



COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES, VETERANS, CULTURE, AND RECREATION
Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair
Councilor Alisa F. Klein
Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra

MINUTES

Monday November 16, 2015

4:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building, Northampton, MA

*Activate NCTV Camera to Record Meeting

1. **Members present/absent:** Present at the meeting were Councilors LaBarge and Sciarra. Councilor Klein was absent.
2. **Meeting Called to Order:** Councilor LaBarge called the meeting to order at 4:12 pm.
3. **Announcement of Audio/Video Recording of Meeting:** Councilor LaBarge announced that the meeting would be videotaped.
4. **Approval of Minutes of October 19, 2015:** Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of October 19, 2015; Councilor Sciarra seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Klein).
5. **Public Comment:** None
6. **4:10 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Sheri Hall Smith, Board President, CASA LATINA

Sheri Hall Smith talked about the Casa Latina Program. Both Councilor LaBarge and Councilor Sciarra indicated that they are very familiar with what the program does for the community. They are located @ 100 Pine Street in Florence (formerly the Florence Community Center). The main services provided to the community include:

- Information and Referral services
- Medical interpretation services
- Outreach Events
- Case Management Service

The reason why these services are important, is because many people who are new to the area need support during a time of transition. Families can benefit from a broad range of services, including information about housing, doctor referrals, interpreters, and sources for financial assistance. Ms. Hall Smith read a letter from someone who benefited from the Casa Latina Agency many years ago. In that letter, the author talked about how the program helped to shape a better quality of life for an entire family. In 2015 thus far, Casa Latina has served about 350 people.

The Casa Latina Program was hard hit by the recession. To focus on a path forward, the agency began to develop a strategic plan with the help of Alan Bloomgarden, a Coordinator of the Community Based Learning Program at Mount Holyoke College. Mr. Bloomgarden has helped to define a "Board Development Process" aimed at recruiting board members for Casa Latina. The goal is to have 8-10 Board Members who each have a particular expertise in a strategic area of the Casa Latina business. These Board Members can provide leadership to committees or subcommittees in their area of expertise.

Mr. Bloomgarden has also helped to develop a formal process for adding new Board Members. First, a new candidate is invited to meet with the Board of Directors; then the candidate sits in on a Board of Director's

Meeting; finally, the Board will vote on whether the candidate would be a good fit. A newly added part of the bylaws is that the Board must consist of at least 50% members who are of Latin descent.

Cliff McCarthy, President, Pioneer Valley History Network

Cliff McCarthy is the President of Pioneer Valley History Network. The Agency is a resource for local history organizations in western Mass. PVHN brings together various historical organizations (like museums and libraries) in the Pioneer Valley to help promote "History Enthusiasm" to the general public. To encourage collaboration, PVHN selects a "theme" each year and invites participating historical societies and museums to create projects related to that theme. Past themes have included "Remarkable Women in the Pioneer Valley", "Disasters in the Pioneer Valley", and Immigration and Migration in the Pioneer Valley".

About the same time that Immigration and Migration theme was launched, PVHN learned about an exciting funding opportunity put out by the American Library Association with funding from the National Endowment for Humanities. The ALA was interested in developing a documentary series on Latino immigration. It was a good fit for PVHN because the agency did not have a lot of information available about the Latino role in American History. The agency received a \$10,000 grant. They are using the money to sponsor all kinds of Latino cultural events throughout the Pioneer Valley under the name Herencia Latina (2015-2016). Events include Film and Discussion, Parades, Music, and Festivals, as well as Exhibits. Events are held at locations like: the Holyoke Library, Holyoke Community College, and Wisteriahurst Museum (Holyoke), and WGBY studios (Springfield).

Mr. McCarthy shared a portion of a dvd, Latino Americans (available for download) produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association (ALA). To learn more about the dvd and the grant program, check out this website: <https://apply.ala.org/latinoamericans/>

7. 5:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Lucy Hartry, Northampton Health Services Manager, Tapestry Health

Ms. Hartry talked about the services offered by Tapestry Health for over 40 Years: They offer family planning and reproductive health services throughout Western Massachusetts. They provide referrals for other health needs that Tapestry Health cannot address. They offer a needle exchange program (Northampton is one of only 5 communities in Massachusetts to offer a needle exchange program. The state requires acceptance by the local Police Department and the local government. Other than Northampton, the program is offered in Holyoke, Provincetown, Boston and Cambridge). Tapestry Health's goal is to provide neighborhood-centered public health interventions to high risk and underserved populations. In Northampton, Tapestry Health has a clinic on Center Street, however, they would like to re-locate within Northampton to an area closer to down-town.

Cheryl Zoll, CEO Of Tapestry Health

Ms. Zoll has been with the organization about 1 year. She indicated that she is currently upgrading its clinic in Northampton (she specified that the location in Florence is mainly for Administrative Offices). The goal of the move is to become more accessible. They need about 2,200 square feet, but rents are high in downtown Northampton. Ms. Zoll reports that needle exchange customers total about 1,500 per year; health care service customers total about 3,000 people per year. The program serves people regardless of their ability to pay.

8. Councilor LaBarge announced that there will be no meeting in December. On behalf of the entire Committee, Councilor LaBarge wished all residents and their families HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A SAFE NEW YEAR.

10. ADJOURN: At 5:25 p.m. Councilor Sciarra moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Sciarra seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 2 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Klein).

Respectfully Submitted by:

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