

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES, VETERANS, CULTURE, AND RECREATION

*Councilor Marianne LaBarge,
Chair Councilor Alisa F. Klein
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra*

MINUTES

Monday September 21, 2015

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street

Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building, Northampton, MA

1. Councilor LaBarge called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Members present/absent: Councilor Marianne LaBarge and Gina-Louise Sciarra were present at the beginning of the meeting; Councilor Klein arrived at 4:03pm.
3. Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting: Councilor LaBarge announced that the meeting would be videotaped.
4. Approval of Minutes of September 21, 2015: Councilor LaBarge moved to amend the minutes to reflect that she spoke about Jeff Harness coming to the meeting in October. Councilor Sciarra seconded the amendment. The minutes were approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Klein).
5. Public Comment: None
6. 4:05 p.m. – Jeff Harness, Director, Community Health & Government Relations, Cooley Dickinson Health Care

Mr. Harness did a Powerpoint presentation titled “Getting to Healthy”. The source of the information was a report authorized by a team that conducted a community survey about access to healthcare. The hospital conducts this survey every three years; in 2013 the results of the survey showed that “transportation” is a key concern as it hinders certain populations within the community to either get access to healthcare or get access to proactive measures to stay healthy.

A project group was established with key members from hospital staff. In conjunction with the United Way of Hampshire County and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the group began to dissect the transportation issue. They considered many variables including how people traveled (car, bus, taxi), transit times based on the mode of transportation, etc. The group looked at ways to improve access to care that eliminated the need for transportation altogether. The use of technology, providing a co-location of services, and traveling to patients were all part of the findings.

The committee determined that overall the hospital’s target population is extraordinarily healthy. Even still, they found that a concern exists for members of the community who are elderly, physically or mentally disabled, have language barriers, are substance abusers, or are low income status. The study found that members in these other categories are 4x more likely to struggle with transportation issues. The data revealed that lack of transportation meant missing appointments or that it affected the overall quality of the health care experience. Lack of transportation also makes it difficult to maintain a healthy lifestyle; doing healthy things such as exercising on a regular basis or buying fresh food are hindered by these same transportation issues.

The work of the committee is ongoing. Measures to address transportation are being taken, such as, partnering with other health care outlets to share the patient care experience. The hospital is also funding programs aimed at getting people to appropriate healthcare providers as well as those aimed at getting health information to patients without doctor/hospital visits.

6. 5:00 p.m. - Betsy Shalley-Jensen, PhD, DCM, Director for the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council at Cooley Dickinson Hospital

Ms. Shalley-Jensen talked about “A Positive Place”, a grant-funded program affiliated with Cooley Dickinson that provides medical and social case management, housing support, financial support, and healthcare and /or drug reimbursement assistance. The Council’s objective is to use data to make decisions about where to focus resources. The council initiatives include: enhancing LGBT healthcare and workplace environment; eliminating health disparities based on race, ethnicity and/or language. They also aim to improve services for people with disabilities. Their approach is to understand patient culture, values, and behaviors and then use this information to establish protocols that enhance the patient experience.

7. Schedule for the Month of October:

Councilor Klein announced that at 4pm Phil Korman, Executive Director of CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture) will be coming.

Councilor Sciarra stated that Oona Coy, one of the founders of the Tuesday Market will be coming at 5pm and Clem Clay, Executive Director of Grow Food Northampton will be presenting at 5:30pm.

8. ADJOURN-At 5:30 pm Councilor Sciarra moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Klein seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.

Prepared By:
Pamela L. Powers
Administrative Assistant to the City Council
413-587-1210
ppowers@northamptonma.gov