

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
Housing Division**

<b>Report to:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>Submitted by:</b> Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department
<b>Date:</b> April 2, 2009	<b>Prepared by:</b> Brian Kreps, Ext. 4288

**SUBJECT: Emergency Shelter Funding Pressure (ECS08026(b)) (City Wide)**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the General Manager of Community Services be authorized and directed to extend funding, for Personal Support Services at Notre Dame House and Mary's Place, for an additional three months, to September 30, 2009, at an additional gross cost of \$96,459 to be funded from within the 2009 Community Services Operating budget.

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Joe-Anne Priel,  
General Manager  
Community Services Department

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Report ECS08026(a) informed Council that no permanent funding exists for the Personal Support Services provided at Good Shepherd Centre's Mary's Place and Notre Dame House. Council directed staff to fund Personal Support Services from January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009, pending a decision from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), regarding the City of Hamilton's request to transfer funds between two homelessness programs. If MCSS approves the transfer of \$479,360 from the Domiciliary Hostels Program, in which the City has under spent over the past few years, to the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program, the Personal Support Services could be funded on an ongoing basis.

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MCSS has not yet provided a response the City of Hamilton's request. They have indicated, however, that the case is strong and that a decision will likely be made by the end of May. Community Services is recommending that Council authorize the extension of funding for Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House, for an additional three months so that a final decision may be obtained from the MCSS. Community Services will need to accommodate the additional \$96,459 cost as a budget pressure on Departmental surpluses.

**BACKGROUND:**

Emergency shelter per diem funding only covers the basic provision of shelter, food and minimal supervision. Personal Supports are services that help people staying in emergency shelters to access housing and move back into the community. This includes:

- Supportive counselling;
- Searching for housing; and,
- Helping people connect with income support programs and other services.

Personal Support Services were initially funded at Notre Dame House and Mary's Place by the Province of Ontario, under the General Welfare Assistance Act 1990, when the Province was responsible for administering homelessness programs. Once responsibility was downloaded to the City of Hamilton, Emergency Shelter Services were funded under the Ontario Works Act 1997. The definition of Emergency Shelter Services, under the Ontario Works Act, funds only board, lodging and minimal supervision. In the 2001 Provincial audit, the City was deemed to be non-compliant with the Ontario Works Act, as it was funding Personal Support Services under Emergency Shelter Services.

Community Services has worked with MCSS and the Good Shepherd Centre to continue these services out of recognition that without Personal Support Services, the residents of these shelters would experience longer stays at an increased cost to the City. Report ECS08026(a) described the temporary arrangements used to continue these supports through 2008. The report also highlighted the need for a sustainable solution to the funding of Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House.

In October 2008, Community Services submitted a business case to the MCSS requesting that \$479,360 be permanently transferred from the Domiciliary Hostel Program to the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program. Over the past few years, the City of Hamilton has been under spent in the Domiciliary Hostels program so the money could be moved without affecting service levels. If approved, this funding would be applied to the Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House, as well as the expansion of Personal Support Services within other shelters that would pave the way for more coordinated supports between shelters.

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Report ECS08026(a) directed the General Manager of Community Services to fund Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House from January 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009, pending a decision from the MCSS regarding the permanent transfer of funds. Local MCSS officials have communicated that they are hopeful that the request will be approved, but the final decision will likely not be made until the end of May.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

Staff recommend that funding for Personal Support Services at Notre Dame House and Mary's Place be extended for three additional months, to September 30, 2009.

This would allow additional time for MCSS to finalize its decision and for the City of Hamilton and Good Shepherd Centres to take appropriate actions, regardless of the outcome. If funding terminates June 30, 2009, as per current Council direction, steps would need to be taken immediately to plan for accommodating reduced service levels to the clients served by these programs. This could cause potential anxiety for clients and confusion among staff and service providers, which could be avoided by timing the termination of services to allow adequate time for MCSS to reach its final decision.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Council could choose not to extend funding for Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House. This would result in no additional cost to the City of Hamilton. Community Services staff would need to send a notice of termination of services to Good Shepherd Centres. Staff of Good Shepherd Centres and Community Services would need to begin making contingency plans as the withdrawal of funds would mean a reduction in service levels at both facilities. The reduction in services would likely result in longer stays for people with higher needs as they would receive greatly reduced levels of support to leave the shelters.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Continuing the Personal Support Services at Mary's Place and Notre Dame House from July 1, 2009 to August 30, 2009, would cost \$96,459. This cost will become a Departmental budget pressure and will be addressed through any Departmental budget surplus.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

None.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

Community Services staff have worked closely with the MCSS staff to resolve this issue. Consultation has been conducted with City staff from Corporate Services Department, Budgets & Finance Division, Finance & Administration Section.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “**Triple Bottom Line**”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

**Community Well-Being is enhanced.**

**Yes**       **No**

Shelter, care and satisfying employment are accessible to all Hamiltonians. Providing an additional three months of Personal Support Services to the women staying at Mary’s Place and the youth staying at Notre Dame House will assist them in leaving the emergency shelter more quickly. It will also provide them with a better chance of remaining housed through some of the additional supports provided.

**Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.**

**Yes**       **No**

**Economic Well-Being is enhanced.**

**Yes**       **No**

Poverty is reduced. The Personal Support Services recommended in Report ECS08026(b) will help to provide a bridge for women and youth staying in emergency shelters to permanent housing. The security of permanent housing allows individuals and families to then put in place the other supports they need to leave poverty.

**Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?**

**Yes**       **No**

**Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?**

**Yes**       **No**