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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Lamond Daniels at ldaniels@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
JUNE 16, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Barbara Smyth, Chair; Gregory Burnett; Dominique Johnson; Thomas Keegan; Diana Revolus; Kadeem Roberts; Nicholas Sacchinelli

STAFF: Raymond Burney, Director of Personnel and Labor Relations
Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Mary Oster, Early Childhood Coordinator

OTHERS: Adam Bovilsky, Executive Director, Norwalk Housing Authority

1. CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Ms. Smyth called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and called the Roll as indicated above.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments this evening.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON MAY 19, 2021

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Correct the spelling of Mr. Roberts' name.

Page 6 – first sentence should read Ms. Smyth said this is an attempt to take all services to a high level and provide accountability to the elderly and to the taxpayers.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Smyth read the following statement:

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL COMMITTEE

At the May 12, 2021 meeting of the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Council Committee, there was a discussion about the maintenance of some of the City athletic fields.

The Members of that Committee voted to “make recommendations to the Personnel Committee to begin Union discussions to outsource some field maintenance.”

Under the Connecticut Municipal Employee Relations Act, the Mayor (or the Mayor's designee) is charged with the responsibility of negotiating the collective bargaining agreements between the City and the Unions that represent the City employees.

The Community Services and Personnel Committee by law, charter and practice, has reviewed the terms of the collective bargaining agreements settlements negotiated by the Mayor (or his designee), and has participated with the rest of the Common Council in approving the negotiated settlements. But this Committee, by design, does not play an active role in the initiation or negotiation of changes to the current collective bargaining agreements.

So it is beyond the scope of this Committee's role and responsibilities to "begin Union discussions" to pursue any initiative or change to the collective bargaining agreements.

However, the concerns of the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs Council Committee have been relayed by me as Chair of this Committee to the Mayor and his staff. They have given assurance that the appropriate City staff members will meet to discuss the issues raised during that Committee's meeting.

4. **DISCUSSION**

a) Personnel - Discussion on the Summary of the Retirement Incentive Program

Mr. Burney explained that in the meeting packet was a summary of the Retirement Incentive Program. He summarized the program and said that of the 91 eligible employees, 41 took the incentive and retired on October 9, 2020. They looked at the vacancies and created a plan to try and achieve the cash and payroll savings that was projected. As of May 2021, they calculated they saved over \$1.3 million and reduced cash and payroll by over \$1 million. Mr. Burney said the program was a success.

Mr. Burnett commended Mr. Burney for an excellent job that is going to save the City dollars. He said this information should be dated. He asked Mr. Burney if he saw any concerns from any departments as a result of this action, or impact to services. Mr. Burney said that everyone wants their vacancies filled yesterday; however, he does not know of any complaints from departments that they are not able to get their work done due to a vacancy or because of the time it takes to fill the position.

Mr. Burnett asked if there were any service enhancements attributed to the employee incentive. Mr. Burney said they did not miss a beat. The objective was to put this in place and support the various departments. He added that he will think further about any enhancements.

Ms. Smyth asked if any departments need more staffing than others. Mr. Burney said they did a heavy lift for the Public Works department and Parks and Recreation so that they were fully staffed for the spring. He said his department asked the Directors and Chiefs to prioritize those positions they need filled. He said that the Committee members were welcome to ask the department heads.

b) Community Services - General Updates

Mr. Daniels provided an update to the Committee.

The department is partnering with non-profits. On June 26th from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. a Community Day will be held at Ryan Park. An array of services will be there.

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The Food program continues to serve about 1,000 families weekly at Veteran's Park. Mr. Daniels said he is grateful to be able to offer this to the residents.

A press release will announce the new swing space.

Mr. Daniels recommended encouraging people to get the Covid vaccine. Norwalkers can get the vaccine at several pop-up locations throughout the City. He said they are going where the people are.

A press release will be created to make people aware of the new senior services municipal agency.

Mr. Daniels explained that the Diversity and Inclusion Commission has not been established. He said that it is important to do this right and Led By Us is helping with the design of structure of the Commission. He added that Led By Us has a website: Norwalk Speaks. A Town Hall is planned to provide an update and keep Norwalkers informed.

Ms. Smyth said that Ms. Johnson alerted her to a rumor that was circulating that the Commission had been established. Ms. Johnson suggested having a time line for Led By Us be very visible, especially on Facebook and on the Norwalk Speaks page. Mr. Daniels said he would be sure to share and provide information to Norwalkers.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

**** MR. ROBERTS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILING TO EXECUTE AN AFTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP EXTENSION AGREEMENT WITH THE NORWALK HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMENCING FROM THE END OF THE AGREEMENT'S INITIAL TERM THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023.**

Ms. Oster explained the item. She said that the Norwalk Housing Authority operates after school programs. Two of the facilities are not licensed, but operated if they were licensed. They are not licensed because of their size.

This is a request for the City to continue their agreement until they are able to move both sites to 98 South Main street, when it becomes available.

Ms. Oster said she reviews all of the licensing materials and does drop in visits to both sites when the programs are running. She then reports back to Mr. Bovilsky and Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels said that he is confident, that under Ms. Oster's leadership that the Norwalk Housing Authority meets the standards. He said that she will be assigned as the point person. He noted that both sites already meet the licensing standards.

Ms. Oster explained that 98 South Main Street will become licensed just like the other learning centers. Ms. Smyth noted that the City extended their agreement with the YMCA because they need more time. She asked when they will be able to move into that location. Mr. Bovilsky said that he was in touch with the YMCA this week and they are looking at sometime around January 2023. They thought they would be in there prior to this.

Ms. Revolus asked about accessibility and transportation for the students. Mr. Bovilsky explained that the Norwalk Housing Authority employs drivers for the learning center. They currently transport children to a variety of programs. He added that transportation is part of what they do with the learning centers. They are also looking at transporting the students directly from their school to the programs. Ms. Revolus confirmed that she has seen children being transported.

Mr. Keegan asked about licensing and if there were any concerns. Mr. Bovilsky explained that the Norwalk Housing Authority has substantial insurance and the agreement they have with the City includes full liability and indemnity to the City. He said that the Norwalk Housing authority is well insured and meets all of the licensing criteria except for those two sites.

Mr. Burnett asked if the operation of the learning center will fall under the YMCA when they move to 98 South Main Street. Mr. Bovilsky said the Norwalk Housing Authority will continue to serve their own students. This is about a bigger and better space for the children and the ability to consolidate the two centers under one roof.

Mr. Burnett asked if it will create an added liability to have the learning centers under the roof of the YMCA. Mr. Bovilsky said that space was used by Head Start. He said he strongly believes there will not be a problem as for as having other uses in the building. He said the bathrooms will be in the classroom.

Mr. Roberts asked if the space at 98 South Main Street was guaranteed for the Norwalk Housing Authority. Mr. Bovilsky said they have not used that space before. The space has been promised and they are finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding. He noted that the YMCA is relying on them as a funding source.

Ms. Smyth said that from the numerous meetings with Mr. McDowell of the YMCA, they are very committed to the building and the programs.

Mr. Bovilsky explained that when he joined the Norwalk Housing Authority, he looked at ways to fund programs. There was a tremendous deficit. He said they work to break the

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cycle of poverty through education. He said they needed a funding source and identified Care for Kids. To qualify, they need to be licensed or under this same type of situation. When they applied, Care for Kids conducted an inspection and they were very supportive of the program as long as the exemption from the City or Board of Education was maintained.

Mr. Daniels said that Ms. Oster makes unannounced visits to the sites and under Mr. Bovilsky's leadership, he has full faith and confidence. He said this is a temporary situation. Once they move to 98 South Main Street, this exemption will expire. The goal is that Ms. Oster will maintain a relationship with the team and from there will move to 98 South Main Street under their own license. He said he wants to be sure the children get the services they need. This is a tool to achieve that.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. ADJOURN

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 21, 2021