

CITY OF BURNABY
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL POVERTY INITIATIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council approve the expenditure up to \$2000 from Stabilization Reserve for the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council forum on poverty, scheduled for 2001 June 18 at Schou Education Centre.
2. **THAT** copies of this report be sent to the Burnaby School Board and Burnaby Inter-Agency Council.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 2001 May 17, received and adopted the attached report providing an update on the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council poverty initiative and recommend City funding support for the initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor N. Harris
Vice Chair

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| :COPY - CITY MANAGER |
| - DIR. PLNG. & BLDG. |
| - DIRECTOR FINANCE |
| - DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT. SERV. |

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

2001 MAY 10

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.831

SUBJECT: BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL POVERTY INITIATIVE

PURPOSE: To provide an update on the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council poverty initiative and recommend City funding support for the initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be asked to approve the expenditure of up to \$2000 from Stabilization Reserve for the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council forum on poverty, scheduled for 2001 June 18 at Schou Education Centre.
2. **THAT** copies of this report be sent to the Burnaby School Board and Burnaby Inter-Agency Council.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its 2001 January 24 meeting, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) received a report concerning the poverty situation in Burnaby. The report was prompted by a request from the Burnaby School Board, which asked the CISPC to facilitate a review and develop strategies concerning poverty in the city. Key conclusions from the report were as follows:

- Burnaby has a large and growing number of low income families
- Burnaby lacks the resources or mandate to address poverty concerns on its own; however, it would be in a good position to assume a partnership role on the issue with the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC), School District, and other appropriate parties.

Further, the report noted that the BIC had already initiated a review of poverty. Therefore, rather than recommending that Burnaby undertake a separate review, the report concluded that it would be more appropriate for the City to lend support to the BIC initiative currently underway. The CISPC and Council supported this position, and resolved to advise the School Board and BIC accordingly.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the BIC poverty initiative and to request City funding support for a forum that BIC is planning to hold on the topic.

2.0 BIC POVERTY INITIATIVE

Since the aforementioned CISPC report was submitted, the BIC has been working out details for its poverty initiative. The group acknowledges that poverty is an extremely complex and challenging issue, for which no "quick fixes" will be found. That said, recognizing that 24% of Burnaby's families fell below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs in 1996, the BIC believes that poverty is a serious community concern deserving of attention.

As a key first step in its efforts, the BIC is planning a forum on poverty, scheduled for 2001 June 18 at Schou Education Centre. The forum will primarily be targeted to service providers and government representatives; however, it will also be open to members of community organizations, the business sector, religious groups, and the general public. Roughly 100 people are expected to attend.

The forum will be facilitated by John Talbot, of John Talbot and Associates. Its objectives will be as follows:

- i) to raise awareness about Burnaby's poverty situation
- ii) to discuss the causes of the situation
- iii) to discuss current governmental policies with respect to poverty and how they are, or are not, addressing the situation
- iv) to examine programs and activities that are trying to address poverty within and outside Burnaby
- v) to generate creative policy and program ideas for addressing the situation
- vi) to identify various partners who would be willing to participate in follow-up actions concerning poverty.

The forum will consist of presentations from people affected by poverty; City staff (demographic information); elected officials (federal, provincial, and municipal); and representatives of agencies providing services to, and advocating on behalf, of people with low incomes. Time will also be allotted for questions from participants, and for small group discussions. At the next stage of the initiative, priority will be given to obtaining broader involvement of people affected by poverty - possibly starting with smaller scale discussion groups, to be held in the fall.

To help offset costs of the forum, the BIC is requesting participants to pay a \$10 registration fee. The Burnaby Association for the Mentally Handicapped has agreed to cover the facilitator's costs (roughly four days of work, including preparation, logistical support, and actual facilitation). The School District is providing coffee and waiving the rental costs for Schou Education Centre. The Planning Department is assuming responsibility for distribution of invitations.

Despite these contributions, additional funds will be required to cover costs for lunch catering, honoraria for selected speakers (primarily those with low incomes), and preparation of a post-forum document. It is recommended that Council be asked to approve the expenditure of up to \$2000 from Stabilization Reserve to cover these costs. It should be noted that the \$2000 figure represents a *maximum* expenditure; actual expenditures should be less and would be offset by revenues from registration fees.

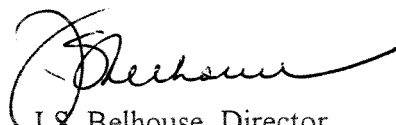
3.0 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report has provided an update on the BIC poverty initiative - most notably, the poverty forum planned for 2001 June 18th at Schou Education Centre. It must be stressed that the forum is not an end unto itself; rather, it is a preliminary step in a much longer process to raise awareness and develop strategies for addressing poverty concerns in the city.

Further details concerning longer term strategies should emerge from the forum. That said, if the strategies are to be effective, it is clear they will need broad support and buy-in - not only from service providers and the government, but also from the broader community and private sector. Also, as noted, priority will need to be placed on involving people with low incomes in the next stages of the initiative. One approach could involve facilitating small discussion groups, whereby people with low incomes could share their experiences and ideas in a safe, respectful, and non-threatening environment in their own neighbourhoods. Through such involvement, it is hoped that people affected by poverty could increase community awareness of their situation, put a human face on poverty, and contribute to longer term solutions to the issue.

In conclusion, it is recommended that Council be asked to approve the expenditure of up to \$2000 from Stabilization Reserve for the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council forum on poverty, scheduled for 2001 June 18 at Schou Education Centre. It is further recommended that copies of this report be sent to the Burnaby School Board and Burnaby Inter-Agency Council.

Staff will keep the CISPC apprised as work on the BIC poverty initiative proceeds.


J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF\sa

cc: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Director Finance