

**CITY OF NORWALK
COMMUNITY SERVICES & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Barbara Smyth, Chair; Dominique Johnson; Ernie Dumas; Nich Sacchinelli; Greg Burnett; Tom Keegan; Kadeem Roberts (7:06)

STAFF: Lamond Daniel, Chief of Community Services; Ray Burney, Personnel Director; Brian Candela, Assistant Corporate Counsel

OTHERS: Debbie Rosella

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Barbara Smyth called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

****MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 18, 2019**

****MR. KEEGAN SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES with 4 in favor, and 2 abstaining (Johnson, Sacchinelli).**

DISCUSSION

Community Services Department Presentation

Mr. Daniels reviewed the presentation he made to Mayor Rilling on January 10, 2020 on how to support the nonprofit community. Mr. Daniels said that he would be putting this in the budget for 2020-2021. The presentation included the mission statement and list of departments coordinating and collaborating with Community Services. Mr. Daniels said that he met with non-profits, community leaders, faith leaders, and residents on his “listening tour” to obtain insights about when they need help in the City of Norwalk. He said that he asked them about their needs and

what are the gaps in services when they need help in our City. He discovered that there is no larger vision for youth and, as far as senior services goes, people are living longer, but not living better. Mr. Daniels said that they are not creating a social service agency, but by establishing a centralized location for community services going forward, he can address some of these perspectives and better deliver the services that are already here.

Mr. Daniel said that he is developing the Community Services Resource Center (CSRC) as a “one-stop shop” approach to delivering resources to the City of Norwalk. He said that, as it is now, a Norwalk resident seeking job resources would have to go to Bridgeport or Stamford. He said that they would be addressing that issue by arranging for scheduled hours for those services in the proposed CSRC. He said they are knocking down some walls upstairs in March to accommodate this Center. He said that the CSRC operate to help residents identify, understand, and navigate where services are available to them.

Mr. Daniels detailed the services that would be offered at the CSRC. He said that the Center would be equipped with 2-1-1 phone lines, computers, and trained resource specialists. He said that the specialists would give assistance by filling out forms, acting as interpreters, answering 2-1-1 phone lines, arranging office hours for targeted services (like job resources), and brief case management. Mr. Daniels said that the community would be served one-on-one by the CSRC staff and that Norwalk would become a hub for these services.

Mr. Daniels proposed the use of \$55,000 from the 2020-2021 budget for 2 part-time employees (\$18/hour, \$26,305.18 annually per person), 3 computers, and a telephone line.

Mr. Burnett asked how success would be measured at the CSRC. Mr. Daniels said they would have to develop metrics to see how many people are coming in. He said they could be able to track if people are utilizing the services they are referred to, and from this, they can determine whether the case manager met the need.

Mr. Sacchinelli spoke in favor of the CSRC and asked how the marketing to the community will look. He referred to the senior tax relief information, which they know is a population that is difficult to reach. Mr. Daniels said that they would have to assess what is working and what isn't working. He said that he felt optimistic about communications through the non-profit channels. Mr. Daniels said that he would communicate to the nonprofit community about the CSRC, asserting that “this is a FREE service” and that these possibilities are available for them access. He said that making this clear to them would deter them from any competitive marketing that could inhibit positive outreach. Ms. Smyth mentioned the lack of a full service radio station as a drawback when developing a marketing approach. She said that coordinating with Josh in social

media, as well as using the website as possibilities for other outreach. Mr. Daniels said that he would be using postcards, News12, and word-of-mouth to communicate to folks who aren't digitally connected about the CSRC.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked about non-profits (ex. 501(c)3 organization operating out of a church) and how they could connect with the CSRC. Mr. Daniels offered to meet and speak with small community groups so they will be informed on what they need and where to go. Ms. Smyth said that Mr. Daniels met with local churches when he first arrived in Norwalk.

Mr. Dumas spoke in favor of the CSRC and suggested using newsletters as a way to communicate. He said that the CSRC could connect with the Basket of Love organization to distribute this information. Mr. Daniels suggested that they use the City's mass mail system to distribute communications.

Ms. Johnson spoke in favor of Mr. Daniels' proposal, saying that it is absolutely needed. She asked about the specific communities were at Mr. Daniels' listening tour that have a place at the table for these discussions. Mr. Daniels said that he met 50-60 of them. Ms. Johnson asked if the CSRC would be assisting the Latinx and LGBTQ communities, for example. Mr. Daniels said that the CSRC is inclusive on every level.

Ms. Johnson asked about bilingual services. Mr. Daniels responded by saying that they must hire people that speak Spanish and speak Creole.

Ms. Johnson asked about anonymous services and how CSRC will handle the assistance of undocumented residents. Mr. Daniels said that they will keep some data on their visit, but they are recommending against collecting any identifying information on them. Mr. Sacchinelli asked that they will only be tracking the volume of services used. Mr. Daniels said that this data on what services are being used and this will help to identify if and when they need additional resources.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked if they were considering dissemination of collected data to the City of Norwalk's customer services, especially for interdepartmental communications. Mr. Daniels said that this would all be managed under his department. He said that he hasn't yet met with customer service yet, although he understands what they do. He said they currently contact him directly with related communications, and he anticipates that the centralized CSRC will relieve some of the stress from them.

Ms. Smyth said that the CSRC is just what the City needs and it can be accomplished efficiently and with a very little amount of money.

Mr. Burnett asked what would constitute opening and closing a case at the CSRC. He said that case workers can be overwhelmed by their caseload. Mr. Daniels explained that case management will be live and in that moment. He said that “live case management” is a term that means one-on-one time working with a real person. He said that they are not tracking this service now, and they don’t have resources for that yet.

Mr. Keegan asked about a situation wherein the police department encounters a family that could use help. Mr. Daniels said that the CSRC would not reach out to that family. Instead, the police would contact them or have the family contact them, since they are an information resource and referral center.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked about key partnerships with 501(c)3 organizations from a facilities perspective. He said that they used to bring in those organizations and subsidized office space for them. He asked if they were going to allot space for key partners. Mr. Daniels said that they would if it made sense, and that they would watch for this over time.

Ms. Johnson asked about the part-time hires and asked how they would make sure that people felt safe and accepted. Mr. Daniels said that they were looking for people with a Bachelor’s degree, relationship building skills, and customer service experience. He said that diversity training would be available.

Mr. Daniels talked about his request for a proclamation. He said he had an idea for a Community Services Department Public Awareness Initiative, making Norwalk residents more aware of relevant campaigns that Norwalk residents would care about. He said that could have a positive effect on the community with direct impact campaigns like Crime Victim Rights Week, the National Campaign for Grade Level Reading, or monthly campaigns that celebrate heritage or advocate for health, like healthy eating or National Mental Health Month. Mr. Daniels said that something a celebration or a “thank you” can go a long way. Ms. Smyth said that this is a great idea to raise awareness in the community and for Community Service to engage in the community this way. Mr. Burnett asked that they consider that the community may be sensitive about leaving any issue or organization out of the proclamation.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked about opportunities for additional grant reviews for 501(c)3 organizations. He also asked if Community Services was seeking additional grant funding. Mr. Daniels said that they just started, and he is working with a grant person (Josh) to incorporate what he needs for

the CSRC. Mr. Sacchinelli asked for updates on any grants that are being identified for the CSRC.

Discussion & Vote on Draft Procedure for Public Act 19-111

Ms. Smyth said that they need to amend Item #3 on the draft. She said that there were legal questions that were brought up on the role of the Corporation Counsel.

Mr. Burney said that, as of this draft, Corporation Counsel was not part of the process. He said that they can certainly agree to amend it to add into the process when he produces the report to be submitted to the personnel committee of the Common Council, and simultaneously submit it to the Corporation Counsel's office.

He said the entire council can seek legal guidance from the Corporation Counsel when they see the need to do so, based upon the report he put together and based upon the application. He said this also applies if the Corporation Counsel has any objections to the report that has been produced. Also, the Corporation Counsel would be giving a report to applicant, so the applicant knows the complete picture of all the information that's out there. Upon receipt of that, the personnel committee of the Common Council can receive advice and guidance from the Corporation Counsel's office.

Mr. Burney and Mr. Candela were available today to discuss the role of the Corporation Counsel in this matter.

****MS. JOHNSON MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 7:52**

****MR. BURNETT SECONDED**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Regular meeting returns at 8:23 PM.

Ms. Debbie Rosella spoke to the assembly. She said that her husband, Phil Rosella, is a police officer who was shot by his sergeant at gun training in 2017. She said that, six months later, his kidneys failed. She reached out to the State of Connecticut and got nowhere. She said that an organization in Massachusetts told her about special legislation that would allow them to get 100% of his pension tax free. She is passing a law that needs the City Council and the Mayor together to vote. She has been fighting for 2.5 years for this. She said that police officers put their lives on the line for us and, if it is not their fault, they should be covered.

Ms. Smyth said that there are some specific changes that need to be made first.

****MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED TO TABLE THE APPROVAL OF DRAFT
PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC ACT 19-111**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

****MR. SACCHINELLI MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:29 PM**

****MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

E.A.Sheils