



## **Minutes of Homelessness Task Force**

**January 17, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

**Electronic and In-Person Participation - Homelessness Task Force**

**The Corporation of the Town of Orangeville**

**(Chair and Secretary at Town Hall - 87 Broadway)**

**Orangeville, Ontario**

Members Present: R. Alvarez  
Councillor Andrews  
T. Carter  
E. Goodyear  
T. Grabb  
Councillor Sherwood

Members Absent: E. Dunn

Staff Present: T. Barry, Executive Assistant, Community Services  
H. Savage, General Manager, Community Services

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:21 p.m.

### **2. Disclosures of (Direct or Indirect) Pecuniary Interest**

None

### **3. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**2024-001**

**Moved By** Councillor Sherwood

That the minutes of the following meeting are approved: December 20, 2023

## **4. Presentations**

### **4.1 Constable Ryan Vogt**

Introduction of Michelle Marr (MCRT Crisis Nurse), Constable James Giovannetti and Constable Ryan Vogt attended on behalf of the OPP.

OPP spoke about the homelessness issue in Orangeville and referred to it in categories stating that there are some individuals who are taken care of (shelter) and seeking support, but then there are those that just do not want the assistance or support and chose to live in isolation, and those with mental health issues which are going untreated.

The OPP does try to get individuals linked to existing supports but unfortunately these individuals are resisting the support.

The OPP is noticing a trend that there is a gap with individuals who just don't know where to turn and aren't on the OPP radar and this demographic is growing. Full resources are lacking a little bit due to a lack of funding and it is hard to help those that are in the middle or in this gap. A new phone number has been launched - 988 - which is a Country-wide number that will link you to a crisis working anywhere in Canada for assistance.

OPP is the front line meeting those homeless. OPP did state that Orangeville sees a decrease in the homeless population in the winter as individuals leave Orangeville and head to the City where there is more support. They said that homeless individuals come up here in the summer as it is considered "wealthy", but leave in the winter so the homeless number does go down.

D. Sherwood asked if any of the homeless are refugee/asylum seekers. OPP confirmed that some are but most refugee/asylum seekers have already been set up. Stated that this group is not a group that is over represented.

T. Carter asked about the OPP's first hand experiences. The OPP said that they are dealing with a very unheard and unseen population who are on the brink of homelessness (the ones in the "gap") and they are seeing it in the older population as they are difficult to serve and they don't feel comfortable asking for help. The elderly may have issues with technology, mobility issues so information is limited, however, agencies are going over

and above to help. In the homeless population the young and middle aged individuals do recognize and appreciate the work that is being done. The OPP find that a lot of the job is to reduce the stigma attached to being homeless.

It is evident that there is a rise in food bank visits and they are seeing repossession of housing, cars. Seeing this shows a picture of what is happening within the community. Using the food bank as a benchmark is a great indication of how our economy is.

#### **4.2 Out of the Cold Roundtable Discussion**

Following the Out of the Cold roundtable it was decided that we will start the process of finding a location and if it all works out, we may be able to open until March 2024. Otherwise we will commence the out of the cold in December of 2024 into 2025.

During the meeting Pastor Kerry (Youth for Christ (Youth Unlimited)) offered his space, but would have to talk to his Board before committing. The expertise has been offered through the Dufferin Men's Shelter, and we need to reach out for volunteers.

Action Item - explore these two avenues and see if this is a viable option for December 2024 going forward (not enough time to implement immediately).

Action Item - Supportive Housing (SHIP) tap into their resources as they have expert staff as well and might be agreeable to partner for volunteer use - Chair Andrews will raise that at the next meeting. Also discuss Safe Beds program and see if that could assist the homelessness issues.

Action Item - E. Goodyear and Pastor Kerry will meet and review the space that has been offered to ensure suitability as E. Goodyear has the experience in assembling an out of the cold program. E. Goodyear also has lived experience in bringing an Out of the Cold program to fruition.

Action Item - to connect with Stephen Murphy to ask about assistance or anything he can provide (i.e. the utility trailer which has supplies/cots, etc.). Find out if our trailer can move on an urgent temporary basis to assist those in distress and in need of immediate shelter.

Suggested that the train station could be a temporary space until we explore the Youth for Christ - can be used up to April of this year, but after April it would not be available.

Action Item - H. Savage to look into the possibility of the train station being used as an Out of the Cold location.

T. Carter suggests that the committee make it the objective that the Out of the Cold be implemented not at -5, just when it is cold.

## **5. Items for Discussion and Reports**

### **5.1 Dufferin Men's Shelter Update**

Jaime Edge provided an update on the Dufferin Men's Shelter and advised that they do have 10-15 men at all times. They do still struggle with staffing components and funding is difficult. Finances are still an issue, but they are getting by; however there is a grant available through INFC which Choices and the Men's Shelter could get a large portion of (grant is for \$175,000). Choices/Men's Shelter have submitted its proposal for this funding. If approved, the organization would be looking to open the Men's Shelter during the day, two days a week, where they would provide programming, life skills, employment workshops, etc. and then open the Youth Shelter during the day as well (currently not funded to do that). This funding would cover until the end of April to keep the Youth Shelter funded and to keep the Men's Shelter open two days a week.

In December they housed 7 individuals. Jaime Edge indicated that their lowest night in December was 6 individuals in the shelter (for a couple nights), then they had 5 more intakes so they were back up to just over 10.

Jaime Edge did say that they were not at capacity, and when the temperature does drop down they do have the space and have the beds and can do an instant intake (pre-screen and take them in right away). But there are barriers with them coming in (must be from area, and they cannot take in women).

Jaime Edge did indicate, and agreed with Anna McGregor's sentiments (from previous meeting), that an Out of the Cold program may not need to be the priority as there are other options. She indicated it is worth it regarding the barriers, but the shelter does have availability. Hotel vouchers are also available for those in need (one off). Jaime Edge is also hopeful that from the funding that they applied for, they would put some money to VISA gift cards for individuals to use.

### **5.2 Affordable Housing**

Chair Andrews has circulated to Mayor Post and H. Savage some additional ideas for affordable housing.

This item will be a standing item at all meetings.

Action Item - Chair Andrews to provide T. Barry will further information to be circulated to the Committee.

### **5.3 Questions and Answers from A. McGregor (and follow up)**

T. Grabb had questions after the meeting with Anna McGregor to which further answers were provided and attached to these minutes.

T. Carter asked what the threshold is for the motel program and wants Anna McGregor to explain what these threshold requirements are in order to access the program.

### **5.4 Future Guest Speakers**

Defer to next meeting.

Action Item - Chair Andrews to invite representative of SHIP and new OPP inspector.

Action Item - committee members to send email to T. Barry setting out the names and contact information for those to be invited. Also indicate what meeting they would like the individual to attend.

## **6. Correspondence**

None

## **7. Announcements**

Matthew Smith, a member of the public, asked where people are to go once the warming centres close at 9:00 p.m. The Committee advised that they should go to a shelter.

Action Item - Conduct an educational campaign and H. Savage will speak to communications manager to put out this educational piece. Included in the information such things as: If a citizen is worried about individual(s) get them to reach out directly to OPP and the MCRT Team (contact through the non-urgent number). Can also email OPP and they will provide the resources for individuals for communication; County would be communication manager; Jaime Edge from Dufferin Mens Shelter can also provide information; also provide a photo of the red card with education. Chair Andrews will also put together some information for the educational piece.

DCEC put out an information piece and it would be beneficial to look at that campaign to gather information.

The OPP stated that our local establishments are very good with the homeless population and let individuals stay until they close.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.