

Sudbury city council wants out of daycare business ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Sudbury city councillors voted Monday night to find someone else to operate the city-run Junior Citizens daycare.

The city councillors who sit on the community services committee endorsed a plan to find a new operator for the city-run Junior Citizens Daycare by 2015.

City staff argue that running the 120-spot centre would cost half as much if it wasn't part of the city.

Parents want Sudbury to keep Junior Citizens daycare

The annual budget for the day care centre, which is downtown in the YMCA building, is \$1.2 million. That works out to about \$94 per child per day. Staff say the average for a community agency running a day care centre in Sudbury is \$43 a day.

The city started looking at its child care system because the province cut \$1.8 million from its funding last year and is threatening to cut \$3.6 million more in 2016. The province says Greater Sudbury has been overfunded when it comes to child care and wants to shift that money to other Ontario cities that have been shortchanged. Sudbury city staff argued that if these cuts are as deep as expected, the total number of subsidized child care spots in Sudbury will be affected.

Numbers crunched by staff project that a \$3.6 million child care funding cut would mean 605 fewer day care spots in the city. But staff argue that if they didn't have to foot the bill for running Junior Citizens Daycare, the money saved there, could save spots for about 200 children.

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City councillor Claude Berthiaume is worried that what staff call "savings" is just slicing down the salaries of daycare workers, since the main reason that the city-run daycare is more expensive is because the workers are paid more.

"It's again the race to the bottom again," said Berthiaume. "I will not be able to support this recommendation."

He was the lone vote against the plan at the community services committee, but it will need the stamp of all of city council before going ahead.

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