
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CSS-01-2025 Corporate & Social Services 2024 Annual Report For Consideration by Council in Committee on April 29, 2025



Objective:

To update Council on the initiatives and activities of the Divisions of the Corporate & Social Services Department for the year 2024.

Recommendations:

1. THAT Report CSS-01-2025 Corporate and Social Services 2024 Annual Report be received as information.

Respectfully submitted: Megan Jamieson, CHRL, General Manager, Corporate & Social Services

Approved: Mark Merritt, CPA, CA, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

This 2024 report, and accompanying presentation, has been prepared to provide Council with a high level overview of the Corporate & Social Services departmental responsibilities, as well as report on the 2024 activities and 2025 goals for each of the divisions. The intent is to enhance communication regarding the achievements and initiatives of the staff of the Corporate and Social Services Department.

Background:

On a biennial basis, departmental presentations are made to Council from each department, with the intent of communicating a summary of the activities and initiatives of staff, via selected annual performance measures and statistics.

This report, including the accompanying presentation to Council (Attachment 1), provides an overview of the department as a whole and each of its four Divisions – Customer Experience & Communication (CEC), Grandview Lodge (GVL), Human Resources (HR), and Legal & Support Services (LSS).

Analysis:

The Corporate and Social Services (CSS) department is a combination of back of house services (internal customer service, risk management, procurement, payroll/benefits) and front of house services, meaning both public facing services (customer intake, recruitment) and operational functions (property, provincial offences and long term care). The vast majority of day-to-day workload in the department, relates to anticipating and responding the needs of internal and external customers, such as:

- Answering and taking carriage of customer phone calls, emails and counter visits.
- Developing communication materials and responding to media requests.
- Addressing applications for licences, property matters, transfer of residents into long term care.

- Responding to grievances, accidents/injuries, infection control concerns, critical incidents, public or resident family member complaints, and requests from various Ministries.
- Administration of POA fines and parking tickets.
- Investigating and taking carriage of informal, or formal claims against the County.
- Processing of payroll and employee benefits, including OMERS pension administration.
- Managing corporate contracts, such as insurance, prosecutor services, furniture, employee benefits, EFAP, uniforms, office supplies, and contracted services at GVL (physiotherapy, physician, foot-care, pharmacy, etc.).
- Carrying out court administration, including interpreter services and scheduling.
- Coordinating recruitment efforts, alongside the hiring manager for vacancies.
- Supporting staff through public procurement and purchasing efforts.
- Providing 24/7 support to resident care needs, whether that be nursing, dietary/nourishments, social/recreational, etc.
- Coordinating the activities of advisory committees: Accessibility, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Resident & Family Council, and the Continuous Quality Improvement team (GVL).
- Liaison with partners in Health and Social Services (Grande Erie Public Health, Haldimand-Norfolk Health and Social Services, Haldimand-Norfolk Housing Corporation).

In 2024, the total operating budget for the CSS department was \$6,693,890, not including the \$4.2 million provided through CSS for health services (predominantly transfers to Norfolk). This represents approximately 7.7% of the overall corporate operating budget and serves to fund direct departmental administration costs, as well as corporate contracted services (insurance, furniture, office supplies and health and safety supplies) and corporate-wide functions such as consolidated legal costs and professional development activities.

In addition to the wide variety of day-to-day tasks, this biennial report is an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the past years and provide an overview of the goals set for the current year. Goals aim to advance Council's strategic priorities, while providing corporate support to the organization and meeting the customer service expectations of the community. In 2024, the Corporate & Social Services Department was able to continue working on major capital initiatives as well as numerous day to day tasks that help the municipality to progress in many ways.

2024 Accomplishments

Council recently adopted five pillars with respect to the Corporate Strategic Priorities. Corporate and Social Services goals and objectives typically fall within the categories of: Future Ready, Exceptional Service and Good Governance. The following provides a few key highlights from the attached Annual Report, under the most appropriate pillar, illustrating how each supports the overall corporate strategy.

Future Ready

As a direct contribution to the preparing for future challenges and opportunities, CSS leverages technology and investments to ensure we are ready to meet evolving environment. Specifically, in 2024, the department has:

- Developed an Inclusive Spaces Fund Corporate Accessibility policy to proactively meet the current and future accessibility needs.
- Implemented new, key staff enhancements at Grandview Lodge, including a new social worker as well as front line nursing staff, in an effort to reach the goal of 4.0 hours of direct care, per resident, per day. This reflects the increasingly complex needs and expectations of residents and family members in long term care.
- Worked with ITS to Digitize meeting spaces at remote locations, such as Grandview, ensuring they are consistent and ready to respond to the work environment changes (hybrid, virtual meetings with families, vendors, etc.).

- Substantial completion on the HVAC Upgrade project at Grandview lodge, representing a significant investment in the infrastructure of the home and the safety of residents.
- Modernized policies related to conduct (staff, council, public, vendors), in anticipation of future needs.
- Re-implementation of core software in POA (CAMS) allowing for improved reporting and collection activities.

Exceptional Service

CSS supports the delivery of quality, citizen-centered services to residents through activities such as improved processes and transparent communications. Specific examples from 2024 activities include:

- Completion of the resident satisfaction survey, to confirm and communicate community expectations.
- Implementation of new online transaction processes for: Online Marriage Applications & Burn Permits.
- Conducting Customer Service Workshops with staff, with the ultimate goal of better serving our customers.
- Initiating an “e-Newsletter: Grand Viewpoints” for residents and families of GVL.
- Engaging new partners and practices to reduce transfer of GVL residents to the ER (PoET, Clinical Pathways, Community Paramedics).
- Establishment of Guiding Principles / Vision for the County’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory committee – encouraging access and inclusion of all residents.
- Successful completion of an operational review through the Ministry of Attorney General (POA), confirming best practices in service delivery.

Good Governance

Most of the activities within the CSS department are deemed administrative and support operations. Accordingly, staff continually take steps to ensure efficient, effective government administration, with investments in staff and engagement. Over the past two years, the department has showcased:

- Implementation of New Procurement and P-Card Policies, making procurement activities more flexible, timely and with more transparency in transactions.
- Significant investments in staff to both recruit, and retain top talent. For example:
 - market review on Non-union and CUPE wages;
 - collective bargaining of 4 new contracts;
 - initiation of the GROW catalogue – a unique training initiative for Haldimand County staff.
 - communication efforts related to free services through sun life and Homewood Steps taken towards improved recruitment and orientation practices to showcase Haldimand as an employer of choice, right from the start.
- Introduction of an e-learning platform at GVL (Surge Learning), ensuring timely and effective training to all staff.
- Participation in the merger of health units, to the new Grand Erie Public Health, ensuring Haldimand’s interests be considered.
- Various improvements to policy and procedure, modernizing language and clarifying expectations. For example, facility usage and solicitation, public complaint procedures, office closure procedures, emergency protocols, remote working expectations, and employee professional development standards.

2025 Goals, Objectives and Considerations

Looking forward, the CSS department is committed to continuing efforts towards all pillars of the strategic plan. Below are some of the highlights anticipated to be completed in 2025 and 2026.

Future Ready

- Provincial Offences Write-off policy and third party collection activates, to align with the new CAMS capabilities.
- Coordination of furniture redesign at HCAB to prepare for future growth needs.
- Completion of the HVAC Project at GVL.
- Rollout of new software and technology enhancements at Grandview Lodge, including: schedule app for staff; meal suite program for the dietary team and active participation in the corporate maintenance management system (work orders).

Exceptional Service

- Investigate feasibility of a future Customer Relations Management Software, through divisional customer service workshops and service readiness assessment.
- Explore opportunities to use existing software to support the administration of parking tickets, to provide a more streamlined, timely process for affected residents.
- Expansion of web form payment options for residents – increasing the number of services that residents can process online.

Economic Vitality

- Consolidate various business licence by-laws into one, based on 2024 stakeholder review and best practices and with the goal of streamlining processes to reduce barriers for businesses.

Healthy Communities

- Continue efforts to recruit a Nurse Practitioner to support the nursing department at Grandview Lodge.

Good Governance

- Develop Framework/Processes Around Citizen Engagement, allowing for a variety of methods to engage stakeholders.
- Investments in technology, for the purpose of streamlining activities and enhancing reporting/transparency objectives. For example:
 - Completion of the People Project (technical enhancements in area of HR).
 - Implementation of ClearRisk Software (claims management in the area of legal and insurance claims).
 - Start investigating opportunities for citizen engagement solutions.
- Continued investment into staffing and top talent, for example:
 - Establishing a new performance management program.
 - Identifying new engagement opportunities to assess employee satisfaction and how best to respond.
 - Participating in a GVL leadership development assessment, focusing on the current culture and best practices to improve.
 - Collaborative and proactive approach to collective bargaining (2 agreements expire in 2025).
- Monitoring of surplus properties as a result of new capital works. For example, with the opening of the new Hagersville Active Living Centre in 2025, the Hagersville Satellite office and Library will become vacant, and potentially surplus to the County's needs.
- Continued review of corporate policy and procedures, with the intent of ensuring its relevance and success, modernizing language and clarifying expectations. Review of recent case law and supreme court decisions will inform this work, where applicable. Specific reviews are planned for:
 - Insurance and Risk Management procedures, including claims protocol and a Risk Management framework to identify, assess, mitigate and monitor risks.

- Introducing a new, comprehensive property policy.
- Haldimand's disability management program.
- Recruitment and orientation procedures and tools, resources to support the hiring manager.

Financial/Legal Implications:

Not applicable.

Stakeholder Impacts:

Not applicable.

Report Impacts:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

References:

None.

Attachments:

1. Corporate & Social Services 2024 Biennial Report Presentation