



## **2020 Second Quarter Activity Report September 24, 2020**

The following is the most recent consolidated Quarterly Report that the DSB will be sending to member municipalities and posting on the public website. Expect Quarterly Reports in February, May, September, and November of each year.

The program statistics are provided separately and updated monthly. They are available on the website by clicking the following link: [Monthly Program Statistics](#)

### **CAO Overview**

The DSB 2020 First Quarter (Unaudited) Financial Report was presented to the Board and projects a year-end municipal **surplus of \$536,773**. This surplus includes Ontario Works forecasted to be on under budget. Children's Services is forecasted to be on budget. Social Housing is forecasted to be under budget by \$300,328. Paramedic Services is forecasted to be under budget by \$231,421. Interest revenue on non-reserve accounts is forecasted to be a \$5,024 surplus over budget.

The DSB quarterly financial reports are available on the DSB website by clicking the following link: [Quarterly Financial Reports](#)

### **Paramedic Services**

#### **COVID-19 Pandemic Response**

The worldwide escalation of the Coronavirus Pandemic was significant during the second quarter of 2020 with the profound mitigation strategies being established across ever sector. Paramedic Services ramped up the COVID-19 Response Team to assist Alternate Testing Sites in Manitoulin Health Center, Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Sciences North. By the end of June 2020, paramedics had completed more than 700 tests, while being contracted for additional relief testing in Little Current, Mindemoya and Wiikwemkoong, programs funded through those health sectors.

Paramedic Services operated at an enhanced level throughout the second quarter with personnel delivering full scope services to the communities. During this period, there was no service degradation.

## **External Paramedic Recruitment**

Paramedic Services completed an external hiring process for 2020. The recruitment included the successful employment of one candidate who was a DSB member of the Patient Transfer Service team. The successful migration to Paramedic Services demonstrates the effectiveness of multi-tiered service delivery, allowing for professional growth. An additional five candidates were also hired during this process.

The 2020 recruitment was the fourth year where Psychological Assessments by Dr. Laidlaw were completed. In 2017, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Paramedic Service became the first service to implement this testing for paramedics. Since that time the similar testing has been added to a number of other systems in Canada.

## **2020/2021 MOHLTC Budget Process for Wiikwemkoong**

Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB submitted the Wiikwemkoong budget proposal to the MOHLTC during the second quarter period. The submission included language to ensure outstanding costs from the 2019/2020 year were remunerated. The service continues to work with other First nations Communities to address funding stability and ongoing delays from the Province.

## **Children's Services**

### **Parent Fees and Funding Support for the Child Care Sector**

On April 10, 2020 staff received a [memo](#) from the Ministry of Education announcing that effective April 9, all child care providers are prohibited from charging fees to parents where care is not being provided and that parents will not lose their child care space or be otherwise penalized as a result of fees not being paid during this closure period.

Providers in the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB had not charged parent fees during the closure period.

### **Emergency Child Care Expansion of Eligibility**

On April 17, 2020 staff received a [memo](#) confirming the list of workers eligible for emergency child care had been expanded.

A second expansion of the list of workers was confirmed by [memo](#) on April 29, 2020.

### **COVID-19 Testing**

Staff received a [memo](#) on May 1, 2020 requiring that all emergency child care staff be tested for COVID-19 before May 15, 2020. Staff partnered with Public Health Sudbury and Districts to ensure the deadline was met, all tests yielded negative results.

### **Early Years Funding**

On May 28, 2020 the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board approved the [Early Years Funding Issue Report](#) and directed staff to action the recommendations contained within the report.

The report highlighted challenges with respect to the provincial approach to funding child care during the closure period.

On May 26, 2020, the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) sent a [letter](#) to the Minister of Education expressing concerns of the Northern Service System Managers.

Since the issue report was approved by the board, staff received confirmation that Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) federal funds could be used to support retroactive costs and do not anticipate any funding pressures during the closure period.

### **Emergency Child Care**

On May 28, 2020 the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board approved the [Emergency Child Care Issue Report](#). The report provided an overview of the background and current state of emergency child care in our community. Two emergency child care centres were opened, one in Little Current and one in Espanola.

### **Child Care Re-Opening**

On June 25, 2020 the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board approved the [Child Care Reopening Issue Report](#).

On June 9, 2020, the Premier announced the provinces plan to reopen child care as of June 12, 2020. The [Guidelines](#) to reopen were released later the same day.

The Minister of Education [wrote](#) to parents on June 13 explaining the provincial plan to reopen child care and reassure parents that the health and safety of children and staff is paramount. The Minister also confirmed that child care programs have the flexibility to reopen on their own timelines, once all the strict health and safety guidelines have been met.

The [funding guidelines](#) were also released to support the reopening of child care, several questions have been raised with respect to the funding guidelines for the reopening phase.

## **Ontario Works**

### **Ontario Works Caseload**

In the second quarter of 2020, the Ontario Works/Temporary Care caseload average is 546. Compared to last year at this time, the caseload has increased by 7%.

## **Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, on [March 17, 2020](#), the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has implemented the following measures on a temporary basis:

- Reducing the need for in-person contact by authorizing risk-based approaches to eligibility determination and other verification requirements, including deferral of visual verification requirements of original documents.
- Helping to reduce the burden on program staff by modifying certain program requirements – including no longer suspending clients who do not report income and suspending Eligibility Verification Process reviews – to enable deployment of resources to priority activities.
- Helping to reduce the burden on the healthcare system by enabling program staff to approve extensions to Special Diet Allowance, Mandatory Special Necessities benefits, and medical transportation/supplies without endorsement from a health professional.
- Suspending the rule that limits emergency assistance provision to only once in a six-month period for individuals and families affected by COVID-19.
- Allowing people to receive emergency assistance for longer (48 days) without submitting a full Ontario Works application.
- A new one-time [Emergency Benefit](#) was created for both OW and ODSP to help with costs for personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, additional costs for food or other essential supplies, etc. The maximum amounts that may be issued for COVID-19 related costs are \$100 for singles, and \$200 for families.

### **Ontario Works Financial Flexibility Measures**

On May 13, staff received a [Memo](#) from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services advising that further to their March 26, 2020 memo, they want to provide further clarification on the Ontario Works program delivery funding and financial assistance.

Coupled with efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 by physically distancing staff, including increased demand on day-to-day administration of social assistance, special considerations were made regarding approaches on performance management and financial oversight.

### **Reloadable Payment Card**

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has worked with Service System Managers to train and guide us through the process of being able to issue Reloadable Payment Cards to our Ontario Works clients.

The Ministry is also committed to reforming and modernizing social assistance, including service delivery. The RPC will improve client experience, improve fiscal responsibilities, and cost efficiencies by reducing the cost of printing cheques, reducing the number of

replacing lost, stolen, or damaged cheques. RPC is also aligning with the Ministry's mandate of going paperless.

The DSB currently has approximately 11% of our caseload who are potentially eligible to participate in the reloadable payment card process. The Board approved the new [policy](#) so that we can proceed with implementation for clients who cannot get bank accounts where it makes sense (i.e. Homeless population).

### **Employment Ontario Audit**

On June 3, 2020, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff received a [letter](#) from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development indicating that they reviewed our progress on our Action Plan by selecting participant and employer files from the Employment Services, Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection: Summer programs. They also validated Employment Ontario Information System – Case Management System data against our participant files.

Although there is improvement, other key compliance issues remain and are outlined in the audit report. Consequently, once again, our site is not in compliance with the Employment Service, Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection: Summer agreements and as a result, the DSB will remain under Official Review.

Our Service Delivery Site is required to update our Action Plan indicating milestones and timelines by July 10, 2020. Our action plan has identified strategies to remedy the issues outlined in the report.

## **Community Housing**

### **Waiting list (Applicants)**

On June 30, 2020, the number of waiting applicants decreased by 1.5%. The applicant breakdown is as follows: Total applications to end of quarter is 514.

1 Bedroom	403	(-11)	2 Bedroom	54	(-2)
3 Bedroom	45	(0)	4 bedroom	22	(-6)

### **Direct Shelter Subsidy (DSS)**

Staff continue to identify and complete the application process with eligible applicants for the DSS program. All applicants receiving the benefit are deemed housed. As of the end of this quarter there were 222 active DSS recipients.

## Income Mixing

Per DSB Policy, every effort is being made where the waitlist allows, to mix the Community Housing Buildings with RGI, Affordable and Market Rent Tenants. We have secured 10 full market rent tenants and 36 affordable rent tenants throughout the portfolio as of the end of the first quarter.

## Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit

The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) calculation is based on the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Average Market Rent (AMR) and not the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's Market Rent. The gap is quite large between CMHC's Average Market Rent comparatively to the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB which means that less people will qualify.

In response to requests for flexibility, Service System Managers were able to request alternate COHB AMRs for the 2020-21 benefit year. The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB submitted a business case including a local market rent survey for alternate 2020-21 COHB.

Based on the business case presented, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) has approved, in accordance with the COHB program guidelines, the maximum monthly benefit amount payable starting July 1, 2020 to be 80% of the [alternate AMRs](#) (shown in the chart below) less the RGI minimum rent which is \$129 for non-social assistance recipients.

# of Rooms	COHB Average Market Rent	New COHB Average Market Rent
One Bedroom	\$ 678	\$ 883
Two Bedrooms	\$ 915	\$ 1047
Three Bedrooms	\$ 993	\$ 1113

## [New Rent Geared to Income Policy](#)

The Province of Ontario has changed the way Rent Geared to Income (RGI) is calculated. The Board approved the implementation of the new RGI calculations starting July 1, 2020. The changes to the RGI calculation make calculating rent simpler for housing providers and easier for tenants to predict and understand.

All rents calculated as of July 1, 2020 will use the new RGI calculation. Changes will be implemented gradually, at annual review, and will be completed by July 1, 2021.

The new RGI calculation is based on 30% of Adjusted Family Net Income (AFNI) and that rent amount is adjusted for utilities, services and heating costs which are all subject to a minimum rent amount. Before applying the 30%, monthly adjusted family net income is reduced by an employment release earnings deduction of wither \$75 or \$150 per month, depending on the size of the household.

All tenants will be required to provide their annual Notice of Assessment as a condition of continued eligibility. A review of rent will be conducted every 12 months. In year reviews will only be completed under specific circumstances.

### **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF)**

On [April 1, 2020](#), MMAH made an immediate investment of **\$148 million** for Service Managers under the Social Services Relief Fund. The investment will allow communities to expand a wide range of services and supports for vulnerable populations, based on local need, so they can better respond to this emergency situation.

This investment complements additional resources provided by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services of **\$52 million** to directly support individuals and families in financial crisis who are not able to access federal assistance. This is through the Emergency Benefit that I spoke about previously.

Under the Social Services Relief Fund, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board will be eligible to receive **\$938,400** in 2020-21. This funding is provided funding through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

A few examples of initiatives that the DSB has initiated with the SSRF funding include:

- organizing food supply to be delivered to all of our food banks in the district to ensure adequate food supply as local grocery stores have limited capacity.
- partnering with Manitoulin Family Resources to secure a place to stay, food and supports for the homeless population on the Manitoulin and LaCloche areas.
- assisting First Nations individuals who have leased land and cannot return home due to the First Nations Emergency Order restrictions.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has also received [confirmation](#) of our Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funding for 2021-21 in the amount of \$766,183.

## **Infrastructure & Asset Management**

### **COVID-19**

Since early April, the department continues to support the DSB Staff and all Clients that we serve to protect from COVID-19 and have been adapting processes as we move through the Provincial Phases. Since the last report;

- Continued vigilance with cleaning and disinfecting practices throughout
- Interdepartmental collaboration with obtaining supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Closure of Public Spaces
- Screening of all residents and contractors in advance of work done
- Providing appropriate PPE to staff
- Supporting the installation of sneeze guards in all ISS locations
- Helping to coordinate contractors for “office readiness” work

## **Work Orders**

During the second quarter a total of 190 Work Orders were generated: 136 for Community Housing; 14 for Administration Offices, and 40 for Paramedic Services. There was a total of 114 Work Orders closed or resolved during that time. Work orders are closed if the work is done in-house, or when the invoice is paid if from an outside source.

Since the last quarter, only work orders of an urgent nature affecting Tenant Safety, Fire Safety, or Building Safety were being actioned.

## **Building Condition Assessments (BCA) – Full Portfolio**

Housing Services Corporation was contracted to assist the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB with completion of Building Condition Assessments throughout the District. This included not only DSB Community Housing, but also Administration Buildings, Paramedic Services locations, and 3 of our Non-Profit Housing Providers.

These BCA’s will assist with having a fulsome over-view of the condition of our assets and a tool to use for financial capital planning throughout the DSB Portfolio.

## **Summary**

The DSB had a very busy second quarter. If municipal Councils have any questions or would like DSB staff to attend a municipal Council meeting, please feel free to contact me at the address below.

### **Fern Dominelli**

Chief Administrative Officer  
Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board  
Phone: 705-222-7777  
E mail: [fern.dominelli@msdsb.net](mailto:fern.dominelli@msdsb.net)  
Website: [www.msdsb.net](http://www.msdsb.net)