Social Housing for a long time. Rick Bliss noted that mold issues and leaky roofs were the most important issues which have not yet been dealt with. Harold Mosley stated that maintenance should be ongoing. The Assistant Manager of Housing stated that last year full inspections were carried out across the District. One tenant was moved out of her home as there had been no maintenance done to her apartment for twenty years. Debbie Ewald asked what the standard is. Is it the best that the Board can afford: The Board Chair stated that the Board needs to think about this. Val Pizey stated that cutting service is the last option. When the Province uploads it takes something away. She would like to know where staff are on the salary scale.

The Housing Manager stated that they are fighting for tenants who deserve standards. Moe Henry understood the concern for tenants but he would like to know what members of the staff do. Rick Bliss noted that they had uncovered some guidelines which were adopted by the Ontario Housing Corporation. Val Pizey stated annual inspections should be done and then make recommendations to the Board. The Assistant Housing Manager stated that she has a five year capital plan based on the Building Condition Audit and that plan has been shared with the Social Housing Committee. The Board Chair stated that he thinks contractors should be used rather than staff. He objected to the \$7,500 for cell phones and the \$20,000 in staff mileage and meals. The Assistant Housing Manager noted that the mileage and meals also included office staff.

The Manager of Finance advised that we have tendered our benefit package and will be meeting with the broker next week. Any savings would not be seen until June if the result is a lesser amount. The Housing Manager stated that we must stay on top of training. She noted that the Social Housing Reform Act is changing and there may be training associated with that. John Callan stated that training has been discussed with each department and the Board is concerned regarding the levels. The Managers should be making valid judgment calls and be mindful of the needs vs the concern of the Board. The Assistant Manager of Housing noted that in the last three years there have been legislated changes which have affected the operation. The Assistant Manager of Housing reviewed the projects which will be completed this year. She noted the need to install automatic door openers under the duty to accommodate. We were not successful in receiving grant monies for this project. The Assistant Manager of Housing stated that they have compared hourly rates of contractors to hourly rates of staff, including benefits, and the hiring of staff is less costly. Duct cleaning at the family units will be carried out this year. This has never been done previously. A discussion regarding the cost of staff ensued. Archie

Wiersema noted more stringent government regulations could be the cause. John Callan added that nevertheless budgets were approved, work programs were approved and staffing levels were approved. Harold Mosley added that we still need staff to take care of the tenants needs. He stated that he has been a maintenance planner for most of his life and it is cheaper to employ staff than to hire a contractor. You only hire a contractor if need be; for everyday work you hire staff. The Board Chair stated that he disagreed.

Debbie Ewald stated once again that the Board must lobby the Province for more funding for Social Housing. Val Pizey stated that the Board should not have taken money out of reserves. Debbie Ewald stated that the Board has spent two days; the CAO brought staffing reductions to the Board and no one was comfortable cutting any positions. It was noted that for next year's budget more information is needed regarding comparisons with other DSSABs. Rick Neilson said that the most important job the Board has is the development of this Budget. We will not find big cuts in two weeks. Val Pizey stated that we must bring the upload back to municipal councils. John Callan noted that the Kenora DSB did not give the upload back to the municipalities plus they increased over 1%. This Board has consistently drawn on its reserves to reduce the cost to its municipalities.

Dennis Brown stated that management should be asked to cut a further \$320,000. John Callan stated that the staff need some direction as to whether to cut staff or service. The Board Chair said that staff should prioritize and cut the least important things in the Budget. John Callan noted that in Draft #3 the municipal contribution dropped by -2.67%. The municipalities should be told that there are concerns and we are not prepared to make cuts to service or draw from reserves. A study could be done this year and compare with other DSSABs. Those decisions could be left for 2012 then you would have something valid on which to base your decisions. The Board Chair stated that municipalities have lost Ontario Municipal Partnership Funds; let the staff make the cuts. Debbie Ewald suggested that an outside group be retained to carry out an efficiency audit. This would be an impartial third party. Harold Mosley noted that this would cost money. Moe Henry suggested asking for an estimate.

Val Pizey stated that she has concerns with both Land Ambulance and Social Housing. She suggested checking with other DSSABs to obtain their labour cost per unit. She suggested putting a stop on fixes and only do health and safety work. She also stated that the Board should lobby the Province. Debbie Ewald agreed that funding should be made an issue with the Province. Archie Wiersema agreed that the Province should be lobbied and the Board must stop using their reserves.

Debbie Ewald stated that the staff should be asked to make further cuts in both Land Ambulance and Social Housing. Archie Wiersema stated that the Board has not done anything. They cannot take money out of reserves and not put anything back.

Ken Perry stated that the organization is top heavy. It has a Housing Manager and an Assistant Housing Manager, its Human Resources department is too big, Finance is too big. Although the municipal share of the Board's budget has decreased since 2005, Fort Frances is paying more now than 2005.

John Callan stated that last week Mr. Perry had stated that the organization was top heavy and said that Sudbury had 500 paramedics but only two managers. In actual fact Sudbury has 153 paramedics and 7 supervisors and a number of lead hands. Mr. Perry also stated that Fort Frances had one finance employee. In actual fact there are several more staff in its finance department. John stated that comparing the Town of Fort Frances to the DSSAB was not comparing "apples to apples". The DSSAB is a district wide body which deals with several ministries. Mr. Callan cautioned anyone giving out misinformation at these meetings.

Harold Mosley stated that he is a new Board member and everyone has there own opinion, however, first two positions were cut and now they are put back in. Val Pizey stated that there still needs to be cuts in the budget. She suggests only fixing the health and safety projects and do away with painting. She also stated that the Province must be lobbied.

The Board Chair stated that the staff should go back to see if they can cut another \$320,000. The Manager of Finance asked that the unincorporated share of the upload could be used to reduce the cuts to \$208,000.

The Staff was directed to cut \$208,000 from the present budget.

The meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup> will begin at 4:00 PM.

## 6. Adjournment

Resolution #23/11 MOVED BY D. Ewald and SECONDED BY M. Henry:

**RESOLVED THAT** the *Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board* meeting be adjourned.

**Carried.**

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CHAIR

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SECRETARY-TREASURER

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DATE APPROVED