Recommendations for a Benevolence Committee:

1. Establish a benevolence committee/board composed of council members and/or financially responsible former council members (preferably members who have ready available e-mail access in order to expedite the process).
2. Establish a timeline for response time of needs/requests, for example within 48 hours.
3. Establish simple questionnaire/financial assistance request for requests. One is available on the website *4sq.ca/toolkit.*
4. Keep the completed questionnaire and attach proof of the church payment when file is closed. If given gas cards or the request is denied please make those notes on the form and file in your benevolence file. Receive documentation of the need, for example if for medical expenses, copy of the medical expenses. These should be kept and attached to the benevolence request.
5. You may want to consider having a policy that allows your office staff to give small benevolence amounts without the committee approval.
6. Regardless of dollar amount requested each person must fill out the questionnaire in order to receive any type of aid.
7. For needs within your own church family getting the input of their home group leader or another leader with relationship with the individual is vital to the process.
8. Establish a written policy of what the benevolence committee/board will consider giving financial assistance for such as:
   * + 1. Utilities
       2. Groceries
       3. Vehicle Repair
       4. Rent and/or emergency housing
       5. Medical Expenses
9. Should probably not consider:
   * + 1. Business expenses
       2. School tuition
       3. Vehicle payments
       4. Cable/phone bills
10. Establish any situations that would disqualify an applicant?
11. Establish the rules for disbursing assistance. For example, is the money given directly to the electric company or is the money given to the individual.
12. Establish a maximum amount that benevolence committee/board will issue per request without pastoral approval. Somewhere between $1-$500 maximum.
13. Establish maximum amount of requests per 12 month period (most likely 3).
14. Establish follow up policy for your church to possibly include contact from home group leader, enrollment in financial class, and/or referral to consumer credit counseling.
15. Establish that the persons making decisions about the benevolence are independent from the person requesting assistance. The church cannot require the individual to perform services for the church to receive benevolence.)
16. Benevolence given to employees according to IRS regulations will be treated as compensation to the minister on their W-2. Please take note that employee compensation must be reasonable and approved in writing or the church could be subject to penalties, therefore any additional payments to them must be carefully documented. Benevolence to family members of employees is also considered income to the employee, if the employee is responsible for the care of the family member.