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| Report To: | Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Board   |
| From:      | Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services and<br>Gilles Plouffe, Ontario Works Program Supervisor |
| Date:      | May 23, 2013   |
| Re:        | Ontario Works Funerals – Issue Report  |

## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the DSB Board with information surrounding funerals for social assistance recipients at the request of a letter received by a funeral home director within our jurisdiction.

## Background

In 2004, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB did an extensive review of their funeral policy. Funeral homes within the District were contacted and were encouraged to provide input on the cost of a funeral as well as what items should be minimally covered. Since then, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff has reviewed all of their policies several times however; the cost for a funeral has not been increased since 2004.

## Objective

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff received a [letter from the Bourcier Funeral Home](#) in Espanola requesting that the board give its immediate attention to the DSB's Ontario Works funeral policy as they have not received an increase for funeral services in 'twenty five years'.

When comparing the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB's funeral rates with counterparts located in our proximity, the Algoma District Services Administration Board Funeral Policy allows for funerals up to the cost of \$4,250. The City of Greater Sudbury Funeral Policy allows for funerals up to the cost of \$4,500.

The following services are approved for [funerals](#) by the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB **up to a maximum of \$2,250.00.**

#### Professional Services

- Preparation and Embalming
- Transfer from the place of death
- Visitation
- Religious service (incl. Payment to clergy)
- Hearse and other vehicles for procession
- Shelter of remains
- Cloth finished casket or equivalent basic wood
- Obituary notice
- Prayer cards
- Cremation where appropriate
- **Cost of an Urn**
- Coroner's Certificate

#### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

The following services are approved as additional expenses, over and above the \$2,250 **up to a maximum of \$2,000.00.**

- Additional travel and transportation as approved
- Opening & closing of the grave
- Cost of plot
- Grave marker and installation as required by cemetery
- Oversized Casket
- Care and maintenance

Based on a review by staff, the average number of funerals paid by the DSB is 10 per year. Taking the current policy into account, this means that the minimum amount paid for funerals is \$22,500 and the maximum amount is \$42,500, depending on the types of services approved as additional expenses.

Although Ontario Works funerals are cost shared with the province at 80-20, there is a maximum cap on the discretionary benefits and any increase in Funeral rates needs to be reviewed in relation to the new cap on discretionary benefits.

#### **Conclusion**

As any change in Ontario Works Funeral rates at this point would affect the 2013 DSB approved budget, staff are recommending that this matter be referred to the Finance Committee for their deliberations as part of the 2014 DSB budget process.