

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Nicol Ayers, Chair; Heather Dunn, Melissa Murray, Barbara Smyth, Douglas Sutton, Dajuan Wiggins.

STAFF: Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services

OTHERS: Diane Lauricella

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Council Member Ayers called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. She then called the roll. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• **January 17, 2024**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SMYTH MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 17, 2024 MEETING.**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1, under **ATTENDANCE**: please change “Barbara Smith” to “Barbara Smyth”.

Page 1, under **ATTENDANCE**: please change “Melissa Murry” to “Melissa Murray”

Page 3, paragraph 3, line 1, please change the following from:

“Ms. Murphy had questions” to “Ms. Murray had questions”

Page 4, **MOTION**: please change the following from:

**** BARBARA SMITH MOVED TO APPROVE ITEMS HEALTH
DEPARTMENT 1A AND 1B.**

**** MELISSA MURRY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

To:

**** MS. SMYTH MOVED TO APPROVE ITEMS HEALTH
DEPARTMENT 1A AND 1B.**

**** MS. MURRAY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 17, 2024 MEETING AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Diane Lauricella greeted the Committee and said that she resides on Little Fox Lane. She said for the record, she would like to speak to the item regarding the Operating Budget. She said that she could not find a copy of the Operating Budget online during the last week. It is highly unusual that the Finance Committee has not provided the public with access to the Operating Budget. She has followed the budget for the last 20 plus years.

She said that it would be important for the Health Department Director and the staff to have access to environmental health experts. There is an extensive list of environmental consulting firms that the City has, which the Health Department should be able to call upon. She noted that in her professional opinion, the Health Department should be able to call them in reference to drinking water, because there were issues with the drinking water because of manmade chemicals in the public water supply. It would be good for Ms. D'Amore to have access to other resources outside of the Water Departments. She needs funding for outside experts on the drinking water and the brownfields which still exist in Norwalk.

She asked that the Mayor be requested to have the Operating Budget placed on the website for the public to review.

There were no one else who wished to address the Committee at this time.

Mr. Daniels joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

DISCUSSION

a. Review of Community Services Department FY 2024-25 Recommended Operating Budget

Mr. Daniels said that he was going to provide an overview of the Community Services Operating Budget. He said that he would be displaying the key items from the budget but did have the full spreadsheet available.

He displayed a slide listing the Early Childhood Council budget request, the Fair Rent budget request and the Human Service Department budget request. There are no significant increases in these three departments. Any significant increases were due to contractual changes.

The Norwalk Youth Services and the Norwalk Health Department were the next two budget requests displayed. Any significant increases were due to contractual changes.

The Norwalk Public Library and Contractual Grants and Line Items were the next departments reviewed. Some of the items included in the Grants were Head Start, Mayor's Summer Youth Program, the Senior Center and Homeless Prevention. Many of these programs have been long standing programs that the City has supported for many years.

The Mayor has requested that the departments present lean budgets, so there have not been many significant increases. The staff member then gave a brief overview of the line items that showed increases.

Council Member Smyth said that when the Council received the budget, Council Member McMurrer had requested a list of positions that were not funded. Mr. Daniels said that the Library positions and other ones in the Community service budget were on hold.

Council Member Smyth asked about the Family Navigators program, which she said was an extraordinary program for the residents. Mr. Daniels said the budget process was underway and they were identifying the best way to support the positions. He noted that the program had been grant funded for the past three years and that over time, the City was pleased with services. He said that he hoped to maintain the program in the future.

Council Member Smyth said that there would be a meeting the following evening about various programs and stated that she hoped the funding would be made available for Mr. Daniel's programs.

Council Member Wiggins asked about funding that was not included in the budget. Mr. Daniels explained that he had been in a meeting earlier in the day and there will be some changes in the budget in the coming days, which he believes will include the funding.

Council Member Murray said that the Health Department budget should be larger than it is. She said that Mr. Daniels inspires her when she sees his passion in various meetings. There will be a Council vote tomorrow.

Council Member Ayers said that she had spoken with Mr. Daniels earlier because it was very important for the Committee to understand the position of the department. She added that she had stated publicly that this department was not funded correctly. She encouraged those on the Finance Committee to understand the full scope of the Department and do their due diligence before the Finance Committee meeting the following evening.

Council Member Wiggins said the information would be presented at the Finance Committee, but wished to know if it would simply be a line item or would have a full presentation. Council Member Ayers said it would be presented on a report and the Council Members would be able to see the fluctuations in the columns, but they would not see the line item or the financial break out. This is why she felt it was important for this meeting.

Mr. Daniels thanked the Committee for their support and said that he did not get everything he wanted but had been working to implement whatever he could.

ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 2024

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MURRAY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLy.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services