

The Manitoulin Expositor

## Island may lose half of its Jobs for Youth positions this summer

By Alicia McCutcheon on April 9, 2014 Local News

MANITOULIN—The popular Jobs for Youth program, which has paired 40 summer students with employers on Manitoulin since 2008 and paid their wages—a Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board-run initiative through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services—may be facing cuts by half this summer.

During the March meeting of the District Services Board (DSB), Donna Moroso, director of integrated social services, explained to the board that the Jobs for Youth program has been running on Manitoulin since 2008 and has been very successful, with potential for more jobs and employers than the funding allows each year.

Last fall the municipality of Markstay-Warren approached the DSB asking for its assistance in taking over the Jobs for Youth program in its area, as the program in their area had been run by the Sudbury YMCA and not to the municipality's satisfaction. Over the fall and winter, Ms. Moroso lobbied the government and was successful in her endeavours with the ministry agreeing to give the DSB responsibility for Markstay-Warren's, and the entire district's, program. The DSB has now been given a funding allotment for 80 summer student positions for the entire DSB area.

**Ms. Moroso made the recommendation to the board that 40 positions are kept on Manitoulin, with the remaining 40 spread out among the rest of the district.**

Fern Dominelli, DSB CAO, said that rationally, the Island should only have 20 positions, but the 40 funded positions was something handed down from the ministry and it was the DSB's thought that this number should be "left alone."

Espanola Mayor Mike Lehoux said he thought the distribution should be done fairly across the area.

Mr. Dominelli suggested waiting for the new contract from the ministry to see if Manitoulin was listed specifically with 40 positions before making any decisions.

"I realize that this is how the ministry did it, but let's treat our partners equally around the table," one board member stated.

"If we decide to decrease the numbers on Manitoulin, there is going to be a lot of unhappy employers," Ms. Moroso warned the board.

"The Island's going to see it as being penalized because we took over the program, just so you know," Mr. Dominelli added.

**“I feel like the fella who watched his mother-in-law drive his new truck over a cliff,” Jack McMillan of Espanola added. “I feel bad penalizing Manitoulin because we’ve taken over, but I get what the rest of the table is saying.”**

Derek Stephens of Mindemoya noted that the program is up and running and successful on Manitoulin, but isn’t elsewhere. Mr. Dominelli explained that it would not be hard to fill spots anywhere in the area.

Gore Bay Councillor Lou Addison said she fully expected the program would be a success anywhere and that Manitoulin might be sore for a while, but would eventually “get over it.”

Manitoulin’s other voice on the DSB, Assiginack Councillor Paul Moffat, remained silent on the issue.

The board decided to defer a decision on the split of the 80 positions until the next meeting of the DSB and the ministry agreement for the 2014 Jobs for Youth program is seen.