HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Monday, December 1, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present:  Alderman Fiske, Alderman Braithwaite, Alderman Holmes, Alderman Tendam, Alderman Grover, Alderman Burrus

Members Absent:  None

Staff Present:  Wally Bobkiewicz, Commander James Pritchett, Henry Ford, Jennifer Lasik, and Melissa Parker

Presiding Member:  Alderman Burrus

I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Alderman Burrus called the meeting to order at 7:50pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2014
Alderman Grover moved approval, Alderman Holmes seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved 6-0.

Citizen Comments

HH 1  Norah Diedrich, Executive Director of the Evanston Arts Center stated that the demolition has begun and renovation should start soon and end by May of 2015. She requests that the City waive the permit fees, help with trash and dumpsters, assist with moving cost, and change the move out date from January 2015 to May 2015. She stated that this final request is critical as the spring session ends in May and the summer session starts in June. She is confident that the relocation will help surrounding businesses. She believes the Arts Center will be an economic driver and the money spent on permit fees, moving and dumpsters could better be used for programs, classrooms and equipment that would serve the community.

HH 1  Junad Rizki spoke in support of money going to the Evanston Arts Center. He went on to talk about his thoughts for the Harley Clarke building. He believes that the building should stay in the public domain. He further discussed other Evanston properties.

HH 1  Barbara Janes stated that she was speaking as a member of the Evanston Parks and Lakefront Alliance. Her goal is to remind everyone that when the City acquired Lighthouse Landing Park it was for the land and the beach and not primarily for the building. The land has the recreational value and no matter what happens it is imperative that the whole area remain in the public domain.
Madelyn Ducree requested that the City do something to recognize the demonstrations going on throughout the community regarding the Ferguson decision.

III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

   HH 1 Harley Clarke Mansion Update and Memorandum of Understanding for Moving Assistance for the Evanston Arts Center
   Alderman Burrus explained that there were three items and the first is a request to extend the lease from January 31, 2015 to May 31, 2015 for the Evanston Arts Center.

   Ald. Grover asked if IDNR would want to occupy the building before then. The timeframe would take them beyond that.

   Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that IDNR doesn’t want to occupy the building until the summer and they are not looking to move in during that timeframe.

   Ald. Grover moved extension of the lease until the end of May, 2015; Ald. Tendam seconded. A voice vote was taken and that portion was approved 6-0.

   Ald. Burrus stated that the next request is to waive costs associated with the move; she listed each fee.

   Alderman Holmes requested a point of special privilege, to speak about providing moving assistance. She spoke in favor of helping with the assistance requesting. She moved to provide the organization $5,000 for moving costs; Ald. Braithwaite seconded. A voice vote was taken and the request was approved 6-0.

   Ald. Holmes addressed the third item; she didn’t think subsidizing trash removal was something that the City could support since dumpsters and trash removal are provided by a private vendor.

   Alderman Grover asked for Mr. Bobkiewicz’s opinion.

   Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that the City does have the ability to provide trash bins, but it isn’t something that the City does regularly. The City is capable of providing dumpsters and providing staff to do the work. It is up to the Committee to authorize providing that support for the Evanston Arts Center.

   Alderman Holmes voiced concern that if the services and resources were provided to one organization then that might mean the City was responsible for providing similar resources and services to all organizations that request them.

   Alderman Tendam asked how the service would get absorbed in the budget.

   Mr. Bobkiewicz replied that City staff would provide bins and be responsible for collecting them. He went on to state that the work could be handled during regular business hours and it wouldn’t be a large expense or difficulty for the City to provide.

   Ald. Tendam stated that he could support providing the services to the organization unless the request was larger or more burdensome.

   Mr. Bobkiewicz stated again that the bins could be retrieved on staff time so he didn’t consider it as a major expense, but to think of the decision as setting precedence for other organizations that may approach the Council for similar services.
Ald. Braithwaite asked Ms. Diedrich if the accumulated trash is beyond normal use.

Ald. Holmes clarified that it is the precedence.

Ald. Braithwaite asked if trash service was already provided.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that this would be above and beyond normal services.

Ms. Diedrich stated that a dumpster is there and it is now full. The organization paid the dumpster permit fee and they need another one by tomorrow or the next day.

Ald. Tendam asked if this is for the old or new building.

Ald. Burrus clarified that the request is for the trash and recycling bins at Harley Clarke.

Ald. Braithwaite asked how much is above and beyond normal use.

Ms. Diedrich stated that her organization needs one more dumpster.

Ald. Grover stated that she thought the dumpster was for normal use and for City owned property; she supports the request. The distinguishing factor is that it is a City owned business.

Ald. Fiske thought that the City should pay also and for the same reason. She stated that paying for new construction is different, but that this is a moving expense.

Ald. Burrus called for a motion.

Ald. Grover moved approval of assistance with trash and recycling at the Harley Clarke mansion to assist with the move from the Harley Clarke mansion, Ald. Braithwaite seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 6-0.

Ald. Burrus directed the Committee to review fees starting with the fire hydrant fee.

Ald. Holmes stated that she was looking at all the fees in regards to other non-profits and believes the assistance is very much needed. She suggested that the City provide some kind of assistance. She isn’t suggesting waiving all fees, but some percentage.

Ald. Grover stated she and Ald. Holmes had been talking and both agreed that there is some precedent for assistance with permit fees for other non-profits to provide assistance with renovations. She thought that it would be helpful information.

Ald. Holmes stated that she called Mark Muenzer and the City Manager to review the issue. She learned through those discussions that some fees were waived for some nonprofits, but not all and she agreed that it would be good to establish some guidelines.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that the last big non-profit construction project was the Evanston History Center and no fees were waived.

Alderman Holmes stated that the organization did not ask for assistance.

Mr. Bobkiewicz requested that the Committee come up with some parameters.
Alderman Fiske asked Mr. Bobkiewicz what the fire alarm sprinkler fee, the water tap fee, and the fire hydrant fee is for.

Mr. Bobkiewicz replied that the fire alarm sprinkler fee is a permit testing fee for testing the work that is done on those systems. The fire hydrant is a connection fee and the water line fee is for a new line.

Ms. Diedrich stated that she was unaware that a fire hydrant was needed but with further discussion with our staff it was necessary.

Ald. Fiske asked if the fire alarm sprinkler fees were triggered because the property is a new construction.

Ms. Diedrich responded that that was the case.

Ald. Tendam asked if the fire alarm sprinkler was an annual fee or if they are all one time fees?

Ms. Diedrich responded that they are all one time fees.

Ald. Tendam stated that he thinks this is Economic Development issue. He stated that the amount was modest, but generous. The money isn’t taxed or revenue, so the City can provide support because it isn’t just handing out money. He stated that he believes this is a very positive precedence.

Ald. Grover stated concerns around the lack of distinct policy for the fee waivers for non-profits and hopes the Committee can review issue to establish procedures. For the fire hydrant fee, she suggested that, since the Central Street/Green Bay area project is under review, she requested that one of the hydrants in that project be a part of the study because the project is related. The building is close enough to the study area to include it.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that when considering policy, a percentage of fees could be waived versus waiving a set amount of actual fees. The building permit is always the bulk of the cost, but the Committee may choose to exclude fees associated with infrastructure like the water line tap fee which may not affect other non-profits. It is the best interest of the Council to think about a percent of the gross number to see what is reasonable. Otherwise it could be difficult to compare projects. Moneys that aren’t spent on City permit fees will go to help the project in other ways so maybe looking at percentages is the way to go.

Ald. Grover pointed out that a waiver may make more sense than a rebate for nonprofits.

Ald. Braithwaite asked what the budget is for this project. He listed several fees and asked how she got those numbers.

Ms. Diedrich replied that she worked with the City Manager on the budget together and they are confirmed by the City. $1.8 million is the total budget to renovate the building.

Ald. Fiske stated that she disagrees with waivers and she pointed out that what makes this project different is that the organization is leaving at the request of the City from a City owned building. She stated that she agreed with Ald. Tendam, however, she stated that this shouldn’t set a precedent for other non-profits that may have more financial resources. What distinguishes this situation is that the City requested that the organization move. She stated that she believes it is worthwhile for the City to bear the cost of $55,000 to help the organization move; but she sees this as a one-time deal unless there are other organizations moving from City buildings.
Ald. Holmes stated that she hears Ald. Fiske’s point, but thinks there are a lot of circumstances with the move and thinks that the City has to be fair. The City needs to be ready to treat everyone the same way and knows that there are other projects coming up. She stated that the City needs a policy in place tonight or at some point in the near future. She further believes it should be based on a percentage and thinks that anything up to 50% is fair. The City should help as much as possible. Her concern is that the building is safe. She is confident that the organization will be successful on Central.

Ald. Grover opened by stating that all know how well the Arts Center is going to fit into this building. It is going to help it achieve its potential for a retail district. The Arts Center will be a catalyst for business. It will bring interesting activity to the area. She agrees that the City should treat all organizations the same and thinks the committee needs more information before reaching a decision. She would like to know what was done in the past and requests that information from staff.

Ald. Fiske asked the City Manager for the number of non-profits in Evanston.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that there were thousands.

Ald. Fiske then asked if City staff could provide more information about the type of support that was given when the Theatre project went on. She mentioned Dave’s Italian Kitchen, any TIFS, Pine Yard and Dominick’s.

Ald. Tendam stated that the amount of money being requested seem reasonable based on what they are investing and their fundraising has been strong. A straight percentage could affect the impact that they can have. The area was underachieving and he wondered how else the City can help since CDBG or TIF funds won’t apply.

Ald. Braithwaite stated that the request is 2 to 2.8% of the total project cost. In the next few months YOU will ask for the same thing. He believes it is wise to set a precedent before the Committee move and take action tonight.

Ald. Burrus stated that it is going to be difficult to make a motion tonight particularly because of the precedent it sets for any items moving forward. Currently, this group is asking for specific items, but requests might be different for another group. Coming to consensus on a percentage seems to make more sense.

Ald. Braithwaite asked if there was time to consider next steps.

Ald. Grover asked if there was urgency for this request.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that the extension of the eviction notice and the trash were the two timeliest items. He offered to issue the permit pending and hold the fees pending in advance of the next Council meeting in January.

Ald. Burrus summarized that the Committee approved items 1, 3 and 4 and would like to hold on item 2.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that the three issues would be moving forward to Council meeting on Monday, December 8, 2014, and then item 2, the issue of the fees would be held in Committee; staff would get more information, and have it for the meeting on January 5, 2015.

Ald. Burrus asked for an update on the discussions with IDNR.
Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that discussions with IDNR have continued with the state of Illinois. The state is requesting to purchase the land and the building. The Council’s direction has not allowed that option which was communicated to IDNR. With the new election, one of the principals is no longer part of the negotiations and a new principal, Todd Main, the new agency Chief of Staff, is now the primary staff member. In a recent conversation it was unclear what the priority would be moving forward with this project. Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that he is asking for direction from the Committee and looking to get something in writing from IDNR. He asks that the Committee consider alternative planning if IDNR is still uncertain at the beginning of the year.

Ald. Grover stated that it would be disappointing if the City couldn’t secure an agreement with IDNR. If this falls through it would be really difficult. She moved to direct the City Manager to request a formal written update from IDNR.

Ald. Fiske seconded and asked if Mr. Main’s position was a political appointment.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that Ms. Tessic, the manager of the program, may not be able to provide an answer and he would recommend that the Committee consider other options if the State is still uncertain. Negotiations may go on for years.

Ald. Grover stated that all will be glad that the Arts Center is occupying the building through May.

Motion approved 6-0.

**HH 2 Cultural Fund Grants Program**

Jennifer Lasik stated that there was a lot of frustration among artists with the complexity of the Cultural Fund Grants application process, the small cap, and the administrative procedure. She convened a working group from all across the arts community of people who received the grant or were familiar with administering grants and the group re-worked the whole program. She is proud of the work done and, according to IT, the group is ready to go live with it this week. There are three categories, capacity, building projects and individual artist projects with the caps going up to $4,000, $4,000 and $2,000 respectively and the application process has been simplified and it will now be available online. She closed by thanking all, especially the members of the working groups.

**HH 3 Human Services Funding Summit Report**

Sandi Johnson stated that she had questions about the recommendations provided to the board; specifically the creation of a minimal funding level for Mental Health board and CDBG grants. She stated that she doesn’t know what that means or what it is for. All of the agencies except one spoke very negatively against the mega grants. And Mental Health Board members voted unanimously against mega grants.

Ald. Burrus requested a definition of mega grant.

Ms. Johnson differed to the City Manager.

Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that he was working with the Mental Health Board to see if there was an opportunity to have larger grants, in excess of $100,000, for a group of organizations to work together toward a common goal. There was discussion that some of the grants were small and some speculation as to whether these small grants were helpful or impactful. The idea of minimum and maximum funding was discussed. He stated that he was unfamiliar with the term “mega grant.”
Ms. Johnson continued by stating that the Mental Health Board will be funding 15 different agencies for specific programs. It appeared that implementing #4 would be usurping the role and duties of the Mental Health Board. In the Mission, section 2 states that the board is responsible for establishing funding, evaluating and assessing effective mental health and other human service programs for Evanston residents. These programs and services shall be accessible and responsive, etc. She stated that there seems to be some confusion with their role as Mental Health board members versus what the City staff will be deciding. The other puzzling comment was on page 10, number 3: potentially transitioning scope from Mental Health to also include a broader public health and human services focus.

Ald. Burrus stated that her recollection was that there was discussion about the name Mental Health Board needing to be more descriptive because the board funds more than mental health services.

Ms. Johnson said that the City Manager brought up last spring, the idea of becoming a Health Board rather than just a Mental Health Board. The board decided it didn’t have the expertise to be a general board, but as far as Human Services it does make sense.

Ald. Grover stated that the scope of the funding that the Mental Health Board provides already includes health and human services. Before deciding to change the name, she suggested that staff check state law, the 708 legislation, because it may be the state legislation from 1969 that gave the Mental Health board its name and status. She also stated that there didn’t seem to be consensus on the minimum and maximum funding levels. She asked that the Committee hold off on that discussion. She also requested that Staff check the state guidelines and implement the recommendations. She moved that the Committee direct staff to implement the other recommendations as to combining two applications into a universal application, holding joint hearings to review applications, appointing and Alderman as a liaison to the Mental Health Board consistent with what the Rules Committee discussed, and then holding a joint meeting among Mental Health, Housing and Community Development and Human Services to discuss funding priorities in January.

Alderman Holmes clarified that no date was set and she seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

V. COMMUNICATION

HH 4 Animal Control Board Report
Mr. Bobkiewicz stated that there was a desire from the Board, the Committee and other Aldermen to keep this issue present and to provide updates. He stated that it is important to decide on a plan for running the Animal Shelter and this topic should remain on the agenda for the next few meetings until it comes to some settling point. The commander and members of the board are here for discussion.

Commander Pickett thanked the members of the board and the volunteers that have transitioned the organization over the past 7 months, from CARE and introduced the four board members present.

Dr. Meredith Rives gave an update; the group created an RFP for a volunteer animal organization and Louis Gergits, Manager of Budgeting and Finance for the City of Evanston, submitted a draft document. That document will be used as the foundation for the RFP. The board took some time to review the document and came back with edits and revisions; the Board is working to come up with the final product which will be completed by the end of the year. Ms. Rives closed by stating
that the shelter continues to run smoothly; animals are being adopted and placed in foster families every week.

Ald. Grover listed Dr. Rives’ accolades and commended Dr. Rives for the commitment and dedication she has shown the animal shelter and the Board.

Ald. Fiske thinks that it is important to tell the committee about the meeting with the Anti-Cruelty Society.

Dr. Rives stated that the Anti-Cruelty Society president, Dr. Robyn Barbiers, responded to the RFQ with a letter of interest, but nothing was done. Dr. Rives decided to contact Anti Cruelty with the RFP to see if there was any continued interest. Dr. Barbiers was invited to come to the shelter and tour the facility. She came with the Vice President of Operations, David Dinger. Both were very impressed and felt that the adoption numbers were terrific and the volunteers were fantastic. They were extremely complimentary. They felt that the potential for them to come in and act as VAO was slim. It was not a model that would mutually benefit the City and the Anti-Cruelty Society. What did come from the meeting was their willingness to support us and form a partnership. They discussed veterinary work and how they could help with adoptions. They will not be responding to any RFP that the board drafts because it is not a business model they want to commit to and they were unable to make any recommendations for other organizations that would be suitable for the needs of the shelter. Dr. Rives closed by stating that the model is unique, the idea of having a municipal shelter that offers open adoption being housed in the same facility as animal control is unique. It will be a challenge to find an organization to step into that model and take it over the way the board intends.

Alderman Fiske stated that one of the problems with the RFQ was that they were uncertain about whether the money that went to CARE would go to the new organization. Her hope is that, with the RFP, the organization will be able to find the right partner. She stated that she is impressed with the committee and the level of involvement and commitment, not only at the meetings but with the animals. She closed by stating that she feels very comfortable that the group is going in the right direction.

Dr. Rives said that it is important to note that after spending as much time as she has in the shelter she has gained a more intimate understanding of what is needed or desired from any VOA that may come in. It has been intrinsic in understanding how to stay true to the mission and work with an organization to accomplish that.

Alissa Kaplan, a volunteer at the shelter, provided an update. She stated that things are going very smoothly. The group completed an improvement of the adoption room as the result of a generous donation. Forty six dogs have been placed in adoption or foster homes and, in comparison, they have doubled the adoption rate of the CARE for an entire year. The group has not euthanized any dogs. Ninety cats have been placed compared to the 120 placed within a whole year. Increasing the re-homing rate has kept the number of animals at the shelter down. Additionally, the group is partnering with local organizations for fundraising events.

**HH 5 Police Complaints**

Ald. Braithwaite asked about a stop on Lyons. He stated concern that she sustained some type of injury and that there seemed to be a difference of opinion about the use of force. The officer wasn’t suspended, but he was given verbal warning.

Commander Davis stated that the Alderman was referring to CR14 0-8. A young lady was stopped for a regular traffic stop but when the officers approached the vehicle it went downhill from there. One of the things officers need to do is to contain the situation. When one officer
was speaking to the lady, the other went to the other side of the car. Once it was determined that a citation would be issued, the young lady tried to get out of the car. Officers can't allow that to happen, they need people to stay in their cars. What was suspicious about this incident is that she tried to exit the passenger side of the door and the officer went to contain her by pushing the door closed. The intent was not to harm her or hurt her. She stated that her hand was hurt. The officers offered medical attention. Her complaint was that the officer shouldn’t have slammed the door. The training was provided because the report was under scrutiny and wasn’t as detailed as it should have been. The training the officer received was in reference to the report he submitted.

Ald. Grover was concerned about the profanity. Plaintiffs are either using profanity or accusing the officers of using profanity. She asked if there was a list of profane words that would trigger disciplinary action if officers used words in public or with the public. She asked if there were any trigger words that would result in disciplinary action.

Commander Davis stated that the officers are trained to be respectful and professional in all encounters. When officers use those words or when it is proven that officers use those words then disciplinary actions are taken.

Ald. Braithwaite questioned the stops where there was no video or audio of the stop captured. He asked if this happens because the cars aren’t in the right place or if it was an issue of technology – not having good equipment at the time.

Commander Davis stated that the intentions are to use the audio and video for anticipated traffic stops. The situations where officers think the stops are routine, sometime turn into a mess. Officers don’t anticipate simple requests turning into more involved situations. The complaints in the report were not anticipated situations. The audio and video should be working. There were no intentions of these traffic stops turning into incidences because they were parking tickets that escalated.

Ald. Holmes asked if the officers used body cameras would those cameras be on at all times.

Commander Davis said that they would be on.

Ald. Holmes asked about a woman who asked for help. According to the report, the officer didn’t take her request seriously.

Commander Davis stated that the officer got bits and pieces of information. There was a basketball game at the Fleetwood Jourdain Center. There were lots of kids out and the encounter with the police lasted several seconds. The officer went to look for the individual in question and went back to talk to the young lady, but the lady had left. The officer didn’t file a report, but the woman went back to the police station. The officer was reprimanded for not reporting the incident appropriately.

Ald. Holmes stated again that body cameras would help.

Ald. Braithwaite stated that, in light of the national news, it is important to highlight positive things. He appreciates the officers and their work with the Animal Shelter. He closed by highlighting the letters of appreciation and thanking the officers for their hard work.

Ald. Holmes mentioned the citizen comments about Ferguson. She noted that the police Chief and many other officers were at the Unitarian church for a touching ceremony. She knows that the City has lots of issues, but community and police relations have improved. The officers are in the community and people know them and that makes a difference. The Chief sets an example of being out in the community and knowing the community and the officers follow it.
VI. ADJOURNMENT


Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Wingader
Administrative Secretary