

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Nicole Ayers; Chair, Greg Burnett, Doug Sutton, Barbara Smith,
Melissa Murry, Heather Dunn, Dajuan Wiggins, Sr.

STAFF: Lamond Daniels; Chief of Community Services

OTHER: AnaVivian; Human Services Director, Ligia Masilamani; FCA
Diirector, Theresa Argondezzi; Asst. Director of Health, Nora
Niedzielski-Eichner, Jalin T. Sead, Sr., Brian Weeks; Program
Diirector of Epidemiology and Formatics. (7:10 p.m.),
Novelette Peterkin; CEO, Carver Foundation (7:20 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER/Role CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:02. Ms. Ayers acknowledged those in attendance as noted above.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Diane Lauricella discussed elements of action item 1a. She hoped it would include a more robust and creative outreach to remind people how to reduce their chances of catching COVID, RSV, and influenza. She said she repeatedly suggested informative posters for several years to no avail. Ms. Lauricella asked if money would be funding for free COVID tests, KN-95 and N-95 masks, posters in both English and Spanish, and engaging and training citizen ambassadors.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE
SEPTEMBER, 21 2023 MEETING.
** MS. DUNN SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR YEAS, 1 NAY AND TWO
ABSTENTIONS (MELISSA MURRY, DUJUAN WIGGINS, SR.)**

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Ms. Argondezzi joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Daniels presented a series of slides describing the Community Services Department. He explained that several departments were combined to create. He showed a slide depicting the departments leadership team. He presented the following:

- The department's vision of a community where all residents have knowledge of and access too the programs and resources so they can reach their full potential.
- The departments mission to increase and sustain the social well-being and health of all Norwalk residents.
- The Service Delivery Model explaining how various services are funded and delivered.
- The Community Services Organization Chart
- The Non-Profit Swing Initiative, a collaboration between the Community Service Department and non-profit organizations to provide programs, services and, a resource hub.

Novelette Peterkin joined the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Ms. Argonezzi presented a series of slides describing the background and services of the Health Department. She presented the following:

- The departments vision of residents thriving in a vibrant community and their mission to prevent and control the spread of disease and promote a healthy environment.
- The work chart outlining the different divisions and where the funding for each comes from.

Mr. Daniels interjected that the council had to authorize the mayor ability to deal with contracts and accept grants. He also stated much of their financing is through grants that have to go through the common council to accept the funding.

- The Board of Health, highlighting the members and the role the Board of Health plays in the overall scheme.
- Strategic Priorities and Goals
- Programs and Services
 - Environmental health issues
 - Licensing and inspection
 - Community health strategy and education
 - Clinical services
 - Epidemiology
 - Public health emergency preparedness
- Office of the Director and Administration and Operations

- Finance accounting and Budget
- Grant coordination
- Operations and admin support
- Quality improvement
- Work force Development
- Policy and public health law
- Performance improvement

Mr. Weeks presented a series of slides showing the nation and state's current COVID wave. He provided a list of practices employed to avoid contracting COVID, RSV, and influenza. He talked about isolation protocols, vaccinations, masking, and self-testing. He also discussed the monitoring of wastewater for the virus that causes COVID. He stated it was an indicator of what's coming relative to hospitalizations. He discussed the new variant of omicron accounting for 66% of the new cases nationally. Mr. Weeks produced a slide showing the statistics for Connecticut.

Ms. Estrella presented a series of slides outlining the role of human services.

- The Community Resource Hub to help residents in need find support services and resources.
- Early Childhood Office to provide resource info for the youngest residents.
- Fair Rent Office for information on landlord tenant issues.
- The ADA Transition office making city facilities and programs as accessible as possible for everyone.
- Youth Services Office providing resources and opportunities for the cities youth.
- Additional Department Roles
 - Municipal services for the elderly – Senior services contract – FCA
 - Mini Grants
 - Swing Space Calendar – The Workplace, CIRI, Urban League of Southern Connecticut

Ms. Murphy had questions about a group called the Family Center that seemed similar to the Human Services Hub and asked and asked under what situations she should make recommendations. Ms. Estralla clarified by explained the difference between the two entities..

ACTION ITEMS

Health Department

- 1a. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all documents necessary to apply for and accept funds from the Connecticut Department of Public Health in the amount of \$495,935.38, for the period beginning March 1, 2022 through

March 31, 2026
prevention of COVID-19.

for the enhanced detection, response, surveillance and

1b. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary to implement enhanced detection, response, surveillance and prevention of COVID-19 activities for the period March 1, 2022 through March 31, 2026.

Ms. Ayers combined the above items because they coincide with each other. Ms. Argondezzi provided context and explained the various elements of both items.

Mr. Burnett referenced the statement made during public comments about fund allocation for masks and test kits. Ms. Argondezzi said that there were plans to purchase at-home test kits. She was uncertain if there was a for the purchase of masks but would take it to the team to see if it was an allowable expense. She also stated there were other funding streams they could look into for outreach and education.

Mr. Daniels asked about the distribution of test kits they had already received from the state. Ms. Argondezzi stated about 3500 of the 4000 that allocated had been distributed thus far.

**** BARBARA SMITH MOVED TO APPROVE ITEMS HEALTH
DEPARTMENT 1A AND 1B.
** MELISSA MURRY SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Community Services

- a. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary with Carver Foundation, Inc. to provide financial assistance for low-income families whose elementary school-aged children attend Norwalk Public Schools in the amount of \$500,000. ARPA Account No.

132010 5796 ACS04

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE ITEM COMMUNITY SERVICES
1A.
** MR. SUTTON SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Daniels discussed the scholarship program provided by Carver. Ms. Peterkin described the various Carver programs, costs, and the number of students currently part of those programs. She requested \$500,000 to cover rising costs.

Mr. Wiggins had questions about the organizational process for receiving grants. Mr. Daniels described the various methods as they pertain to the programs. Ms. Peterkin described the full extent of Carver's participation in the before and after-school programs.

Mr. Burnett had questions about the sustainability plan once the one-time grant expires. Ms. Peterkin stated they were going after other funding to help families. Mr. Wiggins was concerned about what happens to students when the grant funding runs out. Ms. Peterkin explained that no one would be turned away. The funding subsidizes those who can't afford paying the full amount for the programs.

Ms. Dunn left the meeting at 8:36

Ms. Ayers mentioned that many children in need were from the ALICE population. She stated there was more information than could be addressed at the meeting. They needed to continue to educate themselves and continue the conversation about what the population looks like and needs. Mr. Wiggins commented on the need to get the city of Norwalk to be a partner.

- b. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments to reappoint Family Children's Agency, Inc. as the Municipal Agent for the Elderly for the period July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027

A discussion followed. Mr. Daniels asked the council for approval to reapprove FCA for a three-year contract. Ms. Masilimani discussed the FCA and its role as the municipal agent of the elderly.

Mr. Burnett questioned if there was a dollar amount associated with the authorization. He stated that a dollar amount should be approved. Mr. Burnett suggested a discussion with legal. It was considered to approve the three-year contract with a fixed sum per year and provisions for COLA increases. Ms. Ayers asked if they could first reappoint the FCA and table any discussions about finances. Mr. Burnett recommended tabling the item until there is a discussion with legal.

**** MR. BURTON MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM UNTIL THERE WAS A DISCUSSION WITH THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- c. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all agreements, documents, instruments, or amendments as may be necessary with the Local Prevention Council in the amount of \$20,000.00 to the fiduciary Positive Directions, 90 Post Rd W, Westport, CT 06880 c/o The Norwalk Partnership.

Ms. Estrella explained the role of the Prevention Council, aka Positive Direction. Mr. and Ms. Estrella responded to Mr. Wiggins by explaining exactly how the financing worked. Mr. Wiggins wanted assurances that the money would be exclusively Norwalk funds. Ms. Estrella described how funds were acquired and used.

Mr. Burnett asked where the funds were coming from. Mr. Daniels stated that the money was already there. Mr. Burnett requested the item account number before sending it to the full council.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES 1C.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04

Respectfully submitted.
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services