

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003

Present: Ald. Johnson (Chair) Ald. Merrill, Parker, Coletti, Sangiolo, Lipsitt, Fischman, Gentile

Also Present: Fred Guzzi (Veterans' Agent) Beverley Stachowicz (Human Services Director)

#175-03 KATHLEEN MCCARTHY, 11 Washington Street, Newton re-appointed to the BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSION for a term of office to expire June, 2009. (60-day Board action date 06-11-03)

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0 (Gentile & Lipsitt not voting)

NOTE: Kathleen McCarthy and Fred Guzzi were present for discussion of this item. Ms. McCarthy said she has been a Newton resident for 23 years and has four children who have attended Newton schools. She has had a private law practice for the past 23 years as well as being active in Little League, PTA, and on the Board of two community theatre groups. Ms. McCarthy has provided free legal assistance to people who have been victims of domestic violence. Her law practice centers on real estate and probate. She is completing her sixth year with the Board of License Commission. She feels she is able to bring some legal knowledge as well as practical knowledge to the Commission. She is involved in making sure there are adequate controls on events to be sure there is not any underage drinking. Mr. Guzzi stated that Ms. McCarthy brings a good balance to the Board.

Martina Jackson submitted a letter of recommendation to the Committee in support of Ms. McCarthy's reappointment. Ald. Merrill observed that that Ms. McCarthy has been very helpful to the License Commission.

A motion to move approval was made by Ald. Merrill and the Committee voted in favor of her appointment 6-0.

HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET

ACTION: HELD 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: Ms. Stachowicz appeared before the Committee two weeks ago and was asked to come back with more information regarding issues that were raised by the aldermen. She noted that the major area that was planned for restructure would be the delivery of the Youth Outreach Counseling

Services. It is proposed to provide these services by going to an outside contractor. Ms. Stachowicz felt it would be cost effective and the savings would be close to \$100,000 and the program would be enhanced, as there would be more services provided by a contractor. There would be 24-hour services, 7 days a week, as well as emergency coverage. Many of the clients were referred to Riverside, some to a private psychiatrist, and some to guidance counselors. In the opinion of the counselors and Ms Stachowics, the clients have been terminated very appropriately. An amendment has been added to our present contract with Riverside Mental Health that will focus on providing youth services if needed.

Scott Boch, Executive Director and President of Riverside Mental Health and Retardation Center, and Jim McCaulley, Director of the Newton outpatient Department were present. Mr. Boch explained they had six sites in Newton, three residential and three offer various services for the community. Outpatient therapy is provided as well as available day programs. There is support for people getting back to work, providing services to people with mental illness, mental retardation, substance abuse issues, and head injuries from accidents, and early intervention with babies. From his vantage point, this relationship with Beverley Stachowicz and Mike Rourke is an excellent one. There will be a real continuum of care, and no gaps to access of service. Presently the City buys in home intensive services which we call alternative youth services. The City also buys some outpatient therapy, primarily for adults. The outreach staff would meet with kids as needed on an informal basis and refer to emergency services if needed. The concept would be if a child were referred for therapy; specialized staff would be able to provide those services and an assessment would be made. There would be one meeting with a therapist where it would be made sure that they were okay. If they would want to continue in therapy, discussions would be scheduled with parents and if there was no insurance, the City is kind enough to say we want to pay for that and if the family has insurance, it would be used.

Chairman Johnson said that it had been her understanding from Jana Sax that most of the young people in the program do not have insurance. Ms. Stachowics responded that many do have insurance.

There was discussion about what is included in the Outreach Program includes versus therapy. The Outreach person would have the time to reach out to the student, reach out to the people involved with the student and find out what is going on.

Ald. Parker felt there is a misunderstanding in the realignment of this department's services in the sense that Newton does not seem to have any shortage in mental health services. He sees this as a loss rather than a

gain. Mr. Bock said they would work with the city by providing the very similar outreach services that were being provided. Some clinical staff will be placed at Brigham House in Newton Highlands.

Ald. Parker felt kids would be more comfortable with the outreach worker.

Mr. Boch feels with a little money, the City will get a great deal of services. Ms. Stachowics said that this is serious issues we are dealing with, but the informal discussions still takes place, but there has been an evolution to direct, ongoing serious therapy where parental permission is needed. Chairman Johnson suggested that a few communities be contacted to see how services are going. Ms. Stachowics had concerns regarding how the program was working in the past. Ald. Coletti stated he would be very comfortable with this Riverside program.

Ald. Parker said that we are talking about tight fiscal times and the elimination of a service. He felt we were not talking about doing something better or cheaper, but talking about not doing something we had not done in the past. From his viewpoint, it is a mistake for \$100,000 a year to eliminate a program that has helped kids in our community in a very substantive way. Ald. Merrill said at the last meeting he expressed strong opposition to this change. Since then, he feels this change to Riverside would allow a larger field of expertise available than in the past. Ald. Fischman said at the first meeting regarding this issue, it was not apparent that there was justification, but after hearing these discussions, it has become clear why these changes are needed.

Ms. Stachowicz said there is an addition of \$216,000 under senior transportation. The senior transportation is coming back to the Department of Human Services. Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Pooler to report where the money that in the past came in for Nexus is now being used.

Administrative costs for the running of the Child Care Commission are paid for by the Human Services Department. Ald. Sangiolo questioned why two employees were needed and the response was that employees were needed for fund raising, scholarships, coordinating after school programs, as well as information resources for those in need of childcare. Chairman Johnson has observed that a big reason parents come to the Child Care Commission is if there are financial problems and are unable to pay for day care as well as some money going for children to be able to go to camp. Chairman Johnson noted the Committee would like to see more information on this item.

Ald. Sangiolo moved to hold Human Services Budget for further information. The Committee voted to hold 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

CITY CLERK/CLERK OF THE BOARD

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: See Programs and Services Report dated May 1, 2003.

VETERANS/LICENSING

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: See Programs and Service Report dated May 1, 2003

SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

ACTION: APPROVED 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: See Programs and Services Report dated May 1, 2003.

#130-02 ALD. JOHNSON requesting discussion with the Executive Department regarding the establishment of a consistent process for the submission of appointments/reappointments to Boards and Commissions to Board of Aldermen for approval.

ACTION: HELD 7-0

#466-02(2) PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE requesting Monthly progress reports from the NNHS Renovation Task Force.

ACTION: NAN 7-0 (Ald. Gentile not voting)

NOTE: Ald. Lipsitt reported that the Task Force concluded deliberations and recommended approximately 160,000 sq. ft. addition, big enough to hold all of the science classrooms, all of Tech Ed, and essentially 3/4 of the other classrooms as an addition and demolish the classroom portion of the existing building leaving the auditoriums, cafeteria, sports complex, pool, and library of the existing structure. It was broadly discussed and not a universal choice. Ald. Coletti preferred spending 39 million dollars and doing the work when the kids were not in school. A few people preferred a smaller addition. There were about 6 people who preferred a new school, including Ald. Gentile. The Task Force worked on an executive summary, which should be ready shortly. Ald. Lipsitt moved no action necessary 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Johnson, Chair