PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Alderman Lionel Jean-Baptiste

ALDERMAN PRESENT: Delores Holmes, Jane Grover, Mark Tendam, Judy Fiske

A Quorum was present.

ALDERMAN ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Nicola Whyte, Evonda Thomas, Richard Eddington, Cam Herth, Sol Anderson, Kelly Fitzpatrick, Wally Bobkiewitz

OTHERS PRESENT: Marcia Achenbach, Rosemary Jean-Paul, Madelyn Ducre, Lisa Johnson, Alzenia Johnson, Paul Heinrich, Sharline Payne, Chaelor Hurt, Wanda Newman, Dontae Sonthall

CALL TO ORDER
Alderman Jean-Baptiste called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

Approval of the minutes of July 7, 2009 meeting
*Alderman Grover moved approval, Alderman Holmes seconded. Approved 5-0

Township of Evanston monthly bills totaling $110,336.31
The Aldermen raised questions regarding travel/education bills due to the absence of the Township Assessor bills totaling $353.50 was held for further clarification.

*As amended the monthly bills totaling $109,982.81 was approved 5-0.

Update of Citizen Review of Police Complaints
Chief Eddington gave a brief review and history of the Citizen Review of Police Complaints for the benefit of the citizens viewing at home.
Alderman Fiske asked if the police department coordinate with other departments for a resolution to complaints; Chief replied yes regarding coordination.

*The report was accepted 5-0.

Madelyn Ducre (citizen comment) asked for clarity on the process of who reviews the complaints. The Chief stated the Police Advisory Board is an advisory group to the Chief of Police, they monitor for consistency. If the committee does not agree with the department’s ruling on a complaint their comments will be noted in the reports.

*Alderman Jean-Baptiste suggested Ms. Ester and Ms. Ducre meet with the Chief and the members of the Citizen Police Advisory Committee (CPAC) and founding members of the process to review the methods for improvements, if necessary.

Madelyn Ducre asked “when CPAC goes through complaints and their recommendations are given to the Chief is that documented?” She also asked the meeting times for the committee.
The Chief replied yes, it is presented in the report to the Human Services Committee. The meetings are scheduled for once a month, however, due to the schedules of the members or the volume of complaints the meeting time may fluctuate between six to eight weeks.

Betty Ester (citizen comment) asked the Chief the roles of CPAC and the Police Advisory Board, is there a difference in what they do? Alderman Jean-Baptiste interjected and suggested a meeting with CAPC, Police Advisory Board, founding members, and the Chief.

*Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked for a report at the next Human Service Committee Meeting as to the progress or lack thereof of the meetings he suggested.

Report from the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)
Mr. Cam Herth gave a brief summary of this summer’s SYEP program. The program began with preparation seminars at various schools throughout Evanston. In April the job fair was held where the youth completed an application and reviewed job postings and attended a pre-interview workshop resulting in a maximum of three (3) interviews. He stated this year of the 500 applicants approximately 200 were employed this summer, those not employed were referred to other youth agency resources. This year SYEP partnered with property standards to assist with cleaning up vacant properties. The cost to the City to contract with an outside service to clean each property ranged from $250 - $1000 as compared to SYEP workers employed at the $8.00 per hour minimum wage. SYEP youth also worked with Nancy Flowers and senior services to assist Evanston senior population.

This summer, video production was added to the program and a group of youth was sent to the Evanston Community Media Center to become certified with equipment operators. Ms. Thomas asked Mr. Herth to give some information on the 50/50 program. The 50/50 program was started to encourage small businesses to hire youth. The program offsets the cost the businesses may incur employing a youth for the summer. At the end of the program the small businesses or non-profit will submit a payroll ledger and the City reimburses them 50 percent of the payroll. The Township Assessor underwrites the City’s cost for the 50/50 program.

Alderman Grover asked are there limitations to what the youth can or cannot do. Mr. Herth replied yes, there are some limitations; however, each youth is assigned the task that fits their qualifications.

Sharlene Payne (citizen comment) stated SYEP is a great program that keeps the youth off the street during the summer and provides them with a means to purchase their own clothes with pride. Ms. Payne five children have been in the SYEP program and it has impacted them by instilling self-esteem and confidence. It also taught them how to budget and balance their account.

Dontae Sonthall (citizen comment) was a past participant in SYEP and unfortunately he was not able to go through the interview process this year. Mr. Sonthall also stated SYEP spared him from seeking ill sources of employment; it kept him focused on good employment behaviors. He has not been able to find work this summer and believes SYEP is a good program.

Wanda Newman (citizen comment) felt the SYEP is a good program and the youth have a summer job and are also mentored.

Mr. Hurt’s (citizen comment) daughter is in the program and feels SYEP is a good program.

Alderman Holmes stated it is a good program and the Committee has no intentions of removing it.
Alderman Tendam asked if there is a follow up/tracking of the youth that do not get hired. Mr. Herth said the youth are in a database and employment opportunities are sent out to those in the database. SYEP also collaborates with Youth Engagement to seek any opportunities they may offer and that is also referred on to the youth that were not employed in the program.

Ms. Thomas stated all participants are exposed to life skills such as resume writing, interview skill building, and team building exercises.

**Report from the Youth Engagement**

Sol Anderson, Youth Engagement Coordinator reported on the role of the Youth Engagement Initiatives (YEI). YEI assists youth that have aged out for different opportunities or those that have fallen through the cracks. The program connects youth to programs that will bring them back into the community.

Current or recent events: an annual Youth Summit which teaches youth how to be active in their community; anti-violence activities scheduled for this summer and beyond; Teen Test Day address the increasing problems of the HIV/AIDS and STD epidemics plaguing inner-city teens.

Luis Herrera (citizen comment) learned a lot from YEI and because of it he is now a leader and encourages participation.

**Proposed Amendments to the Chapter 5 of the City Code, Human Relations Commission**

Alderman Jean-Baptiste requested this item on the agenda to clarify what is being done by the Commission, what rules and regulations governs the work of the Commission and how to move forward differently.

Ms. Thomas gave an overview of the Commission. They are charged by ordinance to deal with fair housing complaints, landlord/tenant mediations due to violations of the ordinance, dispute resolutions and fair employment. Recently there have been concerns within the community requesting mediation and dispute resolution. Staff are in demand for coordinating and mediating due to the economic climate. The Commission heard the request and they have been inspired to serve in that capacity.

Alderman Burris asked if the Commission has specifics as to how they want to revamp, to function, and address the need for mediation. Also, if the Commission could supply data on the number of cases and types of cases that they are asked to handle and how the mediation process works.

Ms. Thomas replied the Commission has sent out a press release about the mediation services. They want to hear the mediation or resolve the mediation but they also want to increase their scope of mediation services to go beyond landlord/tenant concerns. The ordinance speaks to landlord/tenant issues but the ordinance does not address the direction they would like to go. Health and Human Services has the data/statistics; the commission has not seen the data because that has not been their role in the past. The Commission desires to broaden their scope of practice beyond landlord tenant issues. Alderman Jean-Baptist suggests revisiting the ordinances, review to see if a re-vamp of the Commission’s mission is in order.

Alderman Holmes remembered in the past the Commission did mediate and asked what happened.

Ms. Thomas replied for the last five years the mediation services were handled internally by staff and the cases did not get to the point that they had to be brought before the Commission.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste felt the Commission and staff has at their disposal the Illinois Department of Human Rights that is staffed with investigators, lawyers and administrative judges that hear cases. He suggests further review of the ordinances and a possible...
collaborating with the Department of Human Rights to implement an outreach process for referral to the State or County. He would like the Commission to take advantage of the rich diversity of Evanston by interacting with different organizations and resources to bring Evanston even closer.

Alderman Fiske suggested getting information from the Women League of Voters specific to the Commission. Elke Purze, Interim First Assistant Corporate Council stated the information from staff and the Women League of Voters is located in the Law Department.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste requested inviting the commissioners to the next meeting.

Alderman Grover asked if we should get out of the mediation business. Alderman Jean-Baptiste replied yes, the State and County has a more robust system to assist fair employment and housing issues which are illegal activities. Staff has been handling landlord/tenant mediation for years and they have developed experience and familiarity with the landlords within the community.

Currently, the staff of Health and Human Services does Landlord/tenant mediation.

Alderman Grover asked would they tackle diversity training in the community or special events, will the Commission have a higher profile within the community. Ms Thomas replied yes.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste read Chapter 5, 2-5-4: Statement of Policy of the Human Relation Commission Ordinance. He stated that by changing the goal of the commission to be more community building then that could possibly attract a more diverse group of members.

Alderman Burris stated this is timely since the other boards and commissions were asked to reexamine their mission and purpose and rework bylaws.

Betty Sue Ester (Citizen Comment) felt fair housing and landlord/tenants are areas that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Thomas stated tasks for staff:
- Supply the committee statistics on the number of the volume of call related to fair housing, landlord/tenants etc.
- Give a point of reference to how many people need service; number resolved at staff level, number referred.
- Meet with legal to review the survey from the Women League of Voters
- Extend an invitation to the Chairpersons of the Human Relations Commissioners

**ADJOURNMENT**
The meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicola Whyte
Department of Health and Human Services