



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	June 11, 2020
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	SSR-CW-05-20
<b>Title:</b>	Relocation of Markdale Ontario Works Satellite Office
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Andrea Brendel, Ontario Works Manager
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Barb Fedy, Director
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	Grey Highlands and Southgate
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW116-20; Endorsed by County Council June 25, 2020 per Resolution CC61-20

## Recommendation

1. **That Report SSR-CW-05-20 be received; and**
2. **That the Ontario Works Markdale Satellite office relocate to the South East Grey Community Health Centre at 55 Victoria Ave., Markdale as of July 2020;**
3. **That the additional 2020 rental costs and IT set-up, not to exceed \$5345.00 be funded from the Social Services General Caseload Reserve;**
4. **That a lease be entered into with The South East Grey Community Health Centre for space in the building named above; and**
5. **That staff be authorized to proceed ahead of Council in accordance with Section 25.6 of the Procedural By-law 5003-18.**

## Executive Summary

Grey County Social Services provides Ontario Works (OW) financial and employment assistance to low income residents within Grey County. To enhance services and accessibility to the Ontario Works program several satellite offices have been established throughout the County to better serve vulnerable residents. At present Social Services staff offer Ontario Works services from 206 Toronto Street South, the

lower level of Grey Gables Long Term Care home in Markdale. An opportunity has presented itself to relocate the Social Services satellite office to the newly renovated space at 55 Victoria Avenue in Markdale. This space is owned by South East Grey Community Health Centre and acts as a community hub providing a variety of services to Markdale and the surrounding area.

## Background and Discussion

Social Services has been offered participation in a community hub with office space within the South East Grey Community Health Centre (SEGCHC) in the town of Markdale. SEGCHC provides a variety of services from this location including primary health care, community engagement and health promotion, mental health supports, physiotherapy, nutrition counselling, shower facilities, clothing pickup & exchange and a community garden. SEGCHC is renovating a portion of their building to provide additional office space for community partners to increase services available to the public from one location. This growing community hub has space available for Grey County Social Services from which Ontario Works supports can be provided. Office space is also available for Canadian Mental Health Association and Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services; these leases have been signed and tenancy to begin July 1, 2020.

Moving Ontario Works services to a site that offers other services allows for soft referrals to vulnerable individuals. Individuals visiting the OW staff will be received by a general reception where a variety of program information will be posted for the public. Access to health care and additional supports will be available within the same building, individuals travelling from out of town are able to access several supports with one visit. Familiarity with the setting will increase comfort levels when reaching out for supports with collocated agencies and programs.

At present there are two OW Caseworkers working in Markdale 4 days a week as well as Y Employment Services offered one day a week. Historically, the Markdale OW office has closed to the public when there are not at least two staff members present. This practice was put in place to address safety concerns for staff working in the somewhat isolated office in the basement of Grey Gables. In the case of planned absences such as vacation a caseworker from another office was asked to provide coverage and reimbursed mileage accordingly.

The busy nature of the SEGCHC Markdale hub and collocation with a variety of community partners provides a safe working environment for Ontario Works Caseworkers to meet with clients alone. A second staff member from Ontario Works or Y Employment will not be necessary for services to continue allowing for continuity of

services despite staff absences. The department will also see a decrease in staff coverage required and related mileage expenses.

It is anticipated that the newly renovated space at SEGCHC will be ready for occupancy July 1, 2020. This space consists of two offices of approximately 420 ft combined. The following services are included in the rent at SEGHC as well as at Grey Gables: snow removal, cleaning, lawn maintenance, refuse collection. SEGCHC will also provide receptions services, this service is not offered at the current location.

The Municipality of Grey Highlands has expressed interest in renting the space left vacant by Social Services within the Grey Gables building.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

If approved by Council, Grey County Social Services will enter into a one-year lease with SEGCHC as of July 1, 2020.

## Financial and Resource Implications

Location	Monthly Expenses (including cleaning)	July-Dec 2020 Costs	2020 Budget Implication
Current Grey Gables office space	\$1,625.00	\$9,750	\$0
Proposed SEGCHC office space	\$1,613.46 (\$1585.55 plus unrebated HST)	\$11,294.22 (includes last month's deposit)	<b>Shortfall \$1544.22</b>

An estimate of **\$3,800** has been provided by the Technology and Infrastructure Manager for the one-time network set-up. This includes the cost of a network switch, access point, network cabinet, cables and cable installation. The total amount from the Ontario Works Caseload Reserve needed to fund the additional costs over and above the allocation in the 2020 budget is estimated to be \$5,344.22

An internet connection at the SEGCHC location will have to be secured at an estimated cost of \$100.00 per month. This cost is not incurred at the current location within Grey Gables. It is expected that current mileage savings due to the pandemic will offset this expense in 2020. As well a new printer will be installed; this expense has not been included in this report as the Markdale OW printer was already scheduled for replacement in 2020 and this cost accounted for in the 2020 budget.

The balance of the Social Services General Caseload Reserve as of December 31, 2019 was \$656,430.00

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal
  - Finance
  - Clerks
  - Legal
- External (list)
  - South East Grey Community Health Centre

## Appendices and Attachments

[South East Grey Community Health Centre Lease for Ontario Works Markdale](#)