



PORT COLBORNE

**City of Port Colborne
Special Meeting of Council Addendum**

Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024
Time: 6:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall
66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne

Pages

5. Staff Reports

5.1 Port Colborne Hospital Update, 2024-225

a. Delegations

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| *a. | Alexander Fazzari - 626 Stanley Street | 1 |
| *b. | Angie Desmarais - 270 Davis Street | 3 |
| *c. | Barbara Butters - 1152 Weaver Road | |
| *d. | Melissa Bigford - 173 Chippawa Road | |
| *e. | Brian Lofthouse - 450 Northland Avenue | 4 |
| *f. | Anna Maria Crognale - 630 Stanley Street | |
| *g. | Larry Rosnuk - 62 Fraser Street | 5 |

Presentation to the City of Port Colborne

December 3rd, 2024

Thank you, Mayor Steele for the invite to come here today.

Hello Council. My name is Alexander Fazzari. I am joined today by Harry Hamilton, President of the Port Colborne Legion.

I come representing the Port Colborne Legion as the Second Vice President, as a veteran's advocate, as a business owner in Port Colborne, as a farmer in Port Colborne, as a youth in Port Colborne, as a land owner in Port Colborne, and as a life-long resident of Port Colborne.

I have come today with a simple message. A clear message.

DO. NOT. SELL. OUR. HOSPITAL.

Lease it.

Selling this facility is short sighted and NOT to the benefit of Port Colborne residents. The City can make far more over the life of the building by leasing it. Further, leasing it allows for a 24/7 urgent care facility to be re-established under a new provincial government.

Selling this facility will seal our fate.

I would like to remind this council that the NHS answers to us the people. Not the other way around. Their mandate can change at any time.

DO NOT SELL OUR HOSPITAL. Lease it to ensure Port Colborne's residents, your friends, family, neighbours, and community, will have access to healthcare.

Further, if this hospital is to be sold, the Veterans' and residents of this great city require a full forensic audit, beyond the scope of provincial guidelines and a municipal audit, to detail 100% of all the proceeds and expenditures of the sale via an in-depth forensic audit detailing every expenditure, line-by-line, with receipts. Including perceived and real conflicts of interest. We do NOT want to see any politician or municipal and regional staff member gain any benefit whatsoever, perceived or real, including their friends, from the sale of the hospital. It would be disappointing and potentially illegal for a friend, family member, business partner, or business interest of politicians and staff to have any benefit from the sale, including gaining space in the hospital for private commercial gain, as the entire Port Colborne community will not be benefiting from it in any capacity.

Moreover, selling the hospital to give all the proceeds to the Region for a hospital in Niagara Falls is not in the best interest of our veterans here in Port Colborne and our wonderful community.

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As a child living in Port Colborne, I suffered an asthma attack, and was incapable of breathing properly. I was rushed to the Port Colborne hospital. Within 5 minutes of my inability to breathe, I was saved by the wonderful staff at the hospital. I would not be here to give a presentation to you now if it was not for this hospital.

My Nonno, an immigrant and first generation of my family to live in Port Colborne, almost died from an industrial accident in Port Colborne. Our hospital saved his life. And many more of your friends, family, and neighbour's lives.

The proximity of the hospital was a key factor for saving us both.

Correct me if I am wrong, but there are plans to expand the number of dwellings by 4,000 in the next 5 to 10 years. Our population is about to explode. Including more industry moving to Port Colborne.

Our Branch fundraised and paid for equipment for the Port Colborne Hospital. The money raised were from us, the people and residents of this great City of Port Colborne.

It is nothing short of foolish to sell this facility.

You, our Council, were elected to represent us: the people of Port Colborne. We the people do NOT want our hospital closed or sold.

I urge this Council to do what's right.

Do what you have always done and what we know you will do: Support your community. You were elected by us, the people, to make the best decisions for this city. For us alive now, and those that will be here in the future.

DO NOT SELL OUR HOSPITAL.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, city staff, NHS representatives and members of the public,

My name is Angie Desmarais and I am a Port Colborne resident at 270 Davis St. I am here tonight to formally request the deferment of all matters having to do with changes to the Port Colborne Hospital site and Partnering for the Future of Healthcare in South Niagara scheduled for discussion on Tuesday, December 3rd, 2024.

I believe that there is a decided lack of public opinion on this matter, particularly concerning the future of our healthcare services. Given its importance, I feel that additional time for public engagement and input would be beneficial. Here are the suggested steps for effective public engagement:

1. **Public Forums and Town Hall Meetings:** Organize multiple sessions at various times and locations to ensure accessibility for all community members.
2. **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Distribute both online and paper surveys to gather diverse opinions and concerns.
3. **Focus Groups:** Conduct focus groups with representatives from different demographics, including seniors, parents, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders.
4. **Community Outreach Programs:** Utilize local organizations and media to inform the community about the engagement opportunities and encourage participation.
5. **Online Platforms:** Create an interactive website or social media page where residents can leave comments, ask questions, and engage in discussions.

By deferring the matter, we can ensure that comprehensive community involvement is achieved, allowing all perspectives to be considered before making any decisions. This allows for councillors to make a truly informed decision.

Thank you for considering my request. I appreciate your time and dedication to our community.

**Letter of support to Port Colborne City Council
from the Port Colborne Health Services Working Group**

The Port Colborne Health Services Working Group recognizes the need for improved Comprehensive Primary Health Care in the City of Port Colborne.

We know there is a primary health care crisis which will be heightened by the closure of Port Colborne UCC in 2028. Residents will no longer have access to after-hour or weekend care for minor injuries and illnesses and people who are not rostered with a primary care physician will have no access to care in our city.

We are pleased to acknowledge and support the immense efforts being made by the City of Port Colborne and physicians in Port Colborne to remedy this situation. Over the past year and a half, a great deal of work has been done to develop a Primary Health Team plus a Walk-in Clinic model.

We applaud all those involved in planning a made-in-Port-Colborne solution.

We agree the proposed plan will provide much-needed Comprehensive Primary Health Care for the community of Port Colborne and will include not only treatment of illness and injury but also other aspects of health and wellness.

We support the immediate adoption of tonight's proposal.

The PCHSWG will continue to support and assist in the development of improved primary health care for the City of Port Colborne.

**Brian Lofthouse, on behalf of Donna Birrell-Westlake, chair
Port Colborne Health Services Working Group**

Fort Erie - Council

e: Request Provincial Funding Currently Provided for the Operation of the Fort Erie Urgent Care Center, including Palliative Care Services, remain available to Support Fort Erie's Primary Care Initiative.

Resolution:

Whereas the Douglas Memorial Hospital was built primarily with funds left by the estate of William Douglas on his death in 1929; and

Whereas The Douglas Memorial Hospital ("the Hospital") opened for operation in 1931; and

Whereas the Hospital operated in the black during all of its years of operation (1931-1998) as a full-service hospital under the management and guidance of its own Board of Trustees; and

Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission (HSRC") recommended in 1998 that Douglas Memorial continue operation as a hospital within the new Niagara Health System (NHS"), with acute and chronic care beds, emergency and ambulatory services and a range of diagnostics; and

Whereas despite the creation of a standing committee of the NHS Board for Fort Erie, pursuant to recommendation of the HSRC, to assure local input into Board decision making and that no decision to eliminate any inpatient or emergency services would be made unless approved by such standing committee, the NHS embarked on a systemic reduction or elimination of various services at the Hospital until the adoption by the NHS of its "Hospital Improvement Plan" ("HIP") in 2008; and

Whereas pursuant to the HIP the NHS eliminated emergency and all other health care services at the Hospital in 2009, with the exception of a 24-hour Urgent Care Centre ("UCC"), chronic care beds, palliative care beds and some diagnostics, without the approval of the Hospital standing committee, and

Whereas in July 2023, Niagara Health ("NH"), as it is now designated, reduced the hours of operation of the Hospital UCC to 12 hours, although the public only has access to the UCC from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily; and

Whereas NH has recently adopted a 3-hospital model for the future of hospital services in Niagara that intends to completely close the Hospital, resulting in no urgent, chronic or palliative or diagnostic services in Fort Erie once the new South Niagara Hospital is opened in or about 2028, and

Whereas the most recent population data available indicates that Fort Erie's current population is 36,200, far greater than projected during deliberations with respect to Niagara Regions' new Official Plan, adopted in July 2022; and

Whereas the Niagara Region's population is growing at a rate far greater than anticipated by the Province or NH, particularly when projections were being made for the hospital needs of South Niagara when planning for the new South Niagara Hospital; and

Whereas there are over 7,000 Fort Erie residents unattached to a primary care physician, necessitating a primary care "safety net", such as a UCC or alternative to avoid first point of health care contact at local emergency departments; and

Whereas the UCC at Douglas Memorial forms that primary health care "safety net" in the absence of sufficient primary care physicians or service providers in Fort Erie; and

Whereas the removal of UCC services, chronic care beds, palliative care beds and diagnostics from the Hospital will result in an unreasonable and unnecessary hardship for current and future residents of Fort Erie and will foreclose the use of the Hospital as a safety valve for NH patients anywhere in Niagara in the event the new South Niagara Hospital is unable to meet the demands that the increasing population of Niagara will place on it; and

Whereas a prudent approach to managing the hospital and health care needs of Niagara, particularly South Niagara and Fort Erie, would recognize the value of retaining a fully-operational UCC, with diagnostics and clinics, as well as chronic care and palliative care beds at the Hospital; and

Whereas there is no indication that NH has any intention of changing course on its 3-hospital model for Niagara despite requests by the Town of Fort Erie to continue the services available at the Hospital; and

Whereas the residents of Fort Erie need and deserve equitable primary health care services, including 24-hour Urgent Care and associated services;

Now therefore be it resolved,

1. That the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health commit to funding all necessary services at the new South Niagara hospital without the removal or

- reallocation of operational funding from the Douglas Memorial for the UCC and other current health services, and further
2. That the Council for the Town of Fort Erie requests that the Minister of Health direct any and all funding from the Province of Ontario for the operation of the UCC (primary care), chronic care beds and palliative care beds, and all diagnostic and associated services at Douglas Memorial remain in Fort Erie for use by Niagara Health as part of a revised hospital model for Niagara or an alternative model operated by a qualified designated health care services entity working in collaboration with the Town of Fort Erie should NH close Douglas Memorial as a hospital site, either before or following the completion and opening of the new South Niagara Hospital, and further
 3. That: the Mayor and Town of Fort Erie staff enter into discussions with the Minister of Health and Niagara Health and such other health care providers as deemed appropriate to ensure the continued operation of primary care and other current services at Douglas Memorial, with or without the involvement of NH, and further
 4. That: the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford, be requested to support this initiative, and further
 5. That: a copy of this Resolution be provided to the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Doug Ford; the Ontario Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones; the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Justin Trudeau; the federal Minister of Health, Mark Holland; the four MPPs and MPs who represent Niagara; the Niagara Region and the other 11 local area municipalities in Niagara for support.

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