

Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, June 11, 2019, 5:30pm, Room 209, City Hall

Committee Attendance:

Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3), Pious Ali (At-Large)

Councilors in Attendance: Jill Duson: (At Large), Councilor Kim Cook (District 5)

City Staff: Jon Jennings, City Manager; Heather Brown, Assistant City Manager; Kristen Dow, Director of Health and Human Services; Aaron Geyer, Acting Director of Social Services. Adam Harr, Social Services Division Executive Assistant.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements

- Discussion of Overdose Prevention Sites and Opiate Misuse is postponed to the June 25th Meeting.
- The metro Regional Coalition offered Portland to be the third community in their opiate misuse pilot if the City chooses to do so. .

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

- Councilor Ali moved to approve the minutes; Councilor Batson seconded and the minutes were approved 2 – 0 as amended with Councilor Ali abstaining:
 - Item misattributed to Councilor Batson when they should be attributed to Councilor Ray.
 - Mindful of the promise to follow-up.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - Positive Healthcare

GPH is in the third year

162 patients

60 were originally in the City Positive healthcare Program.

- Services are provided at 3 locations
- Park Street
- Preble Street
- Riverton Park
 - Patient advisory committee meet 4 times a year

- Annual Patient Satisfaction survey specifically for positive healthcare patients once a year, a third survey additional to the two annual surveys given to all patients.
- Team:
 - Medical Provider
 - Social Worker
 - Nurse
 - Medical Assent
 - Program Coordinator
- Located at the Park site but is able to travel to its other sites to best meet patient need.
- Feedback from the patient satisfaction survey.
 - In English, French and Portuguese
Administered at the beginning of the year
26 surveys returned.
- Comments in Surveys:
 - Friendly and respectful
 - Areas for improvement:
 - There was staff turnover
 - Satisfaction for callers and their automated answering service.
 - Now there is a direct extension to the team.
- Collection, evaluation of health data:
 - Consumer led board
 - Are qualitative data being quantified into metrics and corresponding goals,
 - Yes, for overall in the organization, such as above 90% satisfaction but there are not specific metrics or goals in the Ryan White Grant Program.
- Riverton Park: do residents in that neighborhood only go to that local clinic or do patients travel to the main location on Park Street?
 - It is primarily a medical facility
 - Dental and behavioral services may see people travel to Park.
 - As Hours have expanded, there has been growth in patients accessing that site.
 - Riverton Park is open to any patient, however 50% of patients must be residents of the neighborhood.
 - It is a condition of using space that would otherwise be used for housing.
- How many patients were active at the City-run program; if every patient transferred to GPH, what would the number of patients be?
 - HHS will determine.
- What is the capacity of the grant?
 - The program is not at capacity and would be able to meet an influx of need.
- Where are patients coming from?
 - The City program served individual across the state.
- Patients not seen within 6 months are followed up with intensive outreach

- After 1 year, patients are no longer considered active
 - Not counted towards active patients but remain in the system.
- 162 Patients now; what outreach is done to increase access to those who need it.
 - At events in the community such as pride.
 - Social Media
 - Services are included in the overall brochure and a program specific program is in development.
- Is there anything Portland could do to increase outreach to people who need services.
- GPH is a “patient centered medical home.”
 - GPH requires they be a patient’s primary care.
 - This differs from the virology center
- How does the Patient Advisory Committee collaborate HIVAC
 - Jen Rogers had led but is changing roles.
 - North Eastern Aids Continuing Medical Education
 - Embedded Frannie Peabody case manager \
 - Joined the CDC call for providers
- GPH takes in patients who do not have insurance.
 - Serves regardless of ability to Pay.
 - Assisted with via the Ryan White Grant program to reduce fees, copays and places a cap on charges. Receipts can be brought in to lower the price for patients.
- GPH does not have a pharmacy
 - Helps patients apply for ADAP (Maine Care HIV education assistance program)
 - Not having insurance is not a barrier to getting medication
 - It is compacted but possible.
- Services still at India Street refers to appropriate providers including GPH.
- Chair Ray expressed gratitude for the GPH staff’s cooperation and advocacy.
- There was a concern of HIPPA violations that halted the process; now that a number of surveys were returned and it was concluded there were no violations, what are the next steps?
- Chair Ray asked the GPH staff if they have any recommendations on how to move forward:
 - Are there any data points that may be helpful?
 - GPH acknowledged the dated nature of some of the results returned but was not able to say what value responses may still be of use.

Public Comment was opened at approximately 6:11 PM.

- Overview from Patient Advocacy and Transition Team Members
 - Concern from the committee; what was the council’s goals in administering the survey?
 - Patient health?

- o Who is left of the original group and who are their providers?
- o Being someone displaced from the clinic could lead to a precarious situation where a patient moves to a program that may close or move
 - People need a security blanket that the doctors and care people transition to are permanent.`
 - He suggested to look at the surveys if it appears there could be value in it.
- o While GPH is providing great services and it is natural to want to know the status of service, the data from the survey is a separate issue.
 - The data is so old at this point it may not of use, especially with the halt in the process.
 - The most important thing with the surveys is to insure it remains confidential, either from locking it or burning it.
 - To better serve the HIV community, the committee should understand the HIV community in Maine better.
 - The most important thing is to hear the voices of the HIV positive community.
 - Where do they want to move forward with it?
- o Stash Bailey, Co-chair of the HIV Advisory Council
 - 3 years later, it's important to reestablish a relationship with the community.
 - The Advisory Council and the biggest city in Maine should be closer.
 - More inclusion that fosters dialogue would help.
- o What is the best way to understand the face of HIV in Maine?
 - A survey or CDC date?
 - A conversation.
- o There is not value in going over the surveys any longer,
 - Should the City destroy them?
 - Could there be value to compare future survey results?
 - Could only be the City due to confidentiality
 - The City hasn't compiled or analyzed the data yet
 - o It is unclear from the HHS perspective how the surveys would add value.
 - Councilor Batson does not want to pursue analyzing the survey data.
 - The committee deferred to staff how best to manage the survey results.
 - Is the state of HIV a data point Public Health is looking at in its analysis of the overall health of the City.

End of Public Comment.

- There was a cosponsored public forum on housing what allowed a collaborative conversation between stakeholders and the committee helped by staff in a way that does not create an illegal meeting.
- The committee considered the state of HIV be included on the committee work plan

- o Not a traditional work plan item but a public forum on the calendar of things to do the year.
- The committee will not pursue the survey; not that the committee ultimately decided to destroy the survey results.
 - o Not destroying it, keeping it locked without purpose makes things feel uncertain to the community,
 - o While there is no HIPPA information, Kristen Dow recommended destroying the records.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - Community Support Fund Policy

- Budget for PCSF FY 2018 286,000 including donations (\$80,000 over budget)
- Upcoming budget has \$200,000 appropriated.
- 39 individuals presented for shelter Sunday night.
- The City manager of San Antonio contacted the City Manager that Border control changed its policy and is now releasing individuals to locations, not paroling them at the border.
- Jon thanked Kristen, her staff, and highlighted Jeff Tardif, the manager of the family shelter and his staff.
- 150 individual left San Antonio and are traveling to Portland
 - o This is one of many locations where people are getting bussed to Portland from.
- The governor, and DHHS leadership were notified.
- With at least 150 individuals on their way, it is important to ask
 - o Should there be more locations opened for shelter?
 - o What financial guidance can the committee offer?
 - The individuals coming from the southern border are not eligible for any assistance.
- City Manager Jennings invited the Council to visit the shelters, salvation army, and each warming center to see the situation first hand.
- It is likely that the family shelter will need the salvation army and the GA office for additional overflow
 - o This would supplant the option for overflow for the Adult shelter.
- This is straining staff and supplies.
 - o The shelter ran out of blankets last night.
 - o The GA office require twice the amount of staffing because the waiting room and conference room do not have clear lines of sight.
 - o After these rooms are full, there is no room for anyone else who presents.
 - o HHS is working on an emergency repose
 - The greatest need is a location capable of providing shelter to 150 people.
 - The 150 is likely the minimum as the people who came this weekend did not come from San Antonio
 - GA is used to provide meals in the mornings and evenings so shelter would need to be broken down for food to be set up and broken down around the GA office hours.

- The capacity listed for buildings is the perfect condition, but family size and real-life conditions lower that number.
 - The Salvation Army is an amazing partner. They requested to not access the space for 1.5 hours later than usual so they could use their space for an event. This gap has logistic repercussions that are difficult to work through due to lack of space and staff.
 - Social Services as an 18-passenger van, so it could take ten trips to get families to and from meals.
- The CDC and Red Cross said they could provide assistance if the City pursued the situation as an emergency and had a location.
- A location is needed and a budget is needed.
 - There are not enough staff at the emergency shelter.
 - More per diems would have a budget impact.
 - Faculty and full staffing will have an impact.
 - The individuals arriving are not eligible for GA, but would be eligible for the PCSF were it not overspent by \$80,000
- 40 people have fallen into the GAP since February 1st.
 - It costs about \$1,500 per household to assist for a month each.
 - 35 households.
- Issues
 - Shelter Crisis
 - PCSF access
 - Insufficient budget for 2019.
 - How the committee/ council feel about using the PCSF to house people outside of Portland.
 - OSS is close to needing to open its overflow which may be at odds with the family shelter overflow.
- Has staff explore locations?
 - Yes, such as City owned buildings and staff have looked at what other cities have done.
 - Mayor Strimling reached out to the mayor of South Portland and Westbrook for them to contact City Manager Jennings.
- Councilor Cook views this as a Maine community issue for the private nonprofit, business and local government to collaborate on.
 - What outreach has been done?
 - It appears the state legislature appears willing to get involved.
 - For locations, there are County owned buildings.
 - Trump Administration Policy Change on June 4th.
 - City Manager Jennings asked Susan Collins a Chellie Pingree for help
 - Maine CDC will help with staff and possible funding.
- Does the State have an emergency proclamation that would help?
 - Katie Hager is researching the possibility of an emergency declaration.

- Setting up an Emergency Response Center will get agencies like the CDC involved; the parameters are unknown.
 - Cumberland County Emergency Responses
 - Red Cross May be able to provide a fair ground tent.
- As much as it is a state issue, on the ground in Texas, it is a Portland issue.
 - People at the Boarder are saying they want to go to Portland.
- Average family size of 5; average cost is \$1,500 multiplied by average number of households leads to a projected monthly cost of \$66,000 for new individuals.
 - The 35 families that stopped April 1st
 - Using that for the GAP, the cost would be \$120,000 per month.
 - Just rent \$152k
 - \$88k on rent
 - \$189k just in rent this year.
 - PCSF mirrors GA.
- It's an emergency that is coming tomorrow.
- The spending in the support fund last year was less as there were fewer individuals.
 - It is spiking now.
- Should the PCSF be used to fund housing outside of Portland.
- What is known relief such as work authorization?
- It is a difficult ask to ask shelter guests to move and change school districts.
- It is a big Committee decision with large implications for Portland taxpayers paying rents in other municipalities.
- An individual moved to another municipality
 - 30-day window
 - Staff is asking for the committee give guidance
- Successfully moved people from Portland shelters to their chosen community.
 - Paroled vs non-Paroled.
 - People who are Paroled usually access services
 - Gap timing
 - An individual is paroled when credible fear is cited.
 - All asylum seekers must apply within 1 year
- Lisa Marchleski: people coming from the southern border are coming with A numbers regardless if they are paroled or not.
- Qualifying for GA is a separate issue from not having money to fund the PCSF.
- There is a lot of confusion on eligibility
 - When PCSF went over budget, staff were directed not to add anyone new to the program.
 - Staff will clarify the family of 7 and family of 5
 - The PCSF
- Shelter residents are confused as what to do.
- What is the working relationship between us and family promise?
 - It is the same as any community partnership.

- Good working relationship
 - City does not pay Family promise
 - City pays for the rent of the household.
 - If there is no money, there is no rent.
- PCSF pays rent directly to landlords.
 - o The program is paying the rent for people who entered the program before April first and is not creating new homelessness.

Jill Duson

- There is an emergency, but what will be done
 - o When created there were 900 people to cover those already in our community.
 - Used \$2 million taken from school funding.
 - o It was to be phased out over time.
 - o It is a program unique in the nation
- Make it clear that no new applications be accepted as of July 1. Set a date where it is certain services will no longer be offered.
 - o Even then it is not sustainable.
- Declare an emergency and make a one-time allocation to take care of the families who are already here who have fallen in the gap.
- PCSF should be phased out over time as it is not sustainable.
 - o Still work with the state.
 - o Still be a welcoming city

Councilor Batson

- Agrees it is not sustainable and can create conditions for people to enter homelessness.
- \$200,000 were appropriated,
- Emergency shelter situation vs housing
- What other organizations did Kristen reach out to.
 - o CHOM, Preble Street, GPH, Opportunity Alliance
 - Receptive to help
 - o Katie Hager reached out to the Cumberland County Emergency Manager.
- If a physical space was not procured, what would happen?
 - o There would be families and children turned away by staff, possibly having no option but to sleep outside if other organizations cannot step in.
 - o Due to the speed of the emergency, the City may need to step up initially as the County and State's responses mobilize.
- Does staff have specific suggestions for buildings
 - o No as staff are seeking policy guidance from the council to determine what that could be.
- What does "do whatever it takes" mean fiscally.
 - o Cannot be predicted.

- o An official that bought bus tickets for a family cited an article where the mayor appeared receptive or welcoming people to come and be taken care of.
- 35 Families already in area
 - o Estimate \$128,000 per month of known possible
 - o Could be \$200,000 a month even with purposing no new applications as of July 1st.
- Up to 12 months of eligibility for people who are not paroled.
- 70% of people had a length of time of 3 months in PCSF but had 6 months of GA beforehand so the average length of assistance is likely larger.

Pious Ali

- \$200,000 for Councilor Duson's proposal.
 - o Application now to July 1st, will be continue to shelter in emergency shelter?
- Are community partners able to house people, or is emergency shelter the only option?

PCSF

- The order language
 - o It is open ended and not feasible.
 - o It can be used as a guiding document.
 - o Would cover RXs as it covers everything GA would Cover.
- Councilor Duson Suggested staff to contact county and state level entities to create a state level emergency response where the City provides and intake and referral entry point.
 - o Applications completed here then place families in appropriate communities based on processed application.
 - o One concept to address the emergency influx is turning the Portland Expo building into a temporary shelter
 - Only temporary especially due to contractual obligations.
 - 150 cots and tables
 - There are showers.
 - Would need to supplant some community groups who booked the expo during the summer,
 - o How long would it be available?
 - Would work with the red claws to move their camp.
 - Postpone floor maintenance
 - o When is the next unavoidable date that it would have a hard cut off?
 - Red claws season start in October.
 - o Would the red cross be able to come in operate it as a shelter under the emergency management apparatus and nit be additional city staff?
 - o Who would take the lead on triage? State? Red cross with interpreters.
- Advocates when the PCSF was being created through it would relieve pressure off the state delaying an actual solution.
- What would happen if another large influx of people happened?

- Unknown but that could include Cumberland County fair ground.
- As it is an emergency situation, the City Manager has the authority to act which is why he is requesting committee guidance.
 - Mobilize to turn the Expo into an emergency shelter.
- People who come to our state are needed but it cannot be one municipality to insure those people are cared for.
- Chair Ray agreed that the City could move forward in this state emergency that the expo be used as an emergency shelter as country and state organizations mobilize to face the crisis.
- What about the families who are housed now:
 - Do they get evicted and enter the shelter
 - Include them in the households who apply by July 1st.
- Councilor Dusen proposed to make a onetime allocation in the fund balance for an emergency situation.
 - The fund balance may not have the \$2 million+.
- Given there could be a rush in applications, Councilor Cook could not see herself supporting using millions of Portland dollars out of the fund balance.
 - If Portland did do so, other entities would need to match it.
 - She supports using the expo as an ephemeral emergency shelter.
 - Find situations that would forego revenue instead of spending money.
- Consensus amongst the committee to
 - Provide a plan on getting the state, county and providers to collaborate in a state level response.
 - Pursue the expo as an emergency shelter
 - PCSF to be determined at the Council meeting Monday.
 - Staff to clarify details on the 35 families who are not able to pay their rent.
 - Some entered the gap after PCSF funding ran out
 - A difference between never applied for PCSF and never applied for and received assistance (State GA)
 - A family in need could rationally expect assistance would have continued to cover their gap were it not for the over subscription of the fund.
 - Can the cost be calculated and these families be covered?
 - That would mean back rent if authorized.
 - \$52,000 per month; \$157,500 through to July 1.
 - Would continue in PCSF based on July 1 cut off.
 - Councilor Batson thinks it makes sense but does this relief for the 35 families prevent the situation from repeating itself?
- PCSF and its Order
 - Adding a hard-cutoff date when no new applications would be accepted
 - Proposed date July 1, 2019 deadline in the order language.
 - This date would include people who arrive and apply by then.

- The date of application of whatever deadline is set.
 - o Paragraph in 2015 order allows a phase out but does not address the 35 families.
- o Allocation of money to cover people already receiving assistance, including the 35 households assisted through GA who would have been covered by PCSF were the funds not exhausted.
- o No new applications date be the current April 1, 2019 except for people who had received GA in 2019
 - Households newly arrived. That had not received assistance would be welcomed into emergency shelter.
- o Staff will work with corporation council to address the 35 previously assisted families in a separate order given at the council on Monday.
- o There will be public comment and a vote at the full council on Monday
 - There is not public comment or vote tonight as it is guidance based on months of discussion.
- o A financial appropriations could waive the second reading in an emergency action.
- o City Manager Jennings Authorized the 4 April and 8 May families to be assisted immediately to prevent eviction.
- o An appropriation is not necessary with the July 1st cut off because it is a programmatic change that spends down in July which would then necessitate an appropriation in July.

Next Steps

Set the policy on Monday with just a first read; 7 votes to waive the second read and seven votes to pass the policy. 5 votes would allow for reconsideration of a regular read that would trigger a 30 day delayed start.

It is the understanding of the staff that they are instructed to move forward knowing there is buy-in expressed by the agencies previously mentioned.

A meeting of councilors, staff and public notice with the governor.

The Councilors in attendance thanked staff.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM