



Minutes

Support for Ukraine Task Force

Meeting Date: April 20, 2022
Meeting Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: Microsoft Teams
Prepared by Katie Love, Administrative Assistant Community Services

A. Call to Order

- Mayor Alar Soever called the Ukraine Task Force Meeting to order with Councillor Hope and Councillor Sampson present.

Advisory participants present were Carolyn Letourneau (BVO), Suneet Kukreja (YMCA Grey Bruce Settlement Services), Linda Alexander (YMCA Grey Bruce Settlement Services), David Morris (Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce), Heather Lequyere (Blue Mountain Village Association), Dr. Rev. Grayhame Bowcott, Denis Martinek (Short-Term Accommodations), Francesca Dobbyn (United Way Bruce Grey), Sharon McCormick (United Way Simcoe Muskoka), Brian Shelley (United Way Simcoe Muskoka), Nawal Al-Busaidi (COSTI Immigrant Services) joined the meeting following the call to order.

Town staff present were Director of Community Services Ryan Gibbons.

Regrets were sent by advisory participants Cathy Innes (BVO), Dr. Bryan Recoskie, Jennifer Bisley (Attainable Housing – Red Cross) and Ben Lamb (Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development).

- **Task Force Member Attendance**
- **Approval of Agenda**

Moved by: Paula Hope

Seconded by: Rob Sampson

THAT the Agenda of April 20, 2022, be approved as circulated, including any additions to the Agenda, CARRIED.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof

NOTE: In accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and the Town Procedural By-law 2021-76, Support for Ukraine Task Force members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

None

B. Matters for Discussion

B.1 Overall Update of what we know so far and where we want to go

Mayor Soever – Main goal is to get community members together and help coordinate once things arise.

Director of Community Services Ryan Gibbons – Thank you for taking the time participating. Focus is how we can support people not just in TBM, but outside of the Blue Mountains as well. This is a preliminary meeting. We want to make sure we are capturing all the components.

B.2 YMCA Grey Bruce Settlement & Language Services – Overview of Services Offered

Suneet Kukreja

- Provide support in Owen Sound/Grey and Bruce (not immigration services). Offering:
 - Employment for newcomers, with YMCA employment services. Assist with resumes.
 - Housing Services.
 - Assistant with SIN Number application– navigating the banking system.
 - Workplace language support. Client does not need to pay for services. Also helps prepare for citizenship. Access to translation and interpreters. Resources from Tanya as well, written material that we can access.
 - Link classes – conversation circles to give opportunity for people to practice.
- Eligible for Ontario Works.
- Eligible for OHIP, and Ontario schools. We are onboard to help and support any families.
- Access to some license daycares with some subsidy available not unsure if the government will cover the subsidy because of the Ontario works permit.
- Working with hospitality industry as people might be here for short term – hotels, resorts etc.

Linda Alexander

- We also offer community connection activities – picnic in the park, tobogganing. Not just the technical piece but also the welcoming piece.
- Our staff can come to Town of the Blue Mountains or wherever the clients are and meet with them onsite or if there is a space provided.
 - Mayor Soever request that we might need to arrange/need transportation or source volunteers or bus providers that could help.
 - Director Gibbons suggested that the Town can find space at Town Hall or other facilities to help assist.
 - Carolyn Letourneau (BVO) – has space as well to provide.
- First contact – a sponsor brought a family to our office for support. Will be happy to provide exact numbers as families come in.

B.3 Key Point(s) of contact

Mayor Soever

- Very important for the communication plan. Making sure we are sending people to the right place and right services.

B.4 Communications plan

Mayor Soever

- We can work on something that can be sent out regionally if we do it properly.
- Inform the community where they can sign up if they want to provide space to live and define the process that would entail this.
- Request Fire Department check out housing as we do for Short Term Accommodations to make sure it is safe. Background check for people hosting these families.

David Morris – Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce

- Who to register with? Tanya from Peel – newcomers – compiled a list that people have contacted them. Some who are here, and families that are coming. There needs to be access to employment and housing.
- Recommend getting in touch with the Grey Bruce Local immigration partnership – operates out of Grey County – might have more resources.
 - Director Gibbons will include them at the next meeting

Nawal Al-Busaidi – COSTI

- Has been leading the housing program in Toronto. Supporting refugees over 70 years.
- We evaluate the host, assessment, home visit, interviews to make sure they are qualified. Vulnerable screening after they have been qualified.
- Screened 150 people, have 5 families come in. Working on matches.
- Majority offer separate units. Offering up to 1 year.
- More than happy to share the resources, agreements through lawyer. We are unable to coordinate to TBM. Would like to be a resource/support to help coordinate.
- Would Suggest Host program, emergency hotels/shelters and provide a wraparound support.
 - Mayor Soever request to have someone fill the role of COSTI in this area and work with Nawal.
 - Director Gibbons will be happy to connect the three-way partnership agreements and other resources with COSTI.

Denis Martinek – Short-Term Accommodations

- After April, STAs are pretty much fully booked. For long term over the summer, most places have already been booked ahead of time. Might be able to find a week at a time.

Dr. Rev. Grayhame Bowcott

- We need an official contact person that we can refer people to that want to offer their cottages. A lot of people that want to offer financial support. Local charity that is collected funds to support Ukraine – would like these contacts.
- No formal Ukrainian associations/network here just individuals.
 - Mayor Soever requested we bring all these services together – and be the point of contact.

Mayor Soever

- Communication plan – once we develop a plan with COSTI – we can advertise this.

B.5 Updates from Task Force Advisory Participants

David Morris – Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce

- Need to have day to day – wrap around support.
- My hope is that Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce will be hosting a follow-up event for refugee hosts to show what the day-to-day work of hosting a refugee family looks like.

Sharon McCormick – United way

- Increase capacity, urgent needs fund that we could pivot easily.
- We have other programs that could be expanded. Youth call – help line live answer that is offered.
- United way BC – provincial gov't – called 'I volunteer' - a tool worth exploring.

Brian Shelley – United Way

- If there is tightness of funds – The United Way Simcoe Muskoka has an Urgent Needs Fund. Does not impact other gov't subsidies. It is a one-time grant.

B.6 Closing Remarks

Mayor Soever

- Everyone to send in brief bio – what the organization is and contact.
- Start a contact list.
- Start working on, when people want to come here, what the process is.
- A lot more to hosting, then just offering accommodations. Need to know the services are available to help support the families.
- Transportation will be a need. Come out with an outline.

- Province will be offering funding as well.
- Ryan to work with COSTI and see what we can do and contact the GB local immigration, so we are not duplicating. We do not have a registry for people that want to offer housing.

C. Correspondence

C.1. None

D. New and Unfinished Business

D.1 Additions to the Agenda

D.2 Items Identified for Discussion at Next Meeting

E. Upcoming Meeting Dates

Wednesday, May 4th, 2022 at 4:00pm

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams

F. Adjournment

Recommended (Move, Second)

THAT the Support for Ukraine Task Force does adjourn at 5:14p to meet again at the call of the Chair, CARRIED. Councillor Sampson and Councillor Hope.