



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

March 27, 2024

Here are the highlights from the Lanark County Council meeting held March 27, 2024.

Agreement with Rideau Community Health Services Ending: Lanark County Council has agreed to end a purchase of service agreement with Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) for substance use counselling services due to a funding reduction.

The recommendation follows a report to the community services committee of the whole earlier this month by Ontario Works Manager Buffy Armour, who explained the program has been in place for more than 10 years and provides the service to Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) participants. The agreement was funded through ongoing provincial funding allocated for employment assistance activities, but a portion of the funding has been transferred to a different ministry as part of a restructuring under Employment Ontario. Armour said this has meant a 22 per cent reduction.

"The counsellor who has been on contract for over 10 years is retiring on July 31, which coincides with the funding reduction and allows some time for us to create a phase out plan for the caseload and establish a new referral process for clients," Armour explained, adding there are about 60 clients. "Additional funding has been requested from the province to sustain this partnership but, to date, the request has not been approved." She added discussions with various partners are ongoing related to service options for program participants, although a direct access process for these referrals is not currently available.

In 2017, Lanark County's program won the Local Municipal Champion Award from the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. "The partnership with RCHS has been positive and productive, however, continuation of this agreement within the provincial allocation may jeopardize the ability to continue providing the core services of the OW program," Armour said. "The Ontario Works team is grateful to RCHS for its longstanding partnership. The counsellor has undoubtedly improved the lives of many people over the years and made numerous positive impacts on the community." For more information, contact Buffy Armour, Ontario Works Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2102.

Homelessness Prevention Program Investment Plan Approved: Lanark County Council has approved the 2024-25 investment plan for the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), which is a provincially funded program to provide affordable housing and support services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The program aims to prevent, address and reduce homelessness, including chronic homelessness.

At the community services committee meeting earlier this month, Social Services Director Emily Hollington said the program helps a diverse range of vulnerable people to meet short-term, critical needs. "The funding is intended to be flexible and streamlined, so service managers can target where community need is greatest and make the most impact on reducing and preventing homelessness."



MEDIA RELEASE

The county's allocation is almost \$2.5 million for four operative service categories and an allowance for program administration costs. The funding is to be allocated as follows:

- Emergency shelter solutions (\$160,000) – Includes emergency hotel stays and a contract with Victim Services for after-hours support.
- Supportive housing (\$700,000) – Includes Adult Supportive Housing (formerly known as domiciliary hostels) to provide supportive living accommodations for residents who require assistance with daily activities. The county has contracts with Victoria House (Smiths Falls), Shardon Manor (Montague), Rideau Ferry Country Home (Drummond/North Elmsley) and Paradise Valley (Carleton Place).
- Community outreach and support services (\$810,000) – Includes mental health and substance use supports, food security (grocery and food cards), case management and outreach (staff support, hygiene items/self-care kits) and By-Name List activities.
- Housing assistance (\$700,100) – Includes short-term/emergency assistance for rent and utilities arrears, rent and utilities deposits, moving costs and emergency repairs. It also includes long-term assistance through rent supplements for chronically homeless individuals from the by-name list.
- Program administration (\$124,800).

"These programs support the strategic directions of the county's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, improve affordable housing opportunities and housing options across the housing spectrum, provide greater housing stability and retention, and increase availability of support services," Hollington said. For more information, contact Emily Hollington, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101.

2024 Taxation Policies Approved: Lanark County Council has passed a by-law setting the 2024 taxation policy, which sets the tax ratios for the various property classes, refunds the county's portion of landfill taxation to relevant local municipalities, adopts all provisions available to reduce the number of capped properties. Council also approved a by-law establishing the 2024 tax rates to be levied to local municipalities.

At the corporate services committee meeting earlier this month, CAO Kurt Greaves explained council is responsible for determining two tax areas: the levy, which is established in the budget, and tax ratios, which distribute tax burden between property classes and set the levy apportionment between municipalities.

Greaves noted the ratios between the property classes are similar to last year as the province has kept reassessment on hold. Increases for the multi-residential class were above the provincial levy restriction of 2.0 (now 1.97) and increases are fully restricted to 0 per cent of any tax increase.

Council passed the 2024 budget in November with a levy of \$43 million and a net tax increase of 2.6 per cent, which is collected through the towns and townships, along with the education tax. The current value assessment is based on 2016 values, with the residential property class making up 85.2 per cent



MEDIA RELEASE

of the taxes paid in Lanark County and having an assessed value of \$9.2 billion. Total assessment of all classes is almost \$10.4 billion.

For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

Medical Tiered Response Working Group Established: Lanark County Council has approved a report from the striking committee related to the establishment of a temporary medical tiered response working group.

Council approved the terms of reference for the new working group, which was established to review information and statistics and seek specialized advice and materials to determine the need for and potential efficacy of a medical tiered response program for Lanark County. Such programs aim to assist with timely medical emergency responses with trained fire department personnel.

The working group will review the effectiveness of the current program, programs in other jurisdictions and potential agreement parameters around such things as training and communicable disease protection requirements before making recommendations to council. Members of the working group include Warden Steve Fournier (Drummond/North Elmsley Reeve), Councillor Ed McPherson (Perth Deputy Mayor), two of the Lanark County Fire Chiefs (Mississippi Mills Deputy Fire Chief Justin Hemsley), the Lanark County Paramedic Chief or a designate, and either the Lanark County Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Other experts may be invited to participate.

Council also approved an adjustment to the Traffic Advisory Working Group appointments. Montague Deputy Reeve Jeff Carroll will replace Morgan Kenny, and Carleton Place Councillor Dena Comley has been added. For more information, contact Jasmin Ralph, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, April 10, 5 p.m.; Community Services, April 10 (following County Council); Corporate Services, April 10 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, April 17, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, April 17 (following County Council); Economic Development, April 17 (following Public Works). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on X!

– 30 –