Present were: Chair T. Galloway, L. Armstrong, T. Cowan, D. Craig*, R. Deutschmann, J. Haalboom, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz*, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, K. Seiling, S. Strickland, and J. Wideman

Members absent: J. Brewer and C. Zehr

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

None declared

DELEGATIONS

a) James Howe, Kitchener resident, addressed Committee regarding the Waterloo Region Smart on Crime Foundation, Waterloo Regional Police Services and Community Services Budgets. He expressed concern about the Waterloo Regional Police Services budget and suggested that a new community fund be created to address the root causes of crime in the community rather than increasing the police budget.

b) Bill Poole, addressed Committee on behalf of Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery, Kitchener Waterloo Art Gallery, Cambridge Galleries and the Homer Watson House and Gallery, with respect to funding for collaborative marketing initiatives for public art galleries. He provided some background for the requested funding of $30,000 for 2013 toward the joint marketing initiative for the four galleries in the Region.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.

c) Tony Dowling and Hans Pottkamper, addressed Committee on behalf of the West Montrose Resident’s Association Inc., operating as BridgeKeepers, who are committed to preserving the West Montrose Covered Bridge owned by the Region. It was built in 1881, has been designated for its historical interest and is the last Covered Bridge in Ontario. They expressed concern for the historical preservation, maintenance and repairs of the bridge and asked to have the opportunity to participate in the maintenance process.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.
The group was recognized for their work and staff gave an update on the opening of the bridge. Staff indicated they would be meeting with the Bridgekeepers and the community to discuss preservation of the bridge.

d) Chris Walker and Christopher Hyde, addressed Committee on behalf of Wilfred Laurier Student Union and University of Waterloo Federation of Students, with respect to Grand River Transit (GRT) fares. The presentation is attached to the minutes. They expressed concern for the efficacy and consistency of annual negotiations and fare increases over the past few years. They explained the student’s financial sensitivity and concern for the rising costs they are facing. They suggested that the Region partner with them to set long-term rates, terms of service and terms for re-negotiation to help the students anticipate and prepare for future costs.

e) Marianne Irvine, Melissa Webster and Alex Troeger, addressed Committee on behalf of ALIV(e). They explained why the Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits (OWDB) and Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit are essential to the community. They shared their personal stories about how they found themselves requiring the need for these benefits and requested the Region maintain the shortfall. They also requested that the Region advocate to the province to reconsider their decision to upload these benefits.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.

f) Lucia Harrison, addressed Committee on behalf of K-W and Cambridge Immigrant Services, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support and Kitchener Multicultural Centre; and Mira from Reception House, with respect to Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits (OWDB). Mira explained the services that Reception House provides to women refugees from other countries. She explained some of the challenges of these women and how the OWDB provides assistance to them. L. Harrison spoke about these agencies with limited or non-English speaking clients. She expressed concern for the potential loss of language interpreters and explained the importance of maintaining that benefit.

g) John Neufeld and Wendi Campbell, addressed Committee on behalf of Food Assistance Network (Waterloo Region Shares Advisory Group), regarding the Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits. J. Neufeld provided examples of the people who benefit with food hampers through this program and expressed the importance of the program in the community. He explained the program background and where they are today. He requested that the food hamper program should be removed from OWDB to offer the service more broadly. J. Neufeld proposed three Regional funding scenarios $750,000 would allow them to continue with a stronger food network; $700,000 would impact the service; and $650,000 would put them in survival mode and result in reduced hours, staff and services. He committed to reviewing the program for efficiencies over the next year and revisiting funding in future years.

Councillors posed questions to J. Neufeld regarding the program, funding, and the proposal to remove the program from OWDB.

Committee requested staff to provide information regarding the delegation’s proposal to remove the food hamper program from OWDB for the next Budget meeting.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.
h) Ron Flaming, addressed Committee on behalf of Homelessness & Housing Umbrella Group, regarding the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits. He requested that the Region continue to make assistance available for vulnerable people in the Region. He spoke about the need for emergency shelter and provided examples.

i) Shannon Balla, addressed Committee on behalf of Poverty Makes Us Sick regarding Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits. S. Balla expressed concern about the health affects associated with poverty and homelessness and requested the Region maintain the benefits. She shared stories of those that are impacted by these programs.

j) Rohan Thompson brought youth delegations before the Committee to speak about their experience with the inREACH project. A youth spoke about how the program supports youth in making positive choices and changes in their life. Another youth spoke about his personal challenges and how inREACH had supported him and made a positive impact on his life.

Councillors posed questions to Rohan and Christiane Sadeler, Executive Director, Waterloo Regional Crime Prevention, about the program and the funding request. It was noted that funding from the Federal government was recently denied and they indicated they are pursuing other funding options and explained their efforts in that regard.

*G. Lorentz left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

k) Doris Martin, Joe-An McComb, Sandy Roxborough, addressed Committee on behalf of the House of Friendship, Kinbridge Neighbourhood Association, Preston Heights Community Centre and Mosaic, in support of the inREACH project. They explained the importance of supporting the youth in building healthy communities for the future. They requested that the Region support inREACH for the short-term so that they can find a long-term funding solution.

l) Michelle Braniff, Program manager at Lutherwood, spoke in support of the inREACH project. She advised that Lutherwood is prepared to make an investment if there is support within the community for the program. She indicated that they will continue to offer in kind front-line support for inREACH.

m) Kaylie Tiessen, on behalf of Poverty Free Waterloo Region, spoke in support of the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits. She expressed concern about the health affects associated with poverty and homelessness. She suggested advocating to the Province regarding last month’s rent laws.

The presentation is attached to the minutes.

*D. Craig left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

n) Catherine Stewart Savage, on behalf of Poverty Free Kitchener-Waterloo, addressed Committee regarding the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits. She provided an overview of the mandate of the group and suggested that the funding should be from the province.
o) Cameron Dearlove, Kitchener Resident, expressed support for the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits.

p) Jeffrey Beckner, Kitchener Resident, expressed support for the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits.

q) Lisa Steele, Conestoga Students Incorporated (CSI), expressed concern regarding a potential delay in the Conestoga U-Pass implementation and indicated the impact that would have on the students and the community. She advised that CSI would be willing to work with GRT on phasing the improved service.

Chair Galloway suggested that staff take a look at the scenario of phasing in extended service for the Conestoga U-Pass project.

r) Tim Mollison, TriTag, expressed concern for a potential reduction of service on the iExpress route and explained the impacts on ridership.

The delegation was requested to bring their proposed alternatives forward.

s) John Arndt, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, spoke in support of Doors Open and the funding request. He explained the benefits of maintaining program funding.

INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE

a) Letter from Brien Thurston dated November 23, 2012 Re: Waterloo Regional Police Services was received for information.

b) Letter from Conestoga Students Inc. received December 3, 2012 Re: Universal Bus Pass for Conestoga students was received for information.

c) Letter from Cambridge Shelter received December 3, 2012 Re: Transportation benefit and Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits was received for information.

ADJOURN

MOVED by J. Haalboom
SECONDED by T. Cowan

THAT the meeting adjourn at 9:12 p.m..

CARRIED

COMMITTEE CHAIR, T. Galloway

COMMITTEE CLERK, J. Reid
Get Off On Art
Region of Waterloo
Regional Investment in Community Arts and Culture
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery
Homer Watson House and Gallery
Homer Watson House and Gallery
Homer Watson House and Gallery
Homer Watson House and Gallery
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery
Cambridge Galleries Preston
Cambridge Galleries
Common Ground Project
Become a lover today
Our Mission:

“To preserve the ‘Covered Bridge Experience’.”
COVERED BRIDGE FACTS

• Owned by Regional Municipality of Waterloo since 1998  
  • Provincially designated historic site  
  • Last remaining covered bridge in Ontario  
  • Featured in Provincial / Regional / Township tourism material  
  • Attracts 40,000+ tourists / year
BUDGET ISSUES

• Urgent Safety Issue – Horse & Buggy Traffic
• High Priority (3-6 months) – Protection against overweight vehicles vs. re-open bridge to light vehicles
  • High Priority (2013) – Roof replacement
• Medium Priority (2013/2014) – Repair & paint side and end boards
• Ongoing – inspection and maintenance to prevent deterioration
URGENT SAFETY ISSUE!
HORSES & BUGGIES DETOURED TO LINE 86

Highway Bridge:

- No shoulders
- High-speed truck traffic
- Bottom of grade
- Blind curve
- Winter:
  - Slick roads
  - Reduced visibility
URGENT SAFETY ISSUE!
HORSES & BUGGIES DETOURED TO LINE 86

Solutions:

• A – re-open covered bridge to buggies & light vehicles immediately - requires more, and more prominent, signage re weight & vehicle type

• B – reduce speed limits & install warning signs on Line 86
HIGH PRIORITY (3-6 MONTHS): PROTECTION AGAINST OVERWEIGHT VEHICLES

Bridge = important connector
- Connects community socially & commercially (store & mail)
  - Old Orders to meeting house, friends & store
  - Tourists through bridge to / from St. Jacob’s

Balance Protection vs. Access vs. Aesthetics
- 131 years, 1 beam broken
- Better signage – village entrance, approaching bridge
  - Education
  - Video surveillance?
- Sensors / warnings / alarms?
  - Fines?
HIGH PRIORITY (3-6 MONTHS): PROTECTION AGAINST OVERWEIGHT VEHICLES

The Record, August 24, 2011: Region considering monitoring & surveillance of covered bridge – cost estimate $50,000… nothing done… “an ounce of prevention”? 
HIGH PRIORITY (3-6 MONTHS): PROTECTION AGAINST OVERWEIGHT VEHICLES

3 TONNE LIMIT
OVER LIMIT!
DO NOT CROSS BRIDGE!

VIDEOTOURSURVEILLANCE
$5000 FINE

• In bridge or at parks approaching bridge
• Triggered by load sensors or laser beam
HIGH PRIORITY (2013): REPLACE ROOF
(Full of holes, beyond 15-25 year life span of cedar shakes)

- Roof & walls protect floor & structure
- Extend longevity from 20 to 131+ years
- Without protection, structure will deteriorate quickly
- Last replaced 1987 - 2 weeks, $19,000
- Recent estimate $500,000 ????
MEDIUM PRIORITY (2013 / 14): REPAIR & PAINT EXTERIOR

- Broken boards
- Some are “see-through”
- Large knot-holes
- Repair, replace & paint
The West Montrose Covered Bridge is a fragile gem. It requires ongoing monitoring, care and maintenance to ensure it is here for us, our children and future generations. BridgeKeepers want to be involved in its preservation.
“Preserve the ‘Covered Bridge Experience’.”
Student Perspectives on Transportation

A perspective from the Wilfrid Laurier University Students’ Union
Grand River Transit UPASS Programs
The University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University bring over 45,000 students to Waterloo every year

These students bring an estimated *Value Added Economic Benefit* to Waterloo Region of 1.5 Billion Dollars

Additional expansion and redevelopment of both campuses will bring additional tens of millions to the region
University Students are extremely sensitive to cost of living increases

Funding for post-secondary education remains tight

Although comparably cheaper to other university towns, any increase in fares would be felt by the local student community
Beginning 2006/2007 the Federation of Students and the Wilfrid Laurier Students’ Union began providing UPASS programs through Grand River Transit to their student populations.

All members of each association are assessed a UPASS fee on a per term basis, with no opt-out option available.

Each of the student associations are responsible for negotiating the terms for the UPASS program on an annual basis.
Summary of Concerns

1. Efficacy and consistency of annual negotiations
2. Rapid increases to price over the past few years
In 2006, price determination was based upon;

* “…the Region, WLU, and WLUSU will meet to review the Base Fee at which time the Region will notify WLUSU and WLU of any increase related to the Ontario CPI…”

* …Fee increases required by the Region are in excess of the “CPI” as published by Statistics Canada then the Region, WLU, and WLUSU must agree on the increase proposed by the Region. In the event the parties cannot agree on the amount of the increase above CPI, then all parties will agree to Arbitration as outlined in Part XIII …
Annual Negotiations- 2012

In 2012, price determination was based upon;

∗ “Thereafter, the Base Fee will increase effective September 1st of each subsequent school year based on the average increase in GRT fares as approved by Regional Council in April of the previous school year.”

∗ ...It is acknowledged that the Base Fee per student is not necessarily equal to the Upass Fee
Grand River Transit prioritize the following in relation to the Upass agreements;

1. Long-term rate targets
2. Forecast rate increases
3. terms of service
4. Terms for renegotiation

* Recently Annual increases have been inconsistent within the U-Pass Programs. Under the current arrangement it is impossible to predict what increases for the following years will look like.
In recent times there have been mounting student concerns around the annual changes to UPASS programs, particularly with respect to increasing prices and service standards.

**Annual Price & Percentage Increases (WLUSU):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price Per Term</th>
<th>UPASS Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$40.35</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$41.08</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$42.32</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$50.42</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$52.94</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$60.64</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$67.50</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$72.23</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Per Term Price Increase since U-Pass implementation: 79%**
## Student Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Student Service Fee</td>
<td>$152.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upass Fee (18%)</td>
<td>$135.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Plan</td>
<td>$106.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Plan</td>
<td>$100.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSPIRG</td>
<td>$10.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Council Fee</td>
<td>$62.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Publication Fee</td>
<td>$13.28</td>
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<td>Student Union Building Fee</td>
<td>$53.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Life Levy Fee</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright Fee</td>
<td>$20.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool Improvement Fee</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco Fee</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fees:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$764.98</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brantford Upass Fee</strong></td>
<td><strong>$83.04</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Price Increases...

We are not indifferent to the Region’s need to keep transit sustainable;

1. The Region has prioritized sustainability and Long-Term cost recovery
2. Universal Access for UW and WLU Students
3. Economies of Scale
We have stakeholders too

However,

- Rapid increases in the Upass fee makes the mandatory program politically delicate,
  - Intensification of the student corridors may affect attitudes toward the program
  - Subsequent 7% or 9% increases will change our ability to sell this to our students
    - A 4.5% increase is much more tolerable
- We cannot guarantee that our students will be happy with another increase above 5%
  - Students may begin asking us to opt out
For further comments please contact:

- Christopher Walker, VP University Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University Students’ Union: cwalker@wlu.ca
- Chris Hyde, Director of Policy, Research and Advocacy, Wilfrid Laurier University Students’ Union: chyde@wlu.ca
ALIV(e) (Awareness of Low Income Voices) is a collaborative group of individuals dedicated to bringing an active and positive voice to low-income individuals and families struggling with poverty in Waterloo Region.

www.alivecommunity.ca

www.thealiveblog.wordpress.com
Goals

• **educate** the public about the impact of poverty on peoples’ lives

• **inform** the public about changes in policy as it applies to those who live in poverty

• **share** information on available resources that may not be well known to the general public
Some Accomplishments

• Two-day retreat called ‘Collaborating for Change’; skills training

• Consultants for: Social Assistance Review, Regional Poverty Reduction Approach, Renison College’s Humanities 101 course, Guelph’s new Community Voices group, part of consultation on the cuts to the Community Start-Up and discretionary benefits

• Presentations to community

• Two members sit on the Employment and Income Support Community Advisory Committee

• Met with NDP Critic on Poverty - MPP Cheri Dinovo

• Created thealiveblog.wordpress.com

• One member recently joined the Waterloo Region Food Roundtable; potential membership on the Healthy Communities Partnership

• On a national task group that is planning the first national poverty reduction summit
Community Start-Up and Maintenance
Benefits & Discretionary Benefits

We are concerned with the changes to these crucial benefits.
Positive Steps taken by the Region of Waterloo

- Region of Waterloo’s decision to fund the 2012 shortfall in the Discretionary Benefits program
- Demonstrates a commitment by the Region
Why is the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit Important?

• prevents homelessness

• costs less for the government to provide CSUMB than to provide support to a person who is homeless

• CSUMB cuts put more pressure on other community services, like food banks, hospitals, and homeless shelters
Why are the Discretionary Benefits Important?

One of the Region’s values: RESPECT - “We create an environment where people are included, valued and treated with dignity.”

How the Cuts Affect People: Three experiences of ALIV(e) Members...

• Melissa Webster’s story

• Alex Troeger’s story

• Marianne Irvine’s story
Our Request

• That the Region of Waterloo fully fund the shortfall to Community Start-Up and Discretionary Benefits on an ongoing basis

• That the Region of Waterloo advocate to the province to reverse its decision regarding the cuts to Community Start-Up and Discretionary Benefits
Thank you!

2012 Sponsors & Funders

And JJ Sandler!
The first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all mankind. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world.

-- Norman Borlaug
Then Came 2009…

2009: 18% increase in demand for service

Increased demand has continued over past 2 years
Invested by Region

- Created value

$15.82

$1
“We have the audacity to believe that people in Waterloo Region can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.”
Good evening.

My name is Shannon Balla and this is Ian Stumpf and we are here on behalf of local anti-poverty group Poverty Makes Us Sick. We are a group of local organizers who have been mobilizing around issues of poverty since 2009, particularly with and for those living in deep poverty on social assistance. Poverty Makes Us Sick’s work is focused on analysis and education, direct community action through individual and collective advocacy and material support, and a range of other forms of direct action to resist these attacks on our communities. We have been actively involved in the provincial Raise the Rates Campaign, which demands a restoration of OW and ODSP rates to pre-Harris levels (requiring at minimum a 55% increase), the lifting of the minimum wage freeze and an increase to a living wage for everyone in Ontario, and the full restoration of the Special Diet Allowance.

Our name is inspired by a December 2008 report entitled Poverty Is Making Us Sick, by the Wellesley Institute and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, released just before the Ontario Liberal government’s laughable ‘Poverty Reduction Strategy’ was introduced, which once again demonstrated the fact that poverty has profound health consequences.

Quoting from the report: “Poverty is triggering a devastating health crisis among lower-income people, but the research shows that raising incomes leads to better health. The results confirm for the first time that relatively small increases in incomes of poor Canadians will lead to substantial increases in their health.” The latest findings demonstrate that policy-makers cannot ignore the growing costs of poverty because the costs are relatively smaller than the cost of neglect. ....the researchers demonstrate that every $1,000 increase in income leads to substantial increases in health. For instance, an annual increase of $1,000 in income for the poorest twenty percent of Canadians will lead to nearly 10,000 fewer chronic conditions, and 6,600 fewer disability days every two weeks. The poorest fifth of Canada’s population face a staggering 358% higher rate of disability compared to the richest fifth. The poor experience major health inequality in many other areas, including 128% more mental and behavioural disorders; 95% more ulcers; 63% more chronic conditions; and 33% more circulatory conditions.”

Therefore, it is clear that we must look at poverty through a health equity lens.

Poverty Makes Us Sick began to mobilize around an earlier round of government’s attacks through the cuts to the Special Diet Allowance which stole healthy food off of poor people’s tables. We are now hear to speak to you about the next round of cuts – to the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit and Discretionary Benefits – which threaten to steal the roof from over their heads and to deny them access to preventative health and related supports necessary for a reasonable quality of life. Cuts to these programs will force people onto the streets, increase criminalization, hospitalization, and child apprehensions. It will deny women, youth and children safety in fleeing violence in the home. It will disproportionately affect those that are
already marginalized – who are indigenous, racialized, transgendered, criminalized, disabled, or who struggle with perceived or identified mental health challenges.

Again, we have research from the Wellesley Institute to support what any of us who work and live in this community know - that eliminating the CSUMB will have profound health impacts. Almost exactly 4 years after the ‘Poverty is Making Us Sick’ report was released, the Wellesley Institute and partner agencies released a response to the province’s decision to cut the CSUMB, entitled ‘The Real Cost of Cutting the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit: A Health Equity Impact Assessment’. This report details the various ways that the cuts will harm those on social assistance, primarily by forcing them into homelessness, and calls for the cuts to be reversed. It further calls on the province to do a full health equity impact assessment and hold off on all cuts until it can ensure that existing health inequities will not be exacerbated.

This report reflects what we are seeing in our work on the ground – a young woman whose mom fled violence through the CSUMB and who herself has relied on start up to survive, a young mom who was sleeping on a friend’s couch when she found out she was pregnant and needed a safe place for her and her baby, a young man recovering from a mental health struggle in a long term care facility who is seeking to transition back into the community. These are the people in our community that we work with, that we know and love, who make up the richness of our community. In addition to these stories highlighting the vital impact of these programs, we are hearing the fear and desperation in the voices of folks we are supporting who don’t know how they will survive in the face of these cuts. We hear this fear in the voices of everyone we see at the series of sign up clinics we hold on Tuesdays at the Working Centre that are aimed at helping people in accessing the benefit before it disappears.

Despite the rhetoric we have heard from Minister of Community and Social Services about the ‘exciting changes’ that these cuts will mean for our community, this provincial government is actively engaged in a campaign against the poor. John Milloy claims that, unlike the Harris government, “we are not going to balance the budget on the backs of the poor”. And he is right. No matter how much this government slashes the benefits and programs aimed at those in our community already struggling to survive in deep poverty, they cannot reach a balanced budget from those cuts. It is estimated that, in freezing social assistance rates and cutting programs aimed at poor Ontarians, the government will save about $90 million. The fact is, poor people are falling further and further behind – now requiring an increase of almost 60% to regain the losses made during the Harris regime (over 20% lost since this government’s tenure began). As the saying goes, you can’t get blood from a stone – and these policies indeed have blood on them.

We have spent much time lately at the office of our local MPP John Milloy, recently dubbed the more appropriate title “Minister of Misery and Homelessness”, to communicate in no uncertain terms that our community will not stand for this
continued attack, for the austerity measures being forced on the poor, despite the fact that these cuts could never address the financial challenges we face.

Our actions reflect a mobilization that is happening across our community and across the province. We are under no illusion that this provincial government will ‘come to its senses’ and restore the CSUMB without a fight. Therefore, it comes back to us, and it comes back to you. The community is already stepping up. Programs are finding creative ways to respond. Local individuals and groups are stepping forward to make their voices heard, and to share what they have to ensure that people are taken care of to the best of their abilities. Models of mutual aid and networks of support are developing but that is only one part of the puzzle.

The other part is you. This cut is not a ‘fait accompli’. It is not something that communities must simply accept. Municipalities and Regions across the province are already resisting on a number of levels – through direct advocacy pressuring the province to reverse the cuts and developing local plans to make up the shortfall (these include but are not limited to Hamilton, Sudbury, district of Nipissing, Chatham-Kent County, and Lambton county). We are sure that many of these discussions have and are happening behind closed doors but this leadership must also happen publicly and forcefully. In this Region we pride ourselves in our innovativeness, in our creativity in finding solutions for our community in the face of challenges and obstacles. The cut to the CSUMB is an opportunity for this Region to demonstrate this creativity and its commitment to inclusion.

Secondly, we are echoing the Wellesley Institute’s demand for a health equity lens in examining policy. The Region’s 2013 budget must clearly demonstrate our shared commitment to health equity and economic justice for all community members. There has been much talk about the fact that our Region has been unusually ‘generous’ in the use of the CSUMB. That was easy when the province was covering most of the costs and does not, in fact, speak to the character of our community. Our decision to maintain these services, to prioritize funding for this program in the face of cuts and difficult choices – that speaks to who we are. We are asking you to commit to invest in building a healthier, more equitable community, and maintain full funding for the CSUMB and Discretionary Benefits. This is a good investment in our community, and is, fundamentally, the right thing to do.

Finally, we ask you to join us this Friday at a “People’s Open House” at 12:30pm at 1770 King Street East. That address may be familiar to many of you – it is the constituency office of John Milloy. This Friday, folks from across the province, including members of CUPE, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and other local and provincial allies are joining Poverty Makes Us Sick and the Ontario Coalition Against the Poverty for an afternoon of music, food and celebration of community resistance to the cuts to the CSUMB and Discretionary Benefits. We invite you all to be there and will be certainly happy to provide you with a platform to announce how Waterloo Regional Council will be joining this provincial mobilization. We look forward to seeing you on the streets!
Cuts to Supports that Prevent Homelessness

Poverty Free Waterloo Region
1. CSUMB - Cancelled
   * Some additional funding invested in CHPI
   * Loss of at least $2.2M in funding to prevent homelessness by assisting a move or maintaining existing housing

2. Discretionary Benefit - Capped
   * Loss of at least $3.5M in funding
   * Staff recommends an additional $1.15M to support discretionary expenditures
More homelessness means more use of expensive, regionally funded services - ambulance use, police services and emergency shelters.

Services to alleviate the consequences of homelessness are as much at 10X more expensive than housing.

Proactive versus Reactive Responses: The Business Case for a Housing Based Approach to Reduce Homelessness in the Region of Waterloo.
“The elimination of the CSUMB will have significant health impacts for people receiving social assistance [and those living on low incomes] who are already among the most vulnerable in Ontario.”

Wellesley Institute: The Real cost of Cutting the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit: A Health Equity Impact Assessment
The Cuts are a False Economy - Local Impact

* Shelters are already over capacity
  * More homelessness means building more shelters

* Out of the Cold is close to capacity
  * More homelessness would require 800 additional volunteers to operate a second site each night
1. Ask Province to reinstate the CSUMB Funding

2. Provide additional funding to prevent homelessness through discretionary benefits while CHPI plans are being developed

3. Advocate the province to change the laws which allow landlords to collect last months rent.
Thank you.