



Health & Human Services Committee Meeting Tuesday, April 12, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Committee Attendance: Chair Suslovic, Councilor Ray and Councilor Brenerman.
City Staff Attendance: Mayor Strimling, City Manager Jon Jennings, Dawn Stiles/HHS Department, Mary Davis/ Housing, Toho Soma/Public Health/HHS Department

Agenda Item 1 – Meeting Called to Order and Minutes Reviewed:

Meeting was called to order at approximately 5 PM and Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted as written.

Agenda Item 3 – Housing Committee TIF Policy Revision: Please note; this item was taken out of order.

Agenda Item 3 was taken out of order per Chair Suslovic and Mary Davis from Housing and Community Development addressed the Committee and explained the proposed revision that would require each new development that utilizes assistance through TIF Financing, HUD HOME or CDBG subsidy would be required to set aside 10% of the rental units for individuals or families currently living in a Portland shelter.

Mary indicated there will be a **Housing Committee Meeting at King Middle School on April 13th at 5:30 PM**. The next scheduled meeting is **April 27th @ 5:30 in Council Chambers**. Public comment will be allowed at this meeting.

Agenda Item 2– Increasing the Minimum Legal Sale Age of Tobacco Products:

Toho Soma addressed the Committee and did an overview of this proposal. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States killing more than 480k people a year. Each day in the US more than 3800 youth aged 18 or younger smoke their first cigarette. Increasing the minimum legal sale age to 21 would result in an estimated 3% decrease in the prevalence of tobacco use.

Councilor Brenerman questioned how this would be enforced at the retail level. Kristin Dow, Program Manager for the Chronic Disease Prevention Program how her staff works with retail establishments re: carding at the time of purchase – the No Butts campaign. Ongoing education for these establishments will continue.

Mayor Strimling questioned the loss of the Healthy Maine Partnership grant which ends on October 1st. Kristin will be remaining after that time.

Councilor Ray questioned who else enforces this. The State Attorney General is in charge of enforcing but the City would be enforcing locally.

The meeting was then open to public comment:

Alison Webb – Resident of Portland. Alison would like the Committee to consider vaping as part of this ordinance. Chair clarified that vaping is included.

Carol Kelly – Briggs Street resident. Carol strongly urges the Committee to move forward . She indicated the link between substance use and tobacco use and considers nicotine to be a gateway drug. She cited a New England Journal of Medicine report that indicates Users who smoke before the age of 21 have a 95% chance of becoming addicted. She also pointed out it is the #1 killer in Maine.

Elizabeth Capone – Noyes Street Resident. Elizabeth questioned at what age do kids start to smoke? She also questioned the enforcement of this type of ordinance

Matt Kassem – Concerned citizen is in support of the Ordinance.

Public Comment was closed at 5:27 PM.

Motion was made to move the item to the April 25th City Council Meeting. 2nd by Councilor Ray. All in favor. Passed 3-0.

Chair Suslovic wanted to point out that no one is looking to criminalize the behavior. Councilor Brenerman urged the Council to study this Ordinance. Chair thanked the staff and urged them to reach out to retailers and ask how they feel this will impact their business.

AGENDA ITEM- Budget Impacts on Health & Human Services Department:

Dawn Stiles addressed the Committee and gave an outline of the staffing changes and department reorganization with details for each Division.

She also addressed the transfer of services from India Street to Portland Community Health Center in the next 7-8 months.

City Manager Jon Jennings then addressed the Committee with details about the proposed changes and gave a brief history of the Federally Qualified Health Centers in this country. Overall he sees this transition as a way of expanding our services not limiting them. There are currently only 11% of municipalities in the country that offer direct public health clinical services. Portland being the only one in the northeast. He understands there is anxiety with staff and patients but feels they will be pleased with the transition.

The meeting was then open to public comment:

Bob Fowler – *Former Director of Milestone. Bob is interested in watching this process. He has always had a great working relationship with India Street as well as a current working relationship with PCHC as well and is hopeful of this change.*

Joe Pinto – *Resident of Brackett Street. Joe is very concerned with the closure and the possible elimination of services. He would like to know more of what this means and measurable impacts.*

Alison Webb – *Public Health Professional in Support and Recovery. Alison sees the staff at India Street as substance abuse experts and knows that this is true across the State. She urges the city to think about the role and voice India Street plays statewide.*

Al Brown – *Portland resident. Al cannot understand why the City would risk losing this facility that took 20 years to build and currently serves over 4000 patients.*

Elizabeth Capone – *Employee at School Based Health Centers for the city of Portland. She feels we are in a very hard situation. Currently there are roughly 27k uninsured individuals in Cumberland County. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Maine is the only state now to have lost insureds and is the only State without Medicare expansion. She was also curious as to the cuts in the Operations Division.*

Public Comment closed.

Dawn gave details about the loss of major grants as well as the loss of State funding.

Leslie Clark, CEO of PCHC addressed the Committee and introduced some of her staff and Board Members who were present. Currently PCHS runs and staffs a total of 5 locations; Park Avenue, 63 Preble Street, Riverton Park, Franklin Towers and Brick Hill in South Portland. The clinic currently serves 6,647 patients and 1500+ children, 45-50% are uninsured and they do offer a sliding fee scale. She then distributed information that gave details on the reimbursement rates they are eligible for that the City would not qualify for. She also explained that the Board is governed by the patients they serve.

Leslie pledged that she is 100% in making sure that no services will be lost. She understands the critical need of all the services and intends to grow these services not eliminate them.

Councilor Ray questioned what are the staff accommodations for India Street employees. Leslie indicated that all staff can and will be interviewed at PCHC.

Councilor Brenerman questioned Leslie as to why someone would go to India Street vs PCHC. India Street has existed longer, services are great and the staff is great as well. She feels PCHC has same level of services and sees a lot of similarities. They do not however, have a Needle Exchange Program or any in-house HIV specialty treatment which they currently refer to MMC. Councilor Brenerman also questioned if PCHC has the capacity to take on these services. Leslie feels that yes they can accommodate.

Chair emphasized that we need to ensure we do not lose services and patients and access to quality of services and referenced the Health Care for the Homeless transition. He would like to see an impartial overview of their services.

Leslie gave an overview of the Quality Control and will provide details of the onsite visits. She also explained that Portland is the only municipality to have started an FQHC.

Committee questioned if we have 3rd party reviews about India Street? Yes Dawn indicated we have that and will distribute.

Councilor Ray questioned where these additional services will be housed? Leslie indicated that is part of the planning and learning process and will be checking into best practices as they move forward. Street Outreach would continue at the Preble Street location but may move to multiple sites. There are currently plans for expansion of the Franklin Towers location. All locations offer walk in services with open access at all locations. Councilor Ray also questioned if there has been talk of anyone from India Street to come onto the Board at PCHC. Leslie indicated that yes that will occur.

Mayor Strimling questioned if 6 months was enough time for this transition. Leslie indicated that from PCHC's point of view they are fine with 6 months.

Councilor Brenerman questioned if there is a cost savings to the City. Yes the reimbursement is higher as well as the cuts to staffing and infrastructure. \$229k annually is the savings. He also questioned if we currently do electronic records. No, that would mean an investment of \$50k just at the India Street location for high speed internet.

This item is scheduled to be heard 2 times at the City Council level **Monday, May 2nd and Monday May 16th.**

Chair Suslovic thanked the staff for their good work at the clinic and stressed this is not a closure but a shift in services.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.