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**Meeting:** Community Safety and Well-Being Integration Table

**Date:** September 13, 2023

**Time:** 9:00 A.M.

**Location:** 450 Sunset Drive

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**Attendees:** Mayor Joe Preston, City of St. Thomas, Chair  
Warden Ed Ketchabaw – County of Elgin  
Danielle Neilson, Housing and Homelessness Action Table  
Sandra McCabe, Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network  
Chief Marc Roskamp – St. Thomas Police Service  
Inspector Jennifer Neamtz – OPP, Elgin County Detachment  
Staff Sergeant Ian George – OPP, Elgin County Detachment  
Marcia Van Wylie, Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee  
Sandra Datars Bere, City Manager – City of St. Thomas  
Deanna Huggett, Elgin Ontario Health Team  
Natasha Newby, Executive Director – Elgin St. Thomas Community Foundation  
Don Shropshire, CAO – County of Elgin  
Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development & Strategic Initiatives – County of Elgin

**Absent:** Emilian Siman, Elgin Workforce Development Network

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## Minutes

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2023

The minutes were approved as presented.

3. Introductions – Inspector Jennifer Neamtz, Ontario Provincial Police, Detachment Commander – Elgin County

Inspector Jennifer Neamtz was welcomed to the meeting.

#### 4. Roundtable – Action Tables

##### i. **Education and Skills Development – Emilian Siman**

- *Note: Emilian Siman was absent.*

##### ii. **Housing Security – Danielle Neilson**

- D. Neilson provided an update on the by-name list, which currently includes just over 140 individuals, representing an increase from the last meeting. Economic pressures were identified as a contributing factor to new instances of homelessness.
- Since the list's establishment, there have been 512 unique individuals on the list, with 283 successfully housed and 81 moved to an inactive status (relocated, self-resolved, etc.).
- Tenancy selection for the second Indwell build has commenced, with move-ins underway. Tenants are drawn from the by-name list, and waitlists are not being used.
- Efforts are ongoing to lower barriers for individuals seeking emergency shelter at the Inn. Transforming dormitory spaces into flexible areas with 2-4 beds in private spaces to accommodate couples, individuals with pets, and address unique needs.
- Preparations for the winter response are underway in the City and County, with collaboration among community partners such as YWCA and CMHA to assess the need for alternative responses.
- In response to a question about waitlists and community need, D. Neilson stated that the capacity for the second Indwell build is 45, while the social housing waitlist contains over 1,300 individuals. The waitlist's duration ranges from 2 to 10 years, with an expected increase in wait times as demand rises.
- Mayor Preston inquired about meeting housing needs for those facing economic difficulties. D. Neilson emphasized their focus on ending instances of homelessness quickly and highlighted rent supplements as one potential solution.

##### iii. **Mental Health and Well-Being – Sandra McCabe**

- S. McCabe reported that there are currently 80-90 staff members servicing the Elgin region. The new CEO, Pam Tobin, is set to begin in October.
- Three (3) withdrawal beds were established in February 2023, with an average stay of 4.29 days and 110 uses since opening. There is a high demand for these beds. The withdrawal beds will move to a new facility soon and the number of beds will increase from 3 to 7.
- The MCERT/MOST program is experiencing some staff turnover, and recruitment efforts are underway.
- Brief counseling services are in high demand, with a goal to reduce wait times, provide rapid access, and enhance coping skills. Services are offered in 1-3 sessions.

- Crisis teams are active at 110 Centre and STEGH, with staff embedded in the ED at STEGH to respond promptly to crisis assessments. Efforts to promote 110 Centre and extend its hours to 9 am to 8 pm are ongoing.
- Additional suites have been added at 10 Mondamin, featuring improved accessibility and more space to see clients.
- S. McCabe noted that the network continues to meet, with discussions focused on emerging issues such as homelessness, medical documentation challenges, and the shortage of GPs and psychiatrists.
- In response to a question from Mayor Preston about improvements in mental health, S. McCabe highlighted the reduction in stigma surrounding seeking help. Staff Sergeant George emphasized that progress is often measured one person at a time, a sentiment echoed by Mayor Preston. D. Shropshire inquired about barriers to addressing mental health crises, to which S. McCabe cited waitlists, shortage of healthcare providers, and stigma reduction as key areas of concern.
- Mayor Preston underscored the importance of housing projects like Indwell in reducing mental health interactions and crisis incidents.

iv. **Public Safety – Chief Marc Roskamp**

- Chief Roskamp reported an increase in call volume and crime severity, particularly with the growth in the area. Discussions on bail reform have taken place, and grant applications related to bail compliance and warrant apprehension have been submitted. Additionally, efforts are underway to enhance the Mobile Crisis Response Team (MOST) by increasing the number of team members.
- Chief Roskamp highlighted various grant applications aimed at addressing crime severity, budget pressures, and the challenges of growth.
- The reduction in police recruitment applications was discussed, with potential reasons attributed to recent conversations and rhetoric about policing. Innovative approaches to attract and retain officers are needed.
- The implementation of a community resource team to support the downtown core was mentioned as an effective strategy. There are currently six (6) special constables on the team.
- Efforts to address school violence, assaults, weapon possession, and drug-related issues were also discussed. Meetings with school trustees to present information on the impact of police absence in schools have been scheduled.
- Road safety remains a priority, with a focus on breaking down silos for collaborative efforts.
- In response to a question from D. Shropshire regarding addressing hate crimes and anticipated community growth, Chief Roskamp outlined partnerships with local immigration organizations and initiatives to foster inclusion. Inspector Neamtz also noted that training officers to handle diversity-related issues and enhancing traffic safety on roadways are also key strategies to prepare for growth.

v. **Substance Use and Addiction – Marcia Van Wylie**

- M. Van Wylie discussed challenges faced during the transition to the action phase of the Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee. S. McCabe from CMHA has joined as co-chair of the committee, which is preparing to launch a report containing 49 recommendations. The committee is committed to working alongside other community groups to advance these recommendations. The recommendations will be presented to local municipalities through delegations and will also be made available to the public in a more digestible format on a new website launching in October.

5. **Update from Elgin Ontario Health Team – Deanna Huggett**

- D. Huggett provided an update from the OHT, highlighting strategic priorities, including improving care, enhancing access to primary care and mental health resources, and fostering better collaboration among healthcare teams. Efforts to increase awareness of existing services and streamline navigation were discussed. Additionally, meetings with indigenous leaders to develop reconciliation action plans and the provision of mental health first aid sessions for small businesses during small business week were mentioned. The group was encouraged to help promote these initiatives.

6. **Next Meeting Date**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 29th at 9 am, and it will be a hybrid meeting.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 a.m.