

The Corporation of the County of Hastings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2020

Hastings County Wants Child Care Employees to Have Income all Summer: Bewildered by OPSEU's Opposition

BELLEVILLE – Hastings County is surprised and disappointed by OPSEU's about-face on our effort to work with OPSEU for a mutually satisfactory solution for our child care employees, who are currently without work.

The County believed there was an agreement in principle to continue to pay employees for an additional 30-day period. Unfortunately, OPSEU communicated on Friday that they were no longer willing to sign a letter of understanding.

The Ontario Government ordered schools closed on March 17, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The County's Before and After School programs closed at that time, and they will remain closed until schools reopen.

"The County has two priorities as we work through COVID-19. We need to keep people safe and healthy, and we need to manage unprecedented economic challenges, for residents, employees and the County," said Jim Pine, CAO for the County.

"When schools closed, we had a choice. We could put Early Childhood Educators on unpaid leave or temporarily lay them off, as many other employers did, or we could look for a way to help them through the transition. We chose to keep them on staff and continue their pay while we found the best solution," added Pine.

Under the plan agreed to in principle with OPSEU, Hastings County would continue to pay staff for an additional month. Thereafter, employees could apply for the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

“This morning I was reminded that no good deed goes unpunished,” said Pine. “We are fighting a pandemic on one front and its economic impact on another. County staff were working diligently with OPSEU for a plan to assist these employees, and all it would have taken was for the Union leadership to sign the letter of understanding.”

- 30 -

For More Information Contact:

Jim Pine, Chief Administrative Officer
613-922-1212