

DCAFS facing \$1.1M deficit

By DAN PELTON
Staff Reporter

While the harsh economic climate is being felt all over, Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS) is being particularly hard-hit, facing a \$1.1-million deficit for its current fiscal year.

As have many other child welfare agencies across the province, DCAFS has seen its funding cut by the provincial government, which is providing \$23 million less to the agencies than it did last year.

Trish Keachie, the local agency's executive director, said this year differs from previous ones insofar as the government will no longer "mitigate any deficits," or provide any funds to make up for financial shortfalls.

"When it comes to child protection," she said in an interview, "a lot of things are unpredictable."

While accepting that funding cuts are a harsh

reality, Ms. Keachie was upset that the DCAFS was not given sufficient notice that such an action was coming. "Suddenly, with no forewarning, almost \$900,000 was removed from our budget."

Her concerns were echoed by MPP Sylvia Jones, who also serves as Progressive Conservative critic for Community and Social Services and Child and Youth Services.

"There have never before been so many children's aid societies who are in crisis," said Ms. Jones in a press release. "They have a legislated responsibility to provide front-line care for the most vulnerable children in this province."

"Cutting their budgets will inevitably mean a reduction in services for at-risk children."

"The government has said there is no more money for child welfare, but services to protect children from abuse are not optional or subject to

arbitrary reductions," said Jeanette Lewis, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS).

"According to the Child and Family Services Act, CASs must deliver child protection services, on behalf of the Government of Ontario, to vulnerable children and their families. Many agencies have gone into debt to pay for investigations, residential care, support and counselling for children."

"Boards should not have to use credit to deliver the government's services."

Ms. Lewis said that in all areas of the province, agencies are contemplating cuts to core services including abuse prevention programs; programs to strengthen families; counselling services for families in crisis; court-ordered visits to children in foster and residential care; and collaborative programs with community

partners to help families before they are in crisis.

Without sufficient funding, government is forcing CASs to break the rules for child abuse investigation and protection.

For example, CASs will have difficulty responding to high-risk child abuse allegations within the mandated timelines; CASs will not be able to meet minimum mandatory standards of seeing children every month; case workers will be assessing the safety and well-being of children less frequently; children will not be able to visit their biological families as often since CASs will not be able to afford costs of court-ordered access visits.

Despite the recent funding cuts, Ms. Keachie was not entirely critical of the McGuinty government's handling of child services since it was elected in 2003.

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Photo/DAN PELTON

DUFFERIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES executive director Trish Keachie and the DCAFS staff face the challenge of dealing with provincial funding cuts while still maintaining the level of services the agency provides in the community.

County's hiring rules challenged

By WES KELLER
Freelance Reporter

A recommendation that a prospective candidate for a County of Dufferin position as department head should be introduced to the full council before his or her employment is ratified, has been returned to the committee that made the proposal for further consideration.

Under present policy, the selection is more or

less at the sole discretion of a committee appointed to the task, and county council as a whole is not involved in the process until the preferred candidate has been chosen.

The process did not sit well with several councillors last Thursday, and Mulmur Deputy Mayor Sue Snider asked how a pre-ratification introduction to the council would be accomplished.

"We can't introduce the candidate in camera, but can't in an open meeting with so many people in the gallery," she said.

Orangeville Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock, in what might have been a response to the question, said, "in Orangeville, all members of council are on the hiring committee."

And Mayor Rob Adams appeared incredulous.

"It scares me that a select group is trying to make decisions without (involving the whole council). I can vote on a snow blower, but not on the selection of a department head," he said.

Shelburne Mayor Ed Crewson said no one appeared to have an answer to the question of whether all councillors would be allowed to sit in on selection committee meetings. If everyone could sit in, he would support a motion making that clear.

Mayor Crewson added that when he was warden, and there was some difficulty finding a CAO, all council members were welcome to sit it. "I'm not

sure you need the whole council," he said.

Mono Mayor Lorie Haddock, chair of Government Services, referring to the fact that recently appointed Director of Community Services Keith Palmer had been sitting among other members of county staff throughout the discussions, said she found it "very rude of everyone here. The CAO just said that Councillor Snider did sit in (on the selection process) but did not have a vote."

There were a few apologies made, and then the council took the suggestion of Amaranth Deputy Mayor Walter Kolodziechuk and sent the matter back to Government Services Committee.

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- Oct. 18 Orangeville Legion. Come for breakfast. Eggs, bacon, sausages, hashbrowns, pancakes, toast, tea, coffee & juice. \$6 eat in or take out. All welcome.
- Oct. 19 7:00 pm Council Meeting. Council Chambers, main level. Municipal Building, 87 Broadway.
- Oct. 20 6:30-8:30 People living with acquired brain injury in Dufferin County. Family members, friends, all professionals & paraprofessionals. Community Living Dufferin. 29 Centennial Rd., 1-800-263-5404.
- Oct. 21 Alternative Perspectives on N1H1 Flu with the Zina St. Naturopathic Doctors. All proceeds from this seminar will be donated to Family Transition Place. 7 pm. 519-942-4297 for info and tickets.
- Oct. 21 Duplicate Bridge. 1:00 pm. Orangeville Seniors Centre. 26 Bythia St. Everyone welcome! Bring your own partner. For more info call Sandra 519-942-0146.
- Oct. 21 Orangeville M.S. Support Group. 3rd Wed. of each month 7-9 pm. Alder St. Recreation Centre. 275 Alder St. Call Diane for info 519-941-3712.

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Hi, I'm Sylvia Iorio

I was born in St. Catharines. I have a brother, Jim. We send cards to each other. I went to Princess Margaret School and some other schools outside of Orangeville. I have been living with people from Community Living Dufferin since 1990. I live with Gord, Mizue, Todd, Glen and June. I have just had cataract surgery on one of my eyes. Now I can see shadows. Even though I can't see, I am comfortable going around certain areas of my home. I go to the swimming program and the horsemanship program at Options. I love swimming. I go to the pool twice a week, once with the people from Options and then with Tracy (staff). The staff help me. I like riding the horses. Once a week, I go to the mall with Liza (staff). We have coffee. I love to walk around the mall. I like to go grocery shopping. I like to push the cart. I like to walk around our neighbourhood. I like things being the same every day. I like things in the same place so I know where they are. I like being at home too because I am comfortable there. When I am finished eating, I take my dishes to the dishwasher. I put my own dishes in the dishwasher. If I want water I use a sign. I know how to sign for water. I am learning more signs. If I don't know the sign, I take Liza's (staff) hand and I take her to where I want something. Then I show her what I want. Marilyn (staff) cooks my meals and Liza takes me to do my banking. She takes me to all my doctor's appointments. Liza (staff) takes me to the hairdressers too. I go to Daniel's Hair Salon and Angie cuts my hair. I like having my hair done. I also like it when the staff shampoos my hair at home. Every lunch I have to have an apple. I love apples. I also like pasta. I tell the staff apart by feeling them. I feel Liza's arm to find her watch and then her hand to find her ring. She always wears her watch and her ring so I know who she is. Depending on what I want, I pick the staff that I want to help me at that time by feeling them.

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THE STEPFATHER (14A) FRI 7:20, 9:55 SAT-SUN 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 9:55 MON-THURS 5:45, 8:45	ZOMBIELAND (14A) FRI 7:30, 10:00 SAT-SUN 1:50, 4:40, 7:30, 10:00 MON-THURS 6:00, 8:50	
CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS (PG) FRI 6:30, 9:10 SAT-SUN 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, 9:10 MON-WED 5:15, 8:00 THURS 5:15	COUPLES RETREAT (PG) FRI 6:50, 9:50 SAT-SUN 1:15, 4:00, 6:50, 9:50 MON-THURS 5:30, 8:40	
THE INVENTION OF LYING (PG) FRI 7:10, 9:45 SAT-SUN 1:10, 3:40, 7:10, 9:45 MON-WED 5:50, 8:20 THURS 8:20	MONTY PYTHON: ALMOST THE TRUTH (THE LAWYER'S CUT) THURS, OCTOBER 22 @ 7 PM	