

September 12, 2019

The Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario
Ministry of the Attorney General
720 Bay Street, 11th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2S9

Re: Resolution Regarding Provincial Funding Cuts to Legal Aid Ontario

Please be advised the Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent at its regular meeting held on September 9, 2019 endorsed the following resolution;

"Whereas, the Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic (the "Clinic") has delivered legal services in Chatham-Kent (the "Municipality") for over 38 years to area residents who cannot afford legal assistance because of financial hardship – including those who are disabled, on social assistance, pensioners, the unemployed, or those with low income;
And Whereas, the Clinic's services are aimed at ensuring that people with low incomes are able to meet their most basic needs, which in turn gives them the ability to live with health and dignity as active members of their community;

And Whereas, like other community legal clinics across the province, the Clinic carries out this invaluable work through funding provided by Legal Aid Ontario ("LAO");

And Whereas, the provincial government's 2019 Budget has cut funding to Legal Aid Ontario by \$133 Million – which is a 35% reduction in provincial funding – retroactive to April 1, 2019, with cuts rising to \$164 Million (45%) by 2021-22;

And Whereas, these significant cuts will result in a reduction of critical legal clinic services to low income residents in our community resulting in adverse social and economic consequences for the Municipality served by the Clinic – from

- increased reliance on municipal services including increased homelessness resulting from avoidable evictions,
- increased poverty resulting from lack of income supports and employment supports and

- increased reliance on social assistance administration resulting from people being denied appropriate supports

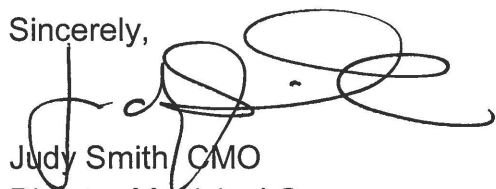
And Whereas, the Council of the Municipality believes all levels of government should provide fair, economically-sound, and evidence-based programs and supports to help low-income residents, vulnerable people, and other equity-seeking individuals escape poverty, precarious housing, and systemic disadvantage, realize their full potential by living healthy and safe lives.

Be it therefore resolved that, the Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent forward a letter to local MPPs, the Attorney General and the Premier of Ontario (and all municipalities in Ontario)

- expressing its strong support for Legal Aid Ontario and its funding of Ontario's community legal clinics, and specifically the Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic, which provides legal services to low income and vulnerable Ontarians;
- expressing its strong opposition to the funding cuts imposed on Legal Aid Ontario by the provincial government;
- calling upon the Premier and the Attorney General to make a commitment to access to justice and to respect the commitment of their government to not decrease front line services; and
- urging the province to restore full funding to these critical services to ensure that all the residents of Chatham-Kent have access to a fair and equitable justice system, regardless of their incomes."

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Judy Smith at 519-360-1998 Ext # 3200.

Sincerely,



Judy Smith CMO
Director Municipal Governance
Clerk /Freedom of Information Coordinator

C
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
All Municipalities in Ontario