CITY OF NORWALK
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

ATTENDANCE: David Heuvelman, Chair; Barbara Smyth, Greg Burnett, Nicol Ayers

OTHERS: Deanna D'Amore, Health Director; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist, AnaVivian Estrella, Human Services Director; Carlos Duque, Fair Rent Coordinator; Theresa Argondezzi, Assistant Health Department Director

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Mr. Heuvelman called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. He called the roll and announced that there was a quorum present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Diane Lauricella greeted the Committee Member and congratulated Ms. D'Amore for her recent award. Ms. Lauricella said that she had several friends and acquaintances that had contracted COVID. She asked what plans the Council had for creatively distributing information on COVID beyond the vaccination.

Ms. Lauricella said that she did not feel that the Health Department and the State Health Department had done enough to get the message out. She suggested that the Health Department consider purchasing N-95 masks so that people could purchase their masks from the Health Department. This would be paired with a flyer with information about reducing exposure to COVID. Even though the staff had created a game about COVID prevention, Ms. Lauricella said that without property signage showing the proper way to wear a mask at grocery stores, they are losing opportunities. She expressed concerns about reaching out to the community about proper mask wearing or having to click five times to reach information from the CDC. It should be on the front page of the Norwalk website.

She said that DEEP has contracted with a company to test fish for PFOS. The Health Department needs to be aware of this. She would like to know what the Health Department to help spread awareness of PFOS and reduce their exposure.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **July 20, 2023**

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 20, 2023 MEETING.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 20, 2020 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- **August 3, 2023**

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 3, 2023 MEETING.**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 3, 2023 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH BURNETT, AND SMYTH IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTAINED (AYERS)**.

DISCUSSION

a. Updates from the Health Department
- Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist

Mr. Weeks then gave a brief overview of the respiratory diseases and displayed the increase in wastewater monitoring. He also displayed a nationwide map showing that 88% of the country is in the green level. There have been outbreaks in Long Island, upstate New York and lower New Hampshire and Vermont.

Mr. Weeks then displayed a slide with information of the COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels and the appropriate actions that should be taken for each level. He also displayed graphs tracking RSV and the 2022-2023 Influenza. The CDC is anticipating a normal flu and RSV season. Tracking will be done for the "tripiedemic", (COVID, RSV and the flu).

Mr. Burnett asked for clarification on wastewater. Mr. Weeks said that there were tests being run on wastewater for evidence of COVID. This method has been verified as an good indicator of what is happening in various cities and towns in terms of those who have COVID. Mr. Burnett asked if they had information that was Norwalk specific. Mr. Weeks said that Norwalk is not in a silo.

Ms. D'Amore said that the WPCA and DPW had been very cooperative in terms of participating with the wastewater testing.

Ms. Ayers asked about requiring masks. Ms. D'Amore said that in the beginning, the masks had been mandated to contain infection, but it is now voluntary. She said that the Department will be customizing the information for Norwalk.

- **Deanna D'Amore, Health Director**

Ms. D'Amore said that the Federal Government had announced that free COVID test kits would be available with up to four per household. The Health Department is working on distributing test kits and they will be ordering more.

The Health Department is hosting flu clinics and residents can register on line or call the Health Department.

Ms. D'Amore said that they were exploring the possibility of offering the flu vaccine.

b. Updates from the Chief of Community Services, Lamond Daniels

Mr. Carlos Duque greeted everyone and displayed a PowerPoint slide deck on COVID-19 Relief Assistance Program. He spoke about Alice (Active Limited Income Constraint) which addresses the fact that many residents live in Norwalk and struggle with a rent increase or eviction. ARPA funds have been allocated to the City for financial assistance. This will be administered through Person 2 Person, and Alliance for Community Empowerment, Inc. He then reviewed the requirements for funding and noted that the applicant would have to prove hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Burnett asked what would happen to an applicant after they received this funding. Mr. Duque said that the Department would be working with applicant to address the issues. Mr. Daniels said that Ms. Estrella was the City's housing advocate. She gave a brief overview of some of the solutions that a case management worker would be able to offer.

Ms. Ayers said that those who were in the ALICE classification were working residents, but fell outside of the scope of regular financial support. These families have been able to sustain themselves with their jobs, but not quite enough to keep up.

Mr. Daniels said that Ms. Estrella has been keeping a database to make sure that the families that truly do need assistance receive the funding. Discussion followed.

Mr. Daniels thanked the Committee and noted that they had received $3 million and this was the last installment of that funding. He said that Council Members Ayers and Revolus had continually requested that the administration get input from the community. There are still many families that have yet to bounce back and this will help them.

ACTION ITEMS

Health Department:

1a. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all documents necessary to apply for and accept public health workforce development and infrastructure grant funds from the Connecticut Department of Public Health in the amount of $300,385 for the period October 1, 2023 through November 30, 2027.

1b. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary to implement the public

health workforce development and infrastructure grant activities for the period October 1, 2023 through November 30, 2027.

** **MS. SMYTH MOVED THAT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS BE FORWARDED TO THE COMMON COUNCIL**:

1A. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE AMOUNT OF $300,385 FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2023 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2027.

1B. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2023 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2027.

Ms. D'Amore it was an exciting event for the Department. This will allow the Department to expand the workforce and add training.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Community Services:

1**. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary with the Alliance for Community Empowerment, Inc. located at 108 Main Street, Norwalk, CT 06851 Inc. and Person to Person, Inc. located at 76 South Main Street, Norwalk CT 06854 to administer the Community Services Department ARPA COVID-19 Rent Relief program for Norwalk residents with each organization receiving $250,000 for a total amount of $500,000.00 Account # 132010-5796-ACS0**1

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM**:

1**. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY WITH THE ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, INC. LOCATED AT 108 MAIN STREET, NORWALK, CT 06851 INC. AND PERSON TO PERSON, INC. LOCATED AT 76 SOUTH MAIN STREET, NORWALK CT 06854 TO ADMINISTER THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT ARPA COVID-19 RENT RELIEF PROGRAM FOR NORWALK**

RESIDENTS WITH EACH ORGANIZATION RECEIVING $250,000 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF $500,000.00 ACCOUNT # 132010-5796-ACS01

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2023. Mr. Heuvelman said that the next meeting will be a Special Meeting because it will be scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services