



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
County of Renfrew Administration Building

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Call to order. | |
| 2. | Roll call. | |
| 3. | Disclosure of pecuniary interest and general nature thereof. | Page |
| 4. | Adoption of minutes of previous meeting held on January 17, 2024. | 2 |
| 5. | Delegations: None at the time of mailing. | |
| 6. | Community Services Department | |
| | a) Department Report | 5 |
| | b) Ontario Works Division Report | 17 |
| | c) Child Care and Early Years Division Report | 21 |
| 7. | New Business. | |
| 8. | Closed Meeting: None at the time of mailing. | |
| 9. | Date of next meeting (Wednesday, March 6, 2024) and adjournment. | |

NOTE: a) **County Council: Wednesday, February, 28, 2024.**
b) Submissions received from the public, either orally or in writing may become part of the public record.



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

A meeting of the Community Services Committee was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 2:36 p.m. at the County of Renfrew Administration Building, Pembroke, Ontario.

Present were: Chair Anne Giardini
Warden Peter Emon
Vice-Chair Debbi Grills
Councillor David Mayville
Councillor Neil Nicholson
Councillor Gary Serviss

Regrets: Councillor Ed Jacyno (City of Pembroke Rep)

Staff Present: Craig Kelley, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
Andrea Patrick, Acting Director of Community Services/Manager of Ontario Works
Jennifer Dombroskie, Manager of Housing and Homelessness
Margo Smith, Manager of Child Care & Early Years Services
Tina Peplinskie, Media Relations and Social Media Coordinator
Gwen Dombroski, Deputy Clerk

Chair Giardini called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m. The roll was called and no pecuniary interests were disclosed.

RESOLUTION NO. CS-C-23-01-01

Moved by Councillor Serviss

Seconded by Councillor Mayville

THAT the minutes of the November 15, 2023, Community Services Committee meeting be adopted. CARRIED.

The Acting Director of Community Services overviewed the Community Services Department Report which is attached as Appendix A.

Councillor Serviss thanked the Community Services Department for attending the Town of Petawawa Council meeting and providing an overview of the services the department provides.

Councillor Nicholson requested that Item #3 (the letter and resolution from the Township of Whitewater Region) be brought back to the February Committee meeting.

The Manager of Child Care and Early Years Services overviewed the Child Care and Early Years Division Report, which is part of the Community Services Department Report.

Councillor Nicholson questioned if the County is experiencing an escalation in child care costs and if the provincial funding/revenues is offsetting the increased costs and suggested that Council advocates for additional funding if and when it is needed. The Manager of Child Care and Early Years Services noted that monthly meetings are held with service providers and will advise if any concerns are presented.

RESOLUTION NO. CS-C-23-01-02

Moved by Councillor Serviss

Seconded by Councillor Nicholson

THAT the Community Services Committee recommends to County Council that By-law No. 49-17 be amended, authorizing the County of Renfrew to approve the addition of a new policy to the Licensed Home Child Care Policies and Procedures. CARRIED.

The Acting Director of Community Services overviewed the Ontario Works Division Report, which is part of the Community Services Department Report.

The Acting Director of Community Services overviewed the Draft 2024 Community Services Department (Ontario Works, Community Housing and Child Care) Budget and the Draft 2024 Renfrew County Housing Corporation Budget. Committee discussed the impact of the transformation in the Ontario Works Department and the proposed staff reductions and vacant positions. Committee also discussed the proposed business case dealing with Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions and the potential staff implications.

RESOLUTION NO. CS-C-23-01-03

Moved by Councillor Mayville

Seconded by Councillor Nicholson

THAT the Community Services Committee recommends that the Draft 2024 Community Services Department (Ontario Works, Community Housing and Child Care) Budget and the Draft 2024 Renfrew County Housing Corporation Budget, as approved by the Renfrew County Housing Corporation Board of Directors, be forwarded to the January 24, 2024, County Council Budget Workshop as presented. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. CS-C-23-01-04

Moved by Warden Emon

Seconded by Councillor Mayville

THAT the Community Services Committee Report, which is attached as Appendix A be approved. CARRIED.

RESOLUTION NO. CS-C-23-01-05

Moved by Councillor Serviss

Seconded by Councillor Grills

THAT this meeting adjourn and the next regular meeting be held on February 14, 2024. Time 3:51 p.m. CARRIED.

**COUNTY OF RENFREW
COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT**

TO: Community Services Committee

FROM: Andrea Patrick, Acting Director of Community Services

DATE: February 14, 2024

SUBJECT: Department Report

INFORMATION

1. Letters from Township of Whitewater Region

Attached as Appendix I and Appendix II are letters from the Township of Whitewater Region Council, highlighting needs seen in their region regarding child care and water and wastewater system affordability in rural Ontario. This item was included in the January 2024 report and deferred for discussion to the February meeting.

2. Health and Housing Crisis Engagement Team

The new MESA Team, the new proposed name for the Health and Housing Crisis Engagement Team (formerly referred to as the “Hub” model), marks a pivotal initiative within the County of Renfrew to address the critical intersection of health and homelessness. This collaborative initiative will be led by the Paramedic Service, Community Services, and Development and Property departments. Recognizing the urgent need for a unified and multi-sectoral approach, MESA establishes an evidence-to-action model that not only acknowledges the complex challenges at the nexus of health and homelessness but also delineates a roadmap for coordinated, integrated solutions. This report underscores the commitment of the County of Renfrew's administration, community services, development and property, and emergency services departments to work synergistically in executing a transformative strategy that goes beyond individual silos and leverages the collective expertise and resources of the community. MESA embodies a bold and compassionate endeavor to address the root causes of homelessness while fostering a resilient and healthier community for all residents of the County of Renfrew. The name is derived from the term used for a flat-topped hill; a formation that has steep sides all around, resembling a table (Mesa comes from the Latin mensa meaning "table"). Tables represent a sturdy and helpful resources, and have the means to stand up on their own feet without any assistance; traits that we are sure we'd want our clients to have at the end of our engagement.

This initiative enhances Strategic Goal #3, Community Wellness and Healthcare

3. **Child Care and Early Years Division Report**

Attached as Appendix III is the Child Care and Early Years Division Report, prepared by Ms. Margo Smith, Manager of Child Care and Early Years Services, providing an update on activities.

4. **Ontario Works Division Report**

Attached as Appendix IV is the Ontario Works Division Report prepared by Ms. Andrea Patrick, Manager of Ontario Works, providing an update on activities.

Council Members**Mayor Neil Nicholson****D-Mayor Cathy Regier****Councillors:**

Mark Bell

Michael Moore

Chris Olmstead

Connie Tabbert

Joey Trimm

October 31, 2023

Warden Peter Emon
County of Renfrew
9 International Drive
Pembroke, Ontario K8A 6W5

Ref: Director of Community Services (Sep, 2023). Child Care and Early Years
Presentation to the Council of the Township of Whitewater Region.

Dear Warden Emon,

The Township of Whitewater Region (WWR) thanks you and the County of Renfrew staff for the presentation this past September. The Director of Community Services and Manager of Child Care and Early Years Division provided great information and feedback to the numerous questions asked by members of Council. It was very much appreciated.

WWR is a rural municipalities with a number of villages and hamlets; and very fortunate to have three elementary schools. Although we have a very large agricultural base and a manufacturing sector within our municipality, there are many of our families that travel outside our municipality to work. Within the last few years, more and more are also working from home via hybrid work models or through diversified farm businesses. In almost all family settings both parents work, making the demand for childcare and before/after school child care a common need for all.

Within WWR, there is only one licensed home child care option with six possible seats and access to Early Years programming is provided through the Toy Bus program six days a month. With over 385 preschool children and another 440 children that qualify for before/after school care in WWR, this simply does not meet our needs. Many parents have had to use private child care options and by doing so, lose any opportunity to qualify for income subsidies or fee subsidies like the \$11/day national child care program. If receipts are not provided, they also lose any opportunities to declare the expense for income tax purposes. Others are on a multiple years wait list for licensed child care in neighboring communities. Not only does this compete with local demand within these communities, more often than not, the child will be

(613) 646-2282



P.O. Box 40,
44 Main Street
Cobden, ON
K0J 1K0

www.whitewaterregion.ca

Council Members

Mayor Neil Nicholson
D-Mayor Cathy Regier

Councillors:

Mark Bell
Michael Moore
Chris Olmstead
Connie Tabbert
Joey Trimm

enrolled in a school close to these supports rather than staying in our rural schools. This lack of access to rural childcare erodes our rural schools and can make parents question why they would choose to live in a community other than where they have access to child care or to schooling, further draining our rural communities of young families.

Access to licensed child care as well as early years programming is an essential component to a vibrant and healthy community; and to ensure our economy has access to this vital demographic of our population. Parents are being forced to choose between working and staying home for childcare or between a rural community lifestyle and a more urban one close to where they might work. We need to work to increase access to licensed child care in our rural communities and recommend that the County of Renfrew, in conjunction with Provincial Ministries consider the following:

- a. Increase rural licensed home child care. As an immediate short term goal, work to dramatically increase the number of rural licensed home child cares. It is a demanding process and takes some effort to ensure a private home can operate in this way therefore incentives and supports should be considered that attract and retain home child care operators, especially in rural communities. This will also offer access to individual subsidies right here, close to home.
- b. Offer before/after school care in rural schools. Advocate with local school boards and Ministry of Education to offer before/after school care in rural schools. As a way to make enrolment in local schools as attractive as possible, each school should offer access into a local before/after school child care whether in the school or in partnership with a provider in the community.
- c. Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Wages. Many existing licensed child care facilities in the County have excess capacity in terms of room and equipment but are unable to take additional children without additional employees. The wage for an ECE is not competitive and many ECEs are recruited for other, higher paying careers even though they would prefer to work with children.

(613) 646-2282



P.O. Box 40,
44 Main Street
Cobden, ON
K0J 1K0



www.whitewaterregion.ca



Council Members

Mayor Neil Nicholson
D-Mayor Cathy Regier

Councillors:

Mark Bell
Michael Moore
Chris Olmstead
Connie Tabbert
Joey Trimm

d. Attract Not-for-Profit/For Profit Providers. In the same manner that municipal governments are working to attract affordable housing, so should effort be put into attracting not-for-profit/for profit providers, especially in rural communities. Economic incentives to help establish these essential services in their first 5-10 years of operations should be considered at both upper and lower tiers of government.

e. Municipal Operations. For specific locations, to meet high demand where insufficient numbers of licensed home child care or not-for-profit/for profit providers are an option to meet demand then consideration should be given to alternatives like a municipal purpose built facility that could be either operated as a municipal child care center or leased to a not-for-profit providers. County of Renfrew could work with lower-tiers to help facilitate consideration of this level of service.

It is recognized that the County of Renfrew is only a designated service system manager for provincial funding. However, child care services directly impacts the lives of our residents as well as our economic capacity. We recognize its importance here in Whitewater Region and want to work together with the County of Renfrew and Province of Ontario to find solutions that can meet our needs.

Respectfully,



Neil Nicholson
Mayor

(613) 646-2282



P.O. Box 40,
44 Main Street
Cobden, ON
K0J 1K0



www.whitewaterregion.ca



November 3, 2023

Council Members

Mayor Neil Nicholson
D-Mayor Cathy Regier
Councillors:
Mark Bell
Michael Moore
Chris Olmstead
Connie Tabbert
Joey Trimm

Warden Peter Emon
County of Renfrew
9 International Drive
Pembroke, Ontario K8A 6W5


Ref: Whitewater Region Briefing Note – Water and Wastewater System
Affordability in Rural Ontario (Nov, 2023)

Dear Warden Emon,

I am reaching out to you to seek your assistance in addressing the affordability of our drinking and wastewater treatment systems here in the Township of Whitewater Region. As outlined in the attached Briefing note, recent and upcoming capital improvements to our systems are so expensive that the rates charged to the residents serviced by these systems is higher than almost all others in the County of Renfrew and could be some of the highest within Ontario.

As such, we are seeking your support to help address this on behalf of our residents. We would like to arrange a meeting where we could examine options to access homelessness funding to support the most vulnerable users and to discuss any other recommendations you or your staff may have to best mitigate the impact of these high rates.

Respectfully,


Neil Nicholson
Mayor

(613) 646-2282



P.O. Box 40,
44 Main Street
Cobden, ON
K0J 1K0



www.whitewaterregion.ca



DATE: November 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Water and Wastewater System Affordability in Rural Ontario

References:

- A. Watson & Associates Economists Ltd (Dec, 2019). *Water and Wastewater Rate Study*. Township of Whitewater Region.
- B. County of Renfrew (Mar, 2020). *County of Renfrew Official Plan*.
- C. Jp2g Consultants Inc (Apr 2016). *Phase 1 and 2 Report Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for the Township of Whitewater Region Cobden Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrades*. Township of Whitewater Region.
- D. Township of Whitewater Region (Oct 2023). *Council Information – Water and Wastewater Systems (Version 2, powerpoint presentation)*.

ISSUE

1. The Water and Wastewater Rate Study for the Township of Whitewater Region (ref A) has identified that the rates needed to operate the systems and pay for capital reinvestment must increase significantly over the period 2019 until 2029. As a result, these rate increases have become unaffordable, and the Township of Whitewater Region (WWR) is seeking ways to mitigate these rate increases to ease the burden on residents.

BACKGROUND

2. WWR is located in the County of Renfrew. The former Westmeath Township, Ross Township, the Village of Cobden and the Village of Beachburg were amalgamated in 2001 to create WWR. It includes 538 sq km of land, is accessed by provincial Highways 17 and 653, and is located 1.5 hours west of the City of Ottawa. WWR has one Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Cobden servicing 425 users and one Drinking Water Treatment System that comprises three separate plants; one in Cobden (455 users), one in Beachburg (458 users) and one in Haley Station (34 users).

3. Drinking Water. The Cobden Drinking Water Treatment Plant (DWTP) draws surface water from Muskrat Lake and was originally constructed in 1980, then upgraded in 2010. It is now in need of a filter replacement or upgrade forecasted at \$1-2M. It includes 9.2 kms of linear infrastructure and a 900 m3 water tower that was constructed in 1987. The Beachburg DWTP has two ground water wells and was originally constructed in 1989 and is currently undergoing a renewal and optimization at a value of \$2M. It includes 10 km of linear infrastructure. The

Haley Station DWTP has two ground water wells and was revitalized in 2010 for \$1M. It has 2 km of linear infrastructure. The system complete has an estimated value of \$24M (ref A).

4. Wastewater. The original Cobden WWTP was constructed in 1979 and had a treatment capacity of 696 m³/day and a peak hydraulic capacity of 2,280 m³/day, however many of its mechanical and electronic support systems did not meet existing provincial standards and were reaching the end of their useful life. Electrical, heating and ventilation, and stand by power did not meet current standards. In addition, during spring runoff and heavy rainfall events, both the hydraulic capacity and the effluent criteria were periodically exceeded resulting in raw sewage bypass events. The original WWTP was also identified as the largest single point source of nutrient loading on Muskrat Lake as the effluent limits exceeded the Environmental Compliance Approvals (ECAs) regulatory limits by 2 to 10 times the limit. Average yearly flows exceeded the plant capacity, and it was projected that 73 new single detached buildings could be expected in Cobden if the capacity was available. The WWTP also had no parallel redundancy as called for by Ministry Design Guidelines and no Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system for effective record keeping.

5. As a result of these issues and needs, a project was initiated to consider upgrading the WWTP. The Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project (ref C) identified a number of constraints, including:

a. Muskrat Lake is a sensitive, at-capacity, inland freshwater lake home to Lake Trout and is one of the most eutrophic lakes in the Province (ref C) making it subject to the Policy 2 provisions outlined in the MOECC Procedural Guideline B-1-5. MOECC staff advised that this means that the **best available technologies** will likely be required to minimize WWTP impact on Muskrat Lake. This constraint heavily influenced the consideration of options that included advance tertiary treatment processes.

b. The original WWTP footprint is restricted; it is between a provincial highway and is immediately adjacent to the Cobden wetland, which is a large wetland designated as a provincially significant wetland making any use of this area subject to extensive environmental investigations over all seasons and MNRF approvals. This constraint directly influenced the viability of options such as aerated lagoon/activated sludge processes. Even though this option would have offered considerable capital and operating cost savings compared to a mechanical plan, it would require additional time for these investigations and even once that was all complete, it still could have been refused by MNRF due to its impact on this provincially significant wetland.

c. A preliminary Infiltration and Inflow study on the WWTP indicated 2% stormwater inflow, 15% rainfall, and 30% groundwater infiltration. Reducing these inflows would reduce hydraulic loading, increase treatment capacity, and assist in the reduction of the frequency and magnitude of the by-pass events. However, the study stated that reducing these inflows would be

expensive and would likely need to be done over the long term. Although this was included as an alternative solution, its estimated cost was over \$14M and was the most expensive option by far.

d. Sludge disposal costs were very high due to the lack of storage at the original WWTP. At the time, WWR also did not have a Non-Agricultural Source Materials (NASM) certification in accordance with the Nutrient Management Act, Ontario Regulation 267/03. Without an approved NASM Plan and without any ability to store the sludge it was necessary to transport this material to another waste treatment facility frequently. It was believed that an upgrade to the WWTP would significantly reduce sludge disposal costs and these operating savings would help to balance any increases in operating costs with a new facility. The 2015 operating costs were \$364K/year. Currently the operating costs are \$1.1M/year with no contribution to reserves at this time.

6. In Aug, 2015, it was decided to proceed with a new parallel mechanical system at a class D estimate of over \$9M. Following the EA process and design a tender was awarded May, 2018 for \$11M. This project realized substantive completion Mar, 2022 and now has a treatment capacity of 1000 m³/day and a peak hydraulic capacity of 3500 m³/day. Total cost for the upgrade, including construction, EA, design and contract administration was \$13M. The analysis of the effluent quality is now consistently showing near zero quantities of phosphorous, e-coli, and other containments. However, recent spring runoff and heavy rainfall events have surpassed the newly established capacity and this resulted in overflow events, reinforcing the ongoing challenge of ground water and storm water infiltrating the system. The plant upgrade, the 9.2 km of linear infrastructure and a pump station have an estimated value of \$21M (ref A).

DISCUSSION

7. Affordability is very difficult to achieve with so few users on such expensive systems. The Cobden WWTP has 425 users on a \$21M system and the Cobden/Beachburg/Haley DWTP has 947 users on a \$24M system. The 2019 Rate Study at ref A has provided the rates needed to fund these systems until 2029 and identifies that the average residential rate for drinking water had to increase to \$1700/year and wastewater had to increase to \$2200/year by 2029. For the average residential user, this necessitates a \$1000/year increase in drinking water and a \$1300/year wastewater rates. For Cobden residents, who are connected to both systems, this will result in an annual water and wastewater bill of over \$3900/year. For a single parent family, a senior on CPP, or for those working at or close to minimum wage this is unaffordable. Further, the rate study assumed a 2% rate of inflation, yet the operating and capital replacement costs are increasing at much higher rates. Also, the operating costs for the WWTP are exceeding forecasts. These two factors call for additional increases in rates to cover existing expenses plus to ensure contributions to reserve necessary to effectively manage the life cycle of the systems. With all these pressures, it is clear that the systems are not affordable given the number of users.

8. Using the Cobden WWTP \$13M upgrade as an example, The Federal and Provincial Government each contributed \$3.1M under the Building Canada Small Communities Fund. As there were no reserves, the balance of the upgrade was an additional \$6M that has been debentured over 30 years. However, even with these contributions there remaining portion to be paid for by the users is so significant that it must be debentured with significant carrying costs. In addition, the new systems must meet new standards and levels of service – they operate 24 hours/day and this requires additional staffing, consumes more hydro, require new treatments regimes, need additional filter cleanings/replacements – and this contributes to significantly higher operating costs.

9. The Township of Whitewater Region has reached a breaking point. It is clear that the rates must be increased to at least the levels recommended in the rate study to keep the systems operational, to cover the debentures, and to build reserves for additional linear infrastructure replacement. However, with over 30% of the current annual rates collected going toward this debenture and operating costs that have tripled, and high inflation, the necessary rates to achieve this are not affordable. Drastic options like ceasing contributions to reserves and delaying all future capital works are now having to be considered as the least-worst option to mitigate short term impacts. Dramatic as these options are, we are only compounding the long-term impacts on our residents by pushing greater financial burden into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The next steps that have been adopted by Council include advocacy through FCM, AMO, ROMA, the MPP, and the MP for our riding to highlight that the affordability of these wastewater and drinking water systems is not sustainable for our rural community. We are seeking assistance to address not only existing challenges, but upcoming replacements of other equipment close to its life expectancy. Some areas that we recommend are investigated:

a. Impacts of Regulation on Capital and Operating Costs. There are a number of regulations, guidelines and legislation that dictate drinking and wastewater treatment systems. The efforts to reduce phosphorus and other inputs into an at-capacity lake greatly influenced the decision to upgrade the Cobden WWTP, yet were they examined without a full appreciation of the long-term impact on the annual user rates? Are the capital and operating costs of these regulations affordable on small systems? Grants are available for capital projects, should there be grants available for increased operating costs of state of the art systems?

b. Grant Sharing Requirements. Sharing costs 1/3 for each level of government for large essential service projects should be re-examined and potentially scaled at different proportions based on the number of users. Grants also need to consider the full cost of the project. In the case of the Cobden WWTP, the estimate for the project was \$9.3M but the final cost was \$13M. Can the sharing formula be adapted to rural projects, in an effort to

meet all the existing regulations without causing annual rates to rise beyond what can be afforded?

- c. Complex Project Management. Small rural municipalities are more than likely without the experience to manage a complex wastewater or water upgrade without specialized outside engineering support. Scoping the project and ensuring that alternative, cheaper alternatives are considered is difficult to do for small municipal staff and councils without more of a full appreciation of project management. Grant requirements (including timelines), conditions and timing as well as specialized engineering supports may have a tendency to default to expensive upgrades. Can project management for essential services be a regional municipal service?
- d. Regional Municipal Services Corporation (MSC). The small number of users, geography, and modest growth potential of these rural drinking water and wastewater treatment plants limit any economy of scale. A MSC that included a number of plants could concentrate skills, knowledge, and expertise. It may allow the retention of engineering support that could find affordable solutions to unique communities and do the detailed long term asset management planning to include a finance plan. It may also provide a louder, single voice to advocate for the necessary grant funding and other potential subsidies. Could it also provide any benefit that could translate into affordable rates across a system? Would there be regional support to the creation of an MSC?
- e. MPAC Property Code. Although a relatively small portion of the operating costs, the water and wastewater treatment plants are issued with a property code by MPAC that is not exempt upper tier and education property tax. Is it possible for this to be re-examined for exemption or some other consideration?
- f. Higher Approval of Affordable Rate Studies. Rate studies should be necessary prior to any significant capital investment and require some provincial oversight or acceptance before any grant is awarded. Can the full annual costs for a project can be appreciated better at the onset, for the public, for Council and for the grant approval authorities?
- g. Encouraging and Funding Alternative Options in Rural Communities. Grants are focussed on providing new upgrades or solutions. In some cases, in an effort to remain affordable it might be necessary to award grants for projects that limit the upgrade or look at other alternatives (like ground/storm water infiltration reduction) that may not have been as environmental but would have been more affordable. Is there a better process to more fully analyze alternative options, including higher level government support for less expensive initiatives?
- h. Disposal of Sewage Sludge. Currently in WWR, the sludge can only be disposed of in the landfill which consumes vital and expensive airspace. Every effort should be made to use this sludge in an agricultural use as close

to the WWTP as possible to minimize costs. Are there NASM certification processes that could be re-examined for rural systems?

11. In addition to this advocacy, WWR is going to examine other ways to lessen the impact of the increasing rates on our users. This will include:

- a. seeking additional capital funding support from the province and federal levels of government for both upcoming projects as well as the additional \$3M incurred for the completion of the Cobden WWTP for having achieved the higher environmental standards that were imposed;
- b. in partnership with OCWA we will try to find operating efficiencies within the systems to decrease operating costs;
- c. examine potential revenue sources, such as receiving septage;
- d. consider water meters as a means of reducing water and wastewater flow and reallocating variable operating costs;
- e. seek homelessness prevention funding to help reduce water and wastewater rates for low income and senior residents; and
- e. ensure we have obtained value for all costs incurred in the project management and construction of the Cobden WWTP.

CONCLUSION

12. Water and Wastewater capital projects are putting significant financial pressures on small rural community users, stagnating growth opportunities in settlement areas and making it unaffordable for young families and seniors to remain in rural communities. Every effort must be examined to address the situation in WWR and to work to ensure other rural communities do not end up in the same position.

Prepared by: Mayor N.Nicholson

Date Prepared: November 3, 2023

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS REPORT

Prepared by: Margo Smith, Manager of Child Care and Early Years Division

Prepared for: Community Services Committee

February 14, 2024

INFORMATION

1. Inclusion Services Statistics

The following chart indicates Inclusion Services monthly statistics from January 2023 to December 2023.

Month	Children Served
January	176
February	173
March	177
April	180
May	179
June	175
July	184
August	177
September	181
October	180
November	180
December	189

2. Licensed Home Child Care Statistics

The following chart indicates the County of Renfrew Licensed Home Child Care program monthly statistics from January 2023 to December 2023.

Month	Children Served	Open Homes	Children on Waitlist
January	38	7	131
February	37	7	120
March	36	7	135
April	39	7	138
May	44	7	148
June	45	7	155
July	43	7	168
August	44	7	153
September	47	8	171
October	48	8	190
November	50	8	196
December	42	7	204

3. **Licensed Child Care Statistics**

The following chart indicates monthly statistics for Licensed Child Care in Renfrew County from January 2023 to December 2023.

Month	Licensed Capacity	Operating Capacity	Children Served	Children Served, receiving Fee Subsidy
January	2275	1593	1584	343
February	2275	1598	1612	343
March	2275	1595	1625	353
April	2363	1633	1680	343

Month	Licensed Capacity	Operating Capacity	Children Served	Children Served, receiving Fee Subsidy
May	2363	1659	1727	343
June	2363	1682	1767	341
July	2363	1503	1422	322
August	2363	1528	1471	321
September	2503	1768	1753	309
October	2503	1789	1752	325
November	2503	1785	1802	344
December	2503	1785	1771	303

4. Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Update

On March 28, 2022, the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement was signed by the federal and provincial governments with the vision that more families in Ontario will have access to high quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care. CWELCC is a five-year plan (2022-2026) to reduce the cost of licensed child care for children under six to an average of \$10/day by 2026.

As the designated Service System Manager, the County of Renfrew Child Care and Early Years division is responsible for planning, directing, and managing growth at the local level under the CWELCC system. Since 2022, there have been a number of actions taken to help implement the CWELCC system in the County of Renfrew, including:

- Enrollment of 30 out of 32 licensed child care programs into the CWELCC system
- Reduction of parent fees for eligible children up to 52.75% from March 2022 rates
- Reduction of child care contributions for eligible families receiving fee subsidy by 50%
- Funding issued to licensed child care providers to increase wages for eligible Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's)

As part of the CWELCC agreement, Ontario has made the commitment to increase access to high-quality, affordable child care by allocating funding to support the creation

of 86,000 new spaces by the end of 2026. This includes 33,000 new spaces that have already been created between 2019 and August 2022. The Ministry of Education allocated CWELCC expansion targets to all municipalities in May 2023 as part of the Directed Growth Strategy and identified specific population criteria to be considered for the new spaces, including:

- Low-income families
- Children with special needs
- Children from diverse communities
- Indigenous families
- Francophone families

The Ministry of Education approved a total of 427 new CWELCC spaces to be created in the County of Renfrew between 2022 and 2026 as part of the Directed Growth Strategy. The following chart indicates the space allocation from May 2023.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total Spaces
School-based Spaces	127	122	42	0	0	291
Community-based Spaces	26	48	62	0	0	136
Total Spaces	153	170	104	0	0	427

Out of the 427 spaces, 291 are designated as school-based spaces that were pre-approved projects by the Ministry of Education prior to the CWELCC agreement in 2022. All of these spaces are required to be counted in the total allocation for the County of Renfrew. The remaining 136 spaces are designated as community-based spaces. All spaces that have been allocated have already been created or are accounted for with existing projects in 2024 within the County of Renfrew. As per the chart, all space creation has been assigned to the years 2022-2024 and there has been zero growth allocated for the County of Renfrew in 2025 and 2026.

The Ministry of Education has formally provided opportunities for Service System Managers to request adjustments to their CWELCC space allocations in 2023. Every opportunity has been taken to request additional spaces for growth in the County of Renfrew and there have been no increases approved for the County of Renfrew to date.

ONTARIO WORKS REPORT

Prepared by: Andrea Patrick, Manager of Ontario Works

Prepared for: Community Services Committee

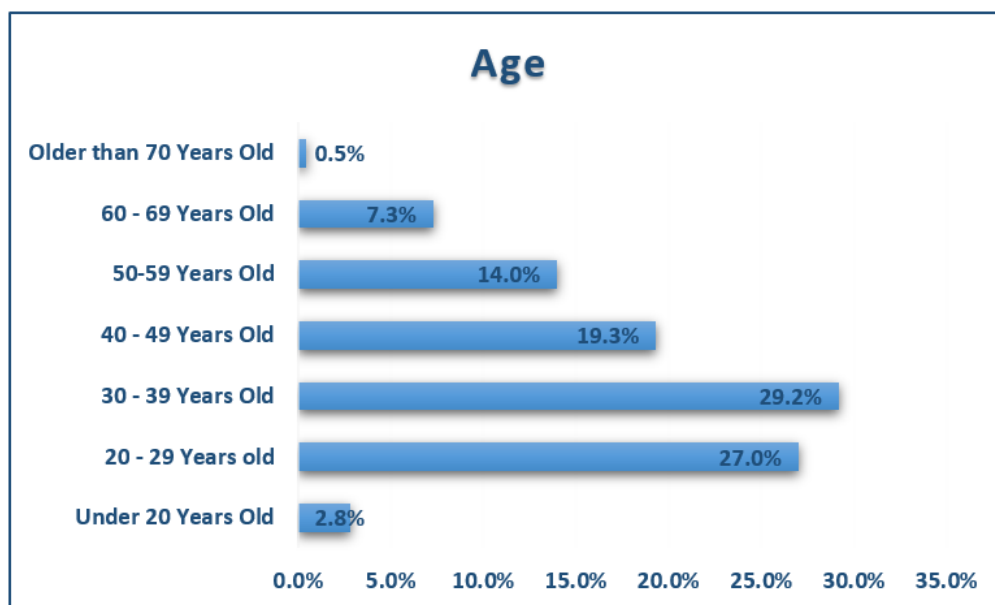
February 14, 2024

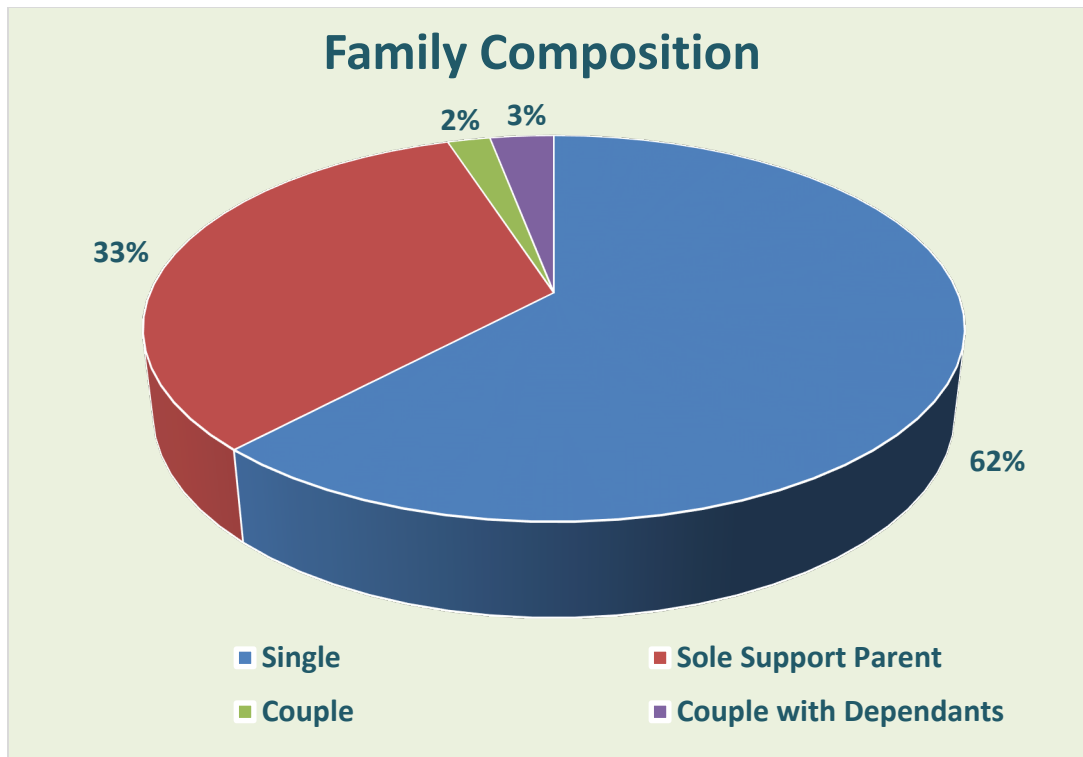
INFORMATION

1. Ontario Works Caseload Statistics

Month	2023 Total Caseload	2022 Total Caseload
January	1,161	1,052
February	1,167	1,083
March	1,182	1,118
April	1,185	1,127
May	1,189	1,147
June	1,182	1,143
July	1,168	1,120
August	1,167	1,132
September	1,161	1,149
October	1,187	1,131
November	1,209	1,143
December	1,204	1,124

Ontario Works Caseload Demographics





Employment Services Transformation Statistics

October 2023 OW Clients with Earnings			Clients Referred to Employment Ontario to date (Oct. 1/23 - Jan. 28/24)	
Number of Earners	Reported Earnings	Average Monthly Earnings Per Earner	Number of Files Referred	Monthly File Referral Average
187	\$ 210,964.81	\$ 1,128.15	174	44