

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 16, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: David Heuvelman, Chair; Heidi Alterman (7:16 pm); Nicol Ayers;
Bryan Meek; Diana Revolus (7:10 pm); Barbara Smyth

STAFF: Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services;
Health Dept.: Deanna D'Amore, Director; Darleen Hoffler, Supervisor
Clinical Services; Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist;
Ana Vivian Estrella, HS Director

OTHERS: Margaret Watt, Norwalk Partnership Prevention Director;
Mary Oyster, Early Childhood Education

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Heuvelman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. There was a quorum present.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Heuvelman acknowledged those present as above noted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted. Speakers are Norwalk residents unless otherwise noted.

Chief Daniels stated there was one member of the public that had emailed to comment.

Ms. Diane Lauricella, 21 Little Fox Lane, Norwalk spoke in support of the important work that the Committee is doing and noted her gratitude for all that the Health Department does. She asked for a response to emails to the Director of the Health Dept. on two issues to be addressed, one is turf fields in particular at Broad River. She has asked for several years for further research on the negative impacts of replacing grass field with artificial turf materials.

She reiterated comments from the last meeting on COVID Messaging and her ongoing disappointment that there is not a robust, creative method to help the public understand how to reduce the spread of COVID. She noted there should be messaging that there are contagious

variants and there are tools the City has that are not being used. She added that despite national warnings for indoor masking, there are no signs at ShopRite or Stop & Shop on wearing masks.

There were no other public comments. Public Participation was closed at 7:05 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 19, 2023

The following corrections were requested to the minutes:

‘Dr.’ Weeks should be ‘Mr.’ Weeks throughout the minutes. Page 3, second to last sentence: new DEAI Chief should be DEI. Page 3, last paragraph, add ‘asked’ after Mr. Weeks. On page 5, motion passed with one vote in opposition should be Opposed Ms. Alterman not Ms. Ayers.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED WITH CORRECTIONS NOTED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Discussion

Updates from the Health Department

• Deanna D’Amore, Health Director

Ms. D’Amore reported that the Health Department is in a much better place than three years ago with surveillance due in part to programs and prevention, and Brian will provide that update with good news to share.

New FDA Codes

The new FDA code is being transitioned for use by Food Inspectors, and State Health Dept. codes are in place with establishments. In the past there was a point program, but this is a good educational opportunity for making changes and complying with new regulations on safe handling practices.

Community Health Centers

The Department is working hard with programs in Public Schools and Health Centers with scheduling physicals and childhood vaccination appointments. It is important to note that information programs are starting to have greater community participation.

Strategic Scholars Program

The Department was selected back in 2020, but due to COVID was unable to fully take advantage of this program that includes resource management, permits, contracts, access to training and cost educational programs. This will increase the effectiveness with the department initiatives and she thanked the staff for participation.

Mr. Heuvelman noted an attendance update: Diana Revolus 7:10 p.m.– Heidi Alterman 7:16 p.m.

• **Brian Weeks, Epidemiologist**

Mr. Weeks provided his report and gave an update on COVID-19 Data Hub. Charts were presented on Community level data and the low-medium-high indicators that determine prevention measures and recommended community outreach for COVID and other respiratory diseases. He covered the variant data tracker along with CT influenza updates, noting recommended resources for protection, that peak respiratory and allergy season exists.

Updates from the Chief of Community Services, Lamond Daniels

Chief Daniels gave an overview federal funding on programs to address COVID impacts and \$2 million grant funds were awarded for allocation to various programs on housing, jobs, and health and wellness and youth services. The next item is a presentation by Margaret Watt, and the this Committee's approval is to move to the contract phase from allocated grant funding into the Partnership for Common Council approval. He acknowledged Ana Vivian Estrella, Human Services Director for her support and the rest of the team in identifying the needs to bring these initiatives to implementation.

Presentation: Margaret Watt, Prevention Director-Positive Directions

Ms. Watt introduced The Norwalk Partnership as a coalition of organizations from the City, schools, non-profits, businesses, parents and teens that work together to prevent substance abuse, promote mental wellness in Norwalk youth and young adults. She provided a power point presentation and highlighted the goals and objectives for creating supports, resources, advocacy for responsible programs on teen outreach and participation in the initiatives. She acknowledged the work and efforts by educators including Dr. Martinez, Norwalk Public Schools; NPS Family Center, NPS Communications; Tory Sullivan, Brien McMahon Chair of Health and Physical Education; Norwalk Acts, Triangle Community Center, Norwalk Strong, parents and partners.

Ms. Watt listed the programs scheduled and explained that use of the funds are direct event costs, adult supervision, signage, administrative costs, and transportation provided by Wheels 2U. She noted that results metrics are tracked with evaluations on cohort data of event participation, businesses, teen feedback.

Mr. Heuvelman asked to defer discussion and comments until the action item in the agenda. It was noted that presentations are posted on the Community Services site and available upon request to Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if there were questions for clarification, and asked when the next survey is scheduled. Ms. Watt replied that every two years, the initial was 2018, then Nov. 2020 which was postponed due to COVID, then June 2021, 2023.

Action Items

Health Department

1. Authorize the Mayor, Harry w. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary to extend the student practicum/internship agreement between the City of Norwalk Health Department and the University of Bridgeport.

Ms. D'Amore explained this item is an extension of past internship programs with Sacred Heart and Fairfield Universities that are invaluable with Nursing and Health Care education.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED THE ITEM**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE STUDENT PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORWALK HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2a. Authorize the Mayor, Harry w. Rilling, to execute any and all documents necessary to apply for and accept grant funds from Optimus Health Care Inc. in the amount of \$300,117 per year for contract period October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2027 for the women, infants, and children (WIC) program.

2b. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments or amendments as may be necessary to implement the WIC Program for the period October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2027.

Ms. Darlene Hoffler, Supervisor of Clinical Services gave an overview of the WIC program that provides nutrition to pregnant and post-partum women and children birth to age five, and has been in place for more than forty years. WIC services approx. 1,100 participants with counseling and

health services and partners with community resources to including Optimus and others in the state to provide services.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FROM OPTIMUS HEALTH CARE INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$300,117 PER YEAR FOR CONTRACT PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2022 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2027 FOR THE WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM.

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE WIC PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2022 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2027.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Community Services Department

Ms. Revolus recused herself from the item due to a conflict with her involvement with the Partnership, and left the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

1. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary with The Norwalk Partnership – Positive Directions to serve as Fiduciary, to support Norwalk Teen Nights Out in the amount of \$50,000.00 total during the period of April 1, 2023, to August 30, 2023. ARPA Acct # 132010-5796 ACS02.

Chief Daniels added this is an important commitment to partner with many organizations as a coalition of community and City organizations to promote these vital youth programs.

There was discussion, and comments were fielded by Ms. Watt.

Ms. Ayers asked about chaperones and suggested to follow the same protocols as Norwalk Public School volunteers. She asked to diversify activities to attract the broad spectrum of youth and interests to reach those that are not being engaged.

Ms. Watt spoke on efforts to expand outreach to those that are disconnected and to provide programs that attract a broad base of youth participation. Ms. Ayers added to reach out to Parent PTOs and School Governance Councils as a resource to expand program offerings. NPS Communications will send flyers and publicize and promote the programs.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if school counselors are included, and Ms. Watt replied that Dr. Martinez is included in the Planning Committee to help target groups and promote the programs.

Ms. Smyth spoke in support of the efforts of this Partnership and answers the need for youth programs to fill the gap of things that youth offerings and social activities that are so important to reach those unengaged.

Chief Daniels acknowledged AnaVivien for her efforts on working with Margaret to bring these programs to fruition.

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED THE ITEM.**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY WITH THE NORWALK PARTNERSHIP – POSITIVE DIRECTIONS TO SERVE AS FIDUCIARY, TO SUPPORT NORWALK TEEN NIGHTS OUT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000.00 TOTAL DURING THE PERIOD OF APRIL 1, 2023, TO AUGUST 30, 2023. ARPA ACCT # 132010-5796 ACS02.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (D. Revelus recusal as noted)**

Ms. Revolus returned to the meeting at 7:45 p.m

2. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Riling to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary to extend the After School Partnership Extension Agreement with the Norwalk Housing Authority beginning July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026.

Ms. Mary Oyster, Early Childhood Education, provided background details of the program that back in 2021 Norwalk Housing Authority were required licensing of after-school programs. This resulted in the City moving programs to the South Norwalk Community Center. King Kennedy is still in operation and 98 South Main is no longer. As a result, this is an extension through 2026 to develop another plan for those children that attend this site. Capacity is for only 20 children, and cost needed to be licensed is prohibitive until another plan is in place. Comments and questions were fielded from the Committee.

Mr. Meek asked to keep this in line with sound financial practice, to not anything new to local budget, he will be voting no until Committees can work collaboratively with consistency.

Chief Daniels replied that this not requesting additional funding, only an extension in timing. Mr. Meek clarified that he was looking at the wrong item.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILING TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXTEND THE AFTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP EXTENSION AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK HOUSING AUTHORITY BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary with Emily Melnick Consulting, LLC to perform Strategic Planning Consulting Services to Norwalk Community Services Department in the amount of \$10,000.00 total. Family Navigator Grant Account # 352011-5258 \$ 8,437.50 & Fair Rent Account #011000-5272 \$ 1,562.50.

Chief Daniels noted the significant investment in the efficiency study and as a result the Consultant recommended critical improvements for departments to function collaboratively for operational and restructures for an oversight of leadership and improvements. He outlined this is a next step from the study and family navigation grant to be used for bringing Emily Melnick on board. He reiterated that is grant funded with only \$1,500 supplemental funding by the City.

**** MS. AYERS MOVED THE ITEM.**

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS, DOCUMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, OR AMENDMENTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY WITH EMILY MELNICK CONSULTING, LLC TO PERFORM STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTING SERVICES TO NORWALK COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000.00 TOTAL. FAMILY NAVIGATOR GRANT ACCOUNT # 352011-5258 \$ 8,437.50 & FAIR RENT ACCOUNT #011000-5272 \$ 1,562.50.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE VOTES IN FAVOR (ALTERMAN, AYERS, HEUVELMAN, SMYTH, REVOLUS), ONE OPPOSED (MEEK).**

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2023

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

M. Knox

Telesco Secretarial Services