



## The City of Niagara Falls, Ontario

### Resolution

November 12, 2024

#### No. 18 – Strengthening Existing System of Mandatory Mental Health Care

Moved by: Mayor Jim Diodati

Seconded by: Councillor Ruth-Ann Nieuwesteeg

- **Whereas** many Ontario mayors are asking the Province of Ontario to strengthen the existing system of mandatory mental health care and to expand service to treat those with severe and debilitating addictions; and
- **Whereas** risk to public safety is unacceptable; and
- **Whereas** illegal activity and disruptive public behaviours take place openly, including drug use, solicitation, prostitution, human trafficking and have been witnessed by and tolerated by residents as the authorities have no available recourse; and
- **Whereas** discarded, used drug needles, defecating and urinating on public property, setting fires to private and public property, theft and vandalism have become common practice in neighbouring areas; and
- **Whereas** vulnerable people need help to navigate supports with drug addictions, mental health and social support; and
- **Whereas** our community experienced the tragic death of a resident walking his dog in the park in broad daylight last month at the hands of someone who should have received needed treatment; and

- **Whereas** in the month of October alone the City of Niagara Falls received 29 encampment complaints, which, if allowed to remain unchallenged, could cost millions of tax dollars to deal with large scale clean-ups, rather than addressing the concerns in real time to prevent this from happening; and
- **Whereas** in 2023, the City of Niagara Falls invested more than \$500,000 on encampment clean-up and related vandalism costs; and
- **Whereas** this is not a municipal responsibility but as a City we continue to incur significant costs without the correct legislative tools and government support to solve the core issues; and
- **Whereas** the chronically homeless population in the Niagara Region is approximately 647 people, just more than 0.1% of the populus, causing a disproportionate burden on families in our community; and
- **Whereas** every neighbourhood in our community has been affected, many businesses have moved and residents face daily ongoing challenges, seeing no marked improvement in the situation.

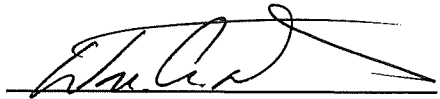
**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

- The City of Niagara Falls join many other Ontario mayors who are asking Premier Doug Ford to use the Constitution’s notwithstanding clause to give authorities and police more power to break up homeless encampments and force more people into mandatory drug and mental health treatment; and
  - To request trespass laws to be written to include jail time for “repetitive trespass” and to empower police to arrest repeat trespassers; and
  - To enact new legislation which would ban open drug use, similar to laws in place on alcohol; and
  - To establish a new court diversion system to redirect offenders toward rehabilitation and more appropriate supports; and
  - To request that the current Provincial Government act as an intervenor in court cases on encampments; and
  - To advocate for the position that courts should not be dictating homelessness policy; and
  - To request the government look at using every legal tool available to the Province to clear encampments and restore dignity and safety to public spaces; and
  - To ask for investment in 24-hour crisis centers to relieve pressures on emergency rooms and first responders; and

- To consolidate appropriate funding with the Federal Government for the unhoused community where gaps exist; and
  - To establish a ministry and minister with appropriate funding and power as a single point of contact; and
  - To create open lines of communication between responsible and relevant Federal ministries, Provincial areas of responsibility and municipalities.
- That this be circulated to local area municipalities, Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament in Niagara, the Premier of Ontario and appropriate ministries and the Prime Minister.

**.AND The Seal of the Corporation to hereto affixed.**

**Carried**



**WILLIAM G.MATSON  
CITY CLERK**



**JAMES M.DIODATI  
MAYOR**