HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Monday, March 3, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Wally Bobkiewicz, Chief Richard Eddington, Grant Farrar, Jennifer Lasik, Joseph McRae, Melissa Parker

Others Present: Alderman Rainey

Presiding Member: Alderman Holmes

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
With a quorum present, Madam Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 3, 2014
Alderman Grover moved approval. Alderman Braithwaite seconded. A voice vote was taken to approve the February 3, 2014 minutes and it was approved 6-0.

IV. TOWNSHIP OF EVANSTON

HHT1  Assessor Bonnie Wilson’s Report
No report was presented

HHT2  Update from Acting Township Supervisor
Township Supervisor, Wally Bobkiewicz, gave a brief update on the Township since it had been awhile and introduced Evonda Thomas-Smith, Director of the Health Department and Interim Director of the Township, to present.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that they hired a new Township Case Coordinator, Indira Perkins, to support the services that have recently been provided. She brings an extensive background in social work and case management.

Ms. Thomas-Smith shared that she has been able to build and restore past relationship the YMCA and with Kevin Brown, Youth and Adult Program Manager, to identify clients that were eligible for general and emergency assistance. Through that meeting they received 26 new general assistance clients.

The Township has partnered with the Erie Family Health Center to provide a screening event, come meet a doctor event, and to enroll eligible clients, which is about 80% of their case load into health care benefits through the Affordable Care Act. This service will provide a half a million dollar of savings in medical and pharmaceutical costs. The first round will be held on March 16th at Erie Family Health Center.
Alderman Holmes and Grover each stated that they were happy to see the healthcare that is being provided to the clients and the savings that will occur.

Alderman Holmes asked about the other 20% of the clients, are there circumstances that are affecting them or have the not been through the process yet.

Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that those clients already have a healthcare provider.

**HHT3 Township Monthly Bills**
Alderman Grover moved approval of the Township Monthly Bills. Alderman Braithwaite seconded. A voice vote was taken to approve the Township Monthly Bills and it was approved 6-0.

**V. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**HH1 Review of December and January Police Complaints**
Alderman Grover moved approval. Alderman Tendam seconded. A voice vote was taken to accept the January Police Complaints and it was approved 6-0.

**HH2 Noyes Tenants and Arts Council Joint Recommendation**
Maggie Weiss, Chair of the Noyes Tenants Committee and Lisa Degliantoni, Co-Chair of the Evanston Arts Council presented in response to the request for recommendations for policies and procedures for the Noyes Cultural Arts Center from the Human Services Committee and the City Manager. Ms. Weiss and Ms. Degliantoni provided a more in-depth look at the recommendations that were included in the packet. One of the main points of emphasis was having a City staff person present at the Noyes Center as point of contact for visitors and increased safety.

Alderman Burrus asked if there has been any consideration of the Noyes Tenant Association running the building and buying it.

Ms. Weiss answered that it was considered two years ago prior to the Piven proposal and hasn’t been reconsidered since then.

Alderman Burrus asked if that could be reconsidered and to possibly put in a proposal to buy the building from the City.

Ms. Weiss replied that has not been reconsidered because of the economic feasibility and the insurance of a free standing building.

Alderman Burrus reiterated that the Noyes Tenant Association wants the City to maintain the building and take on the liability of the building while providing a receptionist to help safeguard the artwork in the building that is from the tenants in the building.

Ms. Weiss indicated that they were looking for a part-time staff member in lieu of the three City staff members that were moved out two months ago.

Alderman Burrus suggested that a volunteer play that role.

Ms. Weiss stated that her understanding would be that it would be organized through City staff with volunteers that are already in place.

Alderman Grover said that she thought that although there may not have been 100% buy in from the Arts Council there was a consensus that these are the recommendations to be supported.

Ms. Weiss agreed that there was a majority consensus.

Alderman Tendam asked the City Manager what other buildings does the City owns and operates as recreation centers that there is not any presence of City staff or City security that community members use.

Mr. Bobkiewicz responded that other than the Evanston Arts Center is the only other building which the City does not operate. The other facilities are actively operating programs. He would recommend that
they hold it in the committee because there is a need to operationalize some of these ideas. There has been general support for having a first floor desk so the question would be about having someone there, how often, and by whom.

Alderman Tendam stated that he believed it is important not to look at it as an arts gallery space but as a recreational facility.

Mr. Bobkiewicz replied that the challenges that are still worked on are taking a look at the cultural arts programming to decentralize it so that arts are happening all over the City where typically it has been at Noyes. It is a unique opportunity for arts programming that has not been City staff led.

Alderman Fiske asked if Mr. Bobkiewicz is solely going to look at how to make these recommendations procedurally work. Is staff in general support of the recommendations?

Mr. Bobkiewicz answered yes. The only other issue is the square footage issue and to make it operational so when current and future tenants come they have criteria set.

Alderman Fiske shared that her preference would be to have a physical person there as it can be a difficult building to find your way around. She believes the artists that are paying rent should be protected.

Alderman Holmes stated that whatever is decided needs to be sustainable.

Mr. Bobkiewicz indicated that the City wants to get away from staff members that just sit and that it would be important to make sure that person has more to do. We currently use volunteers to help at the front desk of the Civic Center to help point people in the right direction.

Alderman Burrus asked if there are any other buildings that are primarily rented space that the City is not holding activities other than Noyes.

Mr. Bobkiewicz replied that if you discount the Harley Clarke Mansion the answer is no.

Alderman Burrus also asked what activities are being run at Noyes by City staff.

Joe McCrae, the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Deputy City Manager, responded that some of the arts camps are conducted in there during the summer and the use of Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre.

Alderman Burrus then asked if the gallery space in the hallways is run by the Tenants Association or the Arts Council and is that space rented as well.

Ms. Degliantoni answered it is collaboratively from both and the hallway space is not rented.

Alderman Burrus asked if the artwork is part of the gallery, what would be the City’s liability.

Ms. Weiss replied that any artist signs a form that indicates that the City of Evanston will be liable.

Alderman Burrus indicated that she has some concerns around this as we are taking on a lot of liability without being compensated for the gallery space. It doesn’t seem to be a financially sound decision with providing free space and taking on the liability.

Alderman Grover moved to accept receiving the recommendations from the Arts Council and the Tenants Association but to hold action on the recommendations to adoption of them in committee until things have been operationalized. Alderman Braithwaite seconded.

Alderman Braithwaite asked if the City has a copy of the liability letter on file.

Ms. Weiss indicated that there would be a copy in Parks and Recreation on file.

A voice vote was taken and it was approved in favor 5-1. Alderman Burrus was the opposed.

**HH3 Extension of Service Agreement with Presence Health for Mental Health Crisis Intervention and Community Outreach Services**

Ms. Thomas-Smith reported on the impact of the crisis intervention services that are provided by Presence Health which has decreased calls to 911 and connected 13 to 20 families that weren’t before. Presence
Health has provided the three different shifts training and has employed a part-time social worker in the library. The initial contract for year one was to provide $55,000 and they are asking for an extension to take us to December of 2014 for a total of a little over $73,000. The total two year extended contract is a full $128,000. Staff is recommending this extension.

Alderman Braithwaite shared that it is hard to read the breakdown of the demographic data included in the packet.
Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that she will get that information to the Committee.

Alderman Grover asked how we get more people aware of the services that are being provided.
Ms. Thomas-Smith specified that most of the promotion was through word of mouth, ward meetings, and other forms. Presence Health hired a new manager that will be working on a different level of outreach.

Alderman Grover reiterated that this is the 24/7 crisis hotline which did not exist a year ago and the number is 708-681-HELP (4357).

Alderman Burrus stated that this is a perfect example of giving better services to the community and we should look at this for other areas of the City as well. This is helping us save costs elsewhere.

Alderman Grover moved approval of the amendment to the service provider agreement with Presence Behavioral Health for the 24 hour crisis line. Alderman Tendam seconded. A voice vote was taken to and it was approved in favor 6-0.

**HH4 Torrens Grant Expenditures**

Ms. Thomas Smith stated that we are a pass through for Cook County for the lead prevention program. Once a child in our jurisdiction has lead poisoning the City inspectors go out test soil and paint chips to find the source. Once the source has been determined abatement and remediation has to be done. The grant allows us to reimburse the contractor that performed that work.

Alderman Grover shared that there were a couple of cases in private residences with lead poisoning and they had to go through the lead abatement rehabilitation. Who qualifies for the Torrens Grant Expenditures?

Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that there are qualifications and there is an income qualification as well.

Alderman Grover moved the approval of the payment for lead rehabilitation property at 1409 Washington St. Alderman Tendam Seconded. A voice vote was taken to and it was approved in favor 4-0. Alderman Burrus and Braithwaite had stepped out of the Council Chambers.

**HH5 Report of Subcommittee on Operation of Evanston Animal Shelter and City Affiliation with the Community Animal Rescue Effort (C.A.R.E.)**

*Citizen Comments –*

The following people spoke concerning the HH5:

- Judy Voigt, 7040 N Sheridan
- Asher Beederman, 9050 Kildare
- Kristin Callis, 926 Judson Ave
- Karin Williams, 2101 Oakton St.
- Erin Chrusciel, 716 Brummel
- Emma Smith, 1607 Dobson
- Karen Strauss, 1616 Hinman
- Sheryl Ferrar, 1124 Brummel
- Mark Carlson, 623 Oakton St.
- Linda Scott, 1203 Elmwood
- Patricia Thrash, 2337 Hartrey Ave.
- Ann Mallow, 2315 Hartzell St.
- Kirsten Carlson, 2325 W Barlow
- Susan Hodges, 3333 Grant
- Vicki Paseuko, 503 W Oakdale
- Alisa Kaplan
- Yvette Granberry

Alderman Holmes stated that for clarification based on citizen comments that it was recommended at the last meeting that a sub-committee be formed. She thought with both sides that there would be
recommendations or a solution. She reiterated that it was always the intent for the sub-committee to come back to Human Services and then this committee will make a recommendation to City Council.

Alderman Grover stated that it has been a long community deliberation on how to manage the operations at the animal shelter under C.A.R.E. The sub-committee’s deliberations had turned out differently then she had intended. Alderman Tendam had expressed at the beginning of the second meeting that it was to determine whether the City and C.A.R.E could work together and under what terms. She believed that the policies and procedures would be proposed on how the shelter would be operated and with what expectations. Those would then be incorporated into a draft agreement and submitted to C.A.R.E. for approval or rejection. She cannot make any conclusions with C.A.R.E.’s unwillingness to move forward until they have been presented with specific expectations and embodied in specific terms of an agreement. Those were not provided from the sub-committee. She suggested a revised agreement with C.A.R.E. incorporating everything the City would like to see at the shelter. If CARE then decides that those are not terms in which they would like to operate then they can walk away from the agreement. It would be precipitous of the City to terminate the relationship with C.A.R.E without knowing what they are willing to do. Give C.A.R.E. our best proposal for how we want the shelter to operate. The agreement that we draft has to apply to anyone that comes into our shelter and not be specific to C.A.R.E. It does seem that the C.A.R.E. Board of the Directors has gotten in its own way and could possibly take a look at how they have handicapped themselves in this discussion and should possibly take a look at their leadership.

Alderman Burrus expressed concerns of the lack of changes in the leadership of the C.A.R.E. Board. She found it suspect to have the same leadership for many terms because it doesn’t leave opportunity for innovation. C.A.R.E. has done amazing work and she would like to continue the relationship but under a different agreement. Maybe it is time for new leadership and give the opportunity to the many volunteers.

Alderman Fiske shared that it was early 2012 when we first heard concern of the euthanasians. Before that the Council was not aware of the percentages that were astounding. In the past two years we have been meeting with C.A.R.E. and it ended in a stalemate and that is when it was decided to send it to this committee. The sub-committee was formed and there have been two meetings about what they are willing to do to change and increase transparency. She and Alderman Tendam were so serious about something needing to be done because of all of this. They had the opportunity to provide more information and they faced resistance. This week the Chief of Police asked for all records of animals that came through C.A.R.E. since 2010 which initially the President had agreed to do and then they came back this week that their attorney did not want them to do so. That was since the sub-committee. This shows no indication that there is an openness and willingness to work with the City. We have the highest euthanasia rate almost in the almost the entire metropolitan area. She did not feel it was appropriate for the City to work with an agency that was only willing to make token improvements. She would like to see the money and time go into the shelter as she has seen elsewhere and through rescue groups. Until they can tell us how they will reduce the euthanasia rate can be lowered then we can’t. Maybe we look at a group that could take care of the dogs and they continue to take care of the cats because that is the one thing she has heard that they have done a good job with. What is happening right now is a group of volunteers stepped forward to save dogs that were recommended for euthanasia and out of their own pockets they have paid for medical expenses and taken care of these dogs. They have worked with rescue groups and the animal warden to get them placed and that is what CARE should be doing but they are not.

Alderman Braithwaite agreed with Alderman Burrus. There are things that need tweaking and he was not sure that getting rid of C.A.R.E. would be the right solution but did express concern about the board. He highlighted that there should be time for an election and the questions by Alderman Tendam and Fiske should be answered. There seems to be the board and the people that support that board and he hated the thought of having to find a new entity because of some bad practices by board members.

Alderman Burrus stated that one of the C.A.R.E. Board members brought up a really good point. We have not heard from the animal warden. The City has a responsibility to say that we could make changes because the animal warden can make our policies.
Linda Teckler, Chief Animal Warden from the Evanston Animal Shelter, stated that C.A.R.E. implied to her that they were certified in the behavior evaluations. She assumed that what they were doing and after the Claude incident she realized that she should have been paying better attention.

Alderman Burrus stated that the blame is not all on C.A.R.E. but we need to take on some of the blame.

Richard Eddington, Chief of Police, stated that one of the bases of the relationship with C.A.R.E. is that they have been the evaluators of the dogs. When the issue came to our attention we intervened to cease the euthanasia rate but please understand that the whole system has been built on that someone has to evaluate the dog. The center of this controversy is C.A.R.E.’s unwillingness to modify that evaluation. There have been a lot of bruised egos that go back a long way and he is not sure that relationship is repairable. Operationally with the Chief Animal Warden and the core of volunteers that are willing to care for the animals they can maintain the shelter. That would mean there would be more costs for the City.

Alderman Burrus asked why didn’t we take responsibility a long time ago to control of the evaluation and train our animal warden and helpers to do the evaluations instead of relying on C.A.R.E.

Chief Eddington replied that if you look at the relationship between these two entities, C.A.R.E. is in charge of adoptions and evaluators and the City is the dog catchers and kennel maintainers. It is two different functions and we have grown dependent on their evaluations.

Alderman Tendam stated that it has been difficult to listen to after having more in-depth conversations during the sub-committee discussions but he wasn’t privileged to the information discussed in the prior meetings over the past two year. What could we expect from a forward thinking community like Evanston? We don’t seem to be doing much of any of it. When we took over the stopping of the euthanasia, then what? C.A.R.E. didn’t want the dogs and the police couldn’t have the dogs so a group of volunteers stepped in to look after them. They created the safety network for the 20 dogs to be rescued. They did it at their own expense for the time and money because C.A.R.E. didn’t want to have any responsibility time wise or financially for those lost dogs. To him that was unacceptable. There was a statement in the second meeting that turned the tide for him which was that we could run two separate entities under the shelter. C.A.R.E. could take in the dogs that are easy to rescue and put into homes. Evanston would want something more comprehensive. It was an unreasonable solution and that was the point that he believed it had no future. There were times things were heated and that is because these are people that are passionate about pets and animals and he would expect that. He believed the relationship is contaminated and if we don’t approve this where do we go?

Alderman Fiske shared that one of the things we might do is to do an RFP to ask partners that want to come in to handle the care of the animals. We could come up with the list of what we want. She doesn’t think based on everything that has been said and done that it serves us well to limit ourselves to one organization. Right now she couldn’t support moving forward with C.A.R.E. Alderman Fiske then asked Chief Eddington during this time if we decided to do an RFP would the Police department be able to take over the care of the shelter. Would all of the animals would stay at the shelter and be able to move forward with adoptions?

Chief Eddington answered yes they are.

Alderman Holmes shared that through this whole process since 2007. She was troubled that she cannot understand how C.A.R.E. which began here in Evanston had this long working relationship and doesn’t hear the passion to stay and work with the City of Evanston. It’s a piece that is missing for her. She understood that feelings can get in the way but if we are all concerned about the wants to know how can C.A.R.E. just walk away from 25 years of service without a fight or willingness to show us the changes that are asked to be made.
Alderman Grover shared that it seems we don't even have a good vision of what we want from our shelter. She motioned that we receive the sub-committee report and direct the City staff to draft an agreement with C.A.R.E. to optimize our shelter operations and we are explicit and specific about how the operations of the shelter should be operated. Then if C.A.R.E. decides that they don't agree to the terms then they could walk away. If C.A.R.E. decides that they can work under that agreement then we continue our longstanding relationship with them. Alderman Burrus seconded the motion.

Alderman Fiske thought there was some disagreement here. She stated that it would be better to come up with what we want the operation of the shelter to look like and it could be presented to any number of organizations. We would leave it up to who the best possible partnership would be and that doesn't preclude C.A.R.E. from taking on that role. Otherwise it does preclude other very qualified organization.

Alderman Braithwaite shared the only thing he would edit is to include new election of the board and have new leadership. He believed that it is time and truly believe that in this room there is the leadership to move this organization forward. That should be part of the request.

Alderman Holmes replied that she doesn't think is within our purvey to tell what to do with their board but we can check with law.

Grant Farrar, corporation council, stated that we could make the request that they make an amendment to the bylaws and request with date certain that they come back with an amended composition of the board.

Alderman Tendam included that he doesn't know what is going to help us turn the corner to do this objectively. He doesn't support dragging this out for months and months and expressed his disappointment.

Alderman Fiske suggested leaving things as they are. If we want to talk about what those goals are then let's talk about them but C.A.R.E. has shown they are generally not responsive. She agreed with Alderman Tendam and this is being highly watched in the community and we need to be more proactive to finding answers. Going forward with C.A.R.E. with the leadership that is in place is a big mistake. She wanted the volunteers to know that she understands their love for the animals and understand their pride in the time and effort of their care for the animals.

Alderman Braithwaite stated that he saw the President of C.A.R.E. present who hasn't spoken and asked if she has any feedback on the discussion?

Linda Gelb, President of C.A.R.E., stated that she doesn't know how to answer the questions right now because she sits on a board with 10 other people and they make the decisions. We look at things very carefully and judge how they fit in with the community. She has heard so many things tonight that has gone to the euthanasias of animals, to replacing the board of CARE. We don't know what you want. When we were told to stop euthanizing animals we asked for a waiver of liability filled out on each one before they went out. We have educated people doing the evaluations and they have modified them. They have changed some of the standards and the dogs they are putting out now are not dogs they would put out three or four years ago. We have to look as to whether or not our philosophy follows with the recommendations. We don't have a clear vision of what the City wants at this point in time. She had no other comments at that point in time and doe have the best interest of the City of Evanston at heart.

Alderman Fiske asked why the reference to the City was removed from the bylaws and website.

Ms. Gelb replied that they we have been trying to rebrand over the past three years. They have had a vision of helping more communities and that is the direction we are headed.

Alderman Fiske asked if they would have a presence at other municipal animal shelters.
Ms. Gelb answered that they would have a separate location outside of Evanston.

Alderman Fiske didn’t understand why they would remove reference to the City of Evanston.

Ms. Gelb said they are not exclusively the City of Evanston’s. They are an independent organization and want to be able to operate more independently than what they have been.

Alderman Braithwaite asked how often you meet with all of your volunteers.

Ms. Gelb replied three or four times a year.

Alderman Braithwaite then asked what the average length of term was for your board members starting with yourself.

Ms. Gelb indicated that she had been president for 23 years.

Alderman Grover motioned to receive the sub-committee report and to direct City staff to draft an agreement for shelter operations and it is brought back for this committee to review. If C.A.R.E. declines then we have the standards for the next organizations.

Alderman Holmes asked if we could get it electronically so we have it before the next Human Services meeting so we have a chance to look at it in trying to take care of the timing on it.

Mr. Bobkiewicz then suggested that they have an intermediate meeting. We could have a have a special meeting for an open forum with a draft and then have it to you for the regular meeting in April. There could be a special meeting on March 31st at 6:00 pm and then bring it to the regular meeting in April.

Alderman Grover motioned to include a consideration of a first draft of this agreement on March 31st. Alderman Burrus seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and it was approved in favor 4-2. Alderman Tendam and Alderman Fiske opposed.

Alderman Braithwaite made a referral to staff to ask for their 2012 tax returns and their most recent bank statement to do an internal audit. Is that reasonable?

Alderman Bobkiewicz replied we could certainly ask.

Mr. Farrar stated that those documents are subject inspection under the Internal Revenue Code and we could make the request but that it is not called for under implacable publications of the IRS.

Alderman Fiske asked if we could find out from the Animal Warden how much has been spent on placing the failed dogs out of the volunteers’ pocket if they are willing to share that information.

VI. COMMUNICATION

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Grover moved for adjournment. Alderman Braithwaite seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Parker
Administrative Secretary