

REPORT OF THE HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MARCH 16, 2006

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Thursday, March 16, 2006 at 7:34 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Marc W. Plamondon presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner, Vice Chair
Alderman Richard LaRose
Alderman Michael Tabacsko

Members not in Attendance: Alderman David MacLaughlin

Also in Attendance: Nick Caggiano, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation
Joe Mendola, BPW Engineering
Ted Setas, BPW Engineering
Donnalee Lozeau, Southern NH Service
Bob Mack, Welfare Officer
Kathy Hersh, Director, Community Development Division
Charlie Matthews, Hunt Memorial Restoration Committee
Nancy Blish, Hunt Memorial Restoration Committee
Sheila O'Riordan, Deputy Urban Programs Manager
Officer Costa, Nashua Police Department
Amy Gill, Public Works

Chair Plamondon announced that Ald. MacLaughlin was absent due to business commitments.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE THAT THE RULES BE SO FAR SUSPENDED AS TO GO OUT OF THE REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS TO NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-06-20

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman Gregory Williams
Alderman David MacLaughlin

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$63,125
OBTAINED FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #331-6233 “DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE UNIT 2006 FUNDS”**

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Officer Costa

This is a grant that we have been receiving since 1997. The purpose of this grant is to fund two positions in our domestic violence unit. It funds partially the salary of an investigator and it pays

for the full salary of an advocate.

Chair Plamondon

I know there has been a focus, especially in the last two years, on domestic violence. Are there any other funds or other personnel specifically targeting domestic violence in Nashua PD right now?

Officer Costa

Yes, we recently got awarded a grant for \$400,000 that's going to dramatically increase the staffing of that unit. We've moved a sergeant over there, another investigator, another officer, another advocate and a secretary as well. It's a two year grant. We will reapply for that and hopefully there will be funds for that in two more years as well.

Chair Plamondon

Do these funds target any specific aspect of domestic violence?

Officer Costa

This unit typically handles the misdemeanor cases. The felony cases still get handled by the detectives. That might change with the funding and increased staffing in this unit. Over the last five years, the numbers have more than doubled. Chances are when we get more investigators out there it is going to turn up more offenses as well.

Alderman LaRose

I am assuming it is not just against the spouse, it's also against children?

Officer Costa

That is right.

Alderman LaRose

Is there some type of a follow up so they get some help in dealing with their problem?

Officer Costa

Yes. Part of our services is referrals to other agencies that can help these people. With increased staff we will be able to go into and check on conditions of restraining orders, parole, probation and actually go out and make house calls. We didn't have the staffing to do that prior.

Chair Plamondon

So parole and probation officers are taking an active part in this as well.

Officer Costa

Yes, that is part of the Memorandum of Understanding that we have regarding this new grant. We are on board with them. They are going to be devoting one investigator to handle all of the domestic cases.

Alderman Tabacsko

You said this is one and a half people in this particular grant that we are talking about tonight?

Officer Costa

We use this to help fund two people that have been in the unit since it has started in 1996. We got the grant in 1997. There is a matching component to this. It does not cover the full salary of both people.

Alderman Tabacsko

So that's the cost – the other half of a person. Since 1996, we've been able to get a comparable amount each year?

Officer Costa

Right. Ususally grants are to get a program started. Then they wean you off it. We have been fortunate that this has stayed on for the last eight or nine years. I hope it will continue.

Alderman Tabacsko

Do you see you able to do this next year?

Officer Costa

I hope so.

Alderman Tollner

This is a great program. I know we have expanded it over the last few years. Some of these grants have an obligation on the city's part that if we accept the grant money over a course of a number of years when the grant, itself, runs out or it is no longer funded, the city is obligated to continue that coverage for those positions. Does this grant work that way?

Officer Costa

Yes.

Alderman Tollner

What is the type of time period as far as our commitment in accepting this grant money and what would be the time period that we would be on our own after that time period expires?

Officer Costa

I don't know if the federal government says you have to have it for five years, ten years. They want to get these units up and running. We have accepted this money saying we're going to continue to fund this. I don't believe there is any kind of deadline that says you have to have this go on for ten years. If our focus changes or if it is no longer needed then there's a possibility it wouldn't be funded, but I don't see that happening. The case load has more than doubled over the last five years.

Alderman Tollner

Is there any other obligation on the city's behalf in accepting these grant dollars?

Officer Costa

No. As I said, there's a matching component. We're absorbing a portion of salary and benefits for the officer that was already on payroll and got transferred over. That freed up a slot in patrol, most likely.

Alderman Tollner

It says here that it is a domestic violence unit 2006 funds. The city would be reimbursed by the federal government starting when?
Is it January?

Officer Costa

Yes. It is a calendar year.

Alderman Tollner

As far as picking up the balance in this particular program, is that already implemented in the Chief's budget that he is forwarding to the Board of Aldermen and the Budget Committee?

Officer Costa

Yes, this is a budgeted item that has been in our budget since day one of the grant. In order to accept this back in 1997, there was a matching component on this.

Alderman Tollner

Do you have any idea how many people you have served over the last year through these grant dollars?

Officer Costa

Last year, they had over 1400 cases that were handled by the investigator and the advocate. That is in total.

Alderman Tollner

Okay, so they are definitely in the budget. The dollars that we are responsible for are

implemented in the Chief's budget that he is going to present to the budget committee.

Officer Costa

That is correct.

Chair Plamondon

Do you know the percent of the match?

Officer Costa

I believe it had to be 25 percent.

Chair Plamondon

Correct me if I am wrong but what I have seen in the Tree Streets Crime Watch reports domestic violence is the most prevalent crime that is in front of us in this city by far.

Officer Costa

That's right. It's an increasing problem that we have. A lot of it comes downtown.

Chair Plamondon

In this department, we have multi-lingual officers that can help with domestic violences, and if so, what languages?

Officer Costa

We do have several Spanish speaking officers. The advocate that we are trying to hire is also a bi-lingual Spanish speaker.

MOTION CARRIED

R-06-21

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Gregory Williams
Alderman David MacLaughlin

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$4,995
OBTAINED FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, POLICE STANDARDS
AND TRAINING COUNCIL INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #331-6235
“NH POLICE STANDARDS AND TRAINING #138”**

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Officer Costa

This money is going to be used to reimburse the PD for sending up an officer to provide instruction at one of the academy.

Chair Plamondon

Are their matching dollars associated with this?

Officer Costa

No.

MOTION CARRIED

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER THAT THE RULES BE SO FAR SUSPENDED TO GO
OUT OF ORDER TO CONSIDER RESOLUTION R-06-31
MOTION CARRIED**

R-06-31

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$19,625 OBTAINED
FROM THE NH DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FOR CONTROL OF
EXOTIC AQUATIC WEEDS IN THE MILL POND AND NASHUA CANAL LOCATED IN
MINE FALLS PARK TO BE PLACED IN SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT 352-6517
“MINE FALLS PARK – EXOTIC WEED CONTROL”**

MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Nick Caggiano, Supt. of Parks

Last fall we were in attendance of a presentation on invasive weeds that are invading the state's waterways from the Department of Environmental Services. During that presentation, we became aware that there is a grant available from the state to actually treat these weeds. Mine Falls fell into the category. We applied for the grant and we received a grant for half. It's a matching grant. We have to match 50 percent. The city's 50 percent will not come out of our operating budget. We were instrumental with Alderman Deane a few years ago in setting up the Mine Falls trust account. The matching \$19,625 will come out of the Mine Falls trust account. It won't affect our operating budget. If everything gets approved, on June 1st, a company in Massachusetts, Control Technology, will go out and make a series of three applications to the mill pond and to the canal, focusing on two major weeds. We will monitor that and hopefully we can apply again. This is a process that may take over a period of ten years to eliminate those weeds.

Chair Plamondon

Weren't we looking for money from Senator Gregg out of HUD money?

Nick Caggiano

There is some HUD monies, but you're not allowed to use federal money to match state grants. This is exactly why we established the trust fund at Mines Falls Park. It is a great use of the money. We have the full recommendation of the Mines Falls Advisory group.

Chair Plamondon

There was an original plan, it must have been with the Army Corps of Engineers. Then there was a federal cut-back.

Nick Caggiano

That is correct.

Amy Gill

There is an ongoing study that is trying to restore the water quality in mill pond and the canal. One of the ways that they are recommending improving the water quality was increase the water through mill pond and the canal by increasing the water through the gate house. That would help with the weed issue that is ongoing there. Right now that in the 95 percent draft stage.

Chair Plamondon

Do we have any plans or the ability within this year to fix the gates for the dam so we can increase that flow?

Amy Gill

Currently we're getting 10 cfs from a Ogunquin who is in charge of the dam at Mines Falls. They have a hydrant plant there. They are only required to discharge 10 cfs to mill pond. In order to increase that, we would have to work with them. There are certain times of the year when they have a surplus of water that we could increase that flow through, but that is still in the planning stages.

Chair Plamondon

I hope we can clean that up. I hget a lot of complaints from people who use Mines Falls and the residents who live along the canal.

Amy Gill

The canal is weedy. This will take care of the aquatic invasive weeds that are in the water. Some of the weeds that are in the canal and mill pond will remain and will not be treated. It will help reduce the growth of the invasive species that are in the waterways.

Alderman Tabacsko

I'm glad to hear that there is a Mine Falls trust fund. What is the source. How do we fund that now?

Nick Caggiano

The Mine Falls trust fund is funded through the revenues from the cell tower that was put up at the soccer field location. Up until two years ago, it was in a special revenue account which had accounting legality issues. We had to establish a trust so that those funds could be protected.

Alderman Tabacsko

You said earlier that the weed problem would be helped by increasing the flow and at least at some points in the year there is enough additional flow available. Mechanically or physically, is that possible? Is there anything other than paperwork stopping us from doing that during those peak flow times?

Amy Gill

There is a valve that controls the discharge througth the gatehouse. Currently there is one 24-inch pipe that goes througth the gatehouse which allows the discharge into the pond. It is locked at a certain level at a certain degree angle so that the flow is controlled at 10 cfs. In the future if negotiations are such, we could increase the valve. Part of on the core study was to look to increase the size of that pipe to allow quite a bit more flow through there.

Chair Plamondon

Was the Army Corps Engineer's original plan going to dredge out the canal?

Amy Gill

That was considered but it fell out as far as the costing analysis was concerned. They looked at other alternatives, one included a floating island in the middle of mill pond. Another was an element treatment – a one time treatment in the pond. These recommendations are part of the study that hasn't been completed yet.

Chair Plamondon

That canal was hand dug by the first Irish immigrants of this city.

Alderman LaRose

How much money is left in the Mine Falls Park fund after taking out the \$20,000?

Nick Caggiano

After we take out the \$20,000 there will be about \$270,000 in the fund.

Alderman LaRose

How much rental do you get from that cell tower a year?

Nick Caggiano

It is never consistent because the users come on and off, but I would say it averages somewhere around \$52,000 a year.

MOTION CARRIED

R-06-23

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner
Alderman Richard LaRose
Alderman David MacLaughlin
Alderman Robert A. Dion

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$1,360,232 FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT INTO SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT #341-6411 "HOPWA GRANT"

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE OF R-06-23

ON THE QUESTION

Bob Mack, Welfare Officer

This HOPWA grant provides housing opportunities for persons with Aids. We're looking to establish a partnership between the City of Nashua, Division of Public Health and Community

Services, Harbor Homes, Inc. and So. New Hampshire HIV and Aids Task Force. We would be looking for the city to accept the \$1,360,232 to provide rental subsidies, supportive services to approximately 30 households with patients with HIV Aids. Approximately \$790,000 would be focused on tenant based rental assistance over a three year period, averaging approximately \$8500 per household per year. Supportive services is approximately \$440,000 over that three-year period. There's administrative costs of approximately \$123,000 over that three-year period. Currently the task force serves some 108 clients in the greater Nashua area. A small percentage of those receive some sort of rental subsidy. This grant opportunity will allow an additional 30 or so household to receive that subsidy. This would allow them to free up some of their client funds for other resources and expenditures. It would also help relieve the burden on some other mainstream resources in the community.

Chair Plamondon

What is the \$440,000 support services?

Bob Mack

It would include food, home health aides, desperate care, day care, transportation assistance, substance use, and/or mental health counseling services.

Chair Plamondon

Are any matching dollars required from the city?

Bob Mack

Not from the city. There will be some in-kind support. It's a pretty much a pass-through grant. Harbor Homes and the Task Force would be providing the direct service. We would provide some administrative oversight.

Alderman LaRose

I'm a little confused about the administrative services. That is not just the city, is it?

Bob Mack

No.

Alderman LaRose

There's a portion that is coming to the city, and there's a portion that is going to Harbor Homes, Southern New Hampshire Services, HIV and Aids Task Force.

Bob Mack

Yes. The admin on the part of the city would be rather minimal. A lot of the administrative services would go towards housing, maintenance, and inspecting the facilities. Harbor Homes would do most of.

Alderman LaRose

These rental subsidies, these are people throughout the City of Nashua, and there is not a specific home?

Bob Mack

Correct. It would be a voucher type system where they could take that rental subsidy to a regular apartment, either right in Nashua or in the greater Nashua area. We would work with Harbor Homes to provide administrative oversight. We would have the ultimate reporting duties back to the federal government. We would collect information report, review those types of things from Harbor Homes and the Task Force and then provide that report to the funder.

Alderman LaRose

Is there a maximum that you are allowed to pay for rent?

Bob Mack

There are some HUD standards that would apply. They have fair market rents and things like that. Part of the administration and support services would be to work with the clients to find suitable and affordable housing within those standards.

Alderman Tabacsko

You said earlier that there was some savings to other resources in the city. Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Bob Mack

By providing support services to the clients that are in this program, it helps them to maintain their health; it allows them greater access to typical traditional services. The healthier they remain, the less of a burden that becomes on the health care system. If they can get some support with medications, they don't have to come and get emergency assistance. If they can pay their own fuel bills, they don't have to come and receive emergency assistance from the city or an alternative resource. It frees it up for other clients in the city as well.

Alderman Tabacsko

Have we participated in this particular grant before?

Bob Mack

No.

Alderman Tabacsko

Anything similar?

Bob Mack

There are a number of grants that operate over at the division. I couldn't begin to tell you all of them. For this particular grant, it was a pretty big deal when we applied for this and was awarded it. Senator Sununu had come to town and a number of folks from HOPWA and HUD. It was a tremendous opportunity to bring this type of funding to the region because we haven't done this before. There are various rental subsidized supportive housing programs that are supported through HUD dollars, but not through this particular HOPWA grant.

Alderman Tabacsko

If you're not willing to go out and stick a number on it tonight, maybe next year through tracking, we could have a number of what this actually saved out of the other resources. I think that would be important.

Bob Mack

Absolutely. This is a three-year grant and that would be a big part of it. There are reporting requirements and outcome requirements that we need to report back to HOPWA on.

Chair Plamondon

Is there any partnerships like Southern New Hampshire HIV and Aids Task Force do they work with the methadone clinics now? I would imagine that a percentage of this population that these grant monies are going towards also are involved with other agencies such as these.

Bob Mack

There are ongoing partnerships already that exist. The public health department does a lot of STD screenings and some outreach for substance abuse. They do a number of referrals to the task force. There's a good partnership there. A piece of this grant is to provide counseling services around substance use.

Alderman LaRose

I have to assume that after three years, the federal government is going to continue this program, or we hope that they will continue the program. If they don't continue the program, what do we do? The reason I ask that is we accept a lot of grants for a lot of different things. My thoughts is if we are going to accept a grant for something and all of a sudden the monies dry up, we've made people dependent on this. My thoughts are if we accept this, we have to take the responsibility in the future if this dries up. If we are not prepared to take the responsibility in the future, then we shouldn't accept this grant.

Bob Mack

That's an excellent point. There is a certain level of risk for applying for any grant funding. One of the things that we do every year is we apply to HUD to get close to \$2 million for supportive housing and transitional housing services. We have to do that year after year after year and hope that they don't reduce the funding too much or that you can stretch the level funding as far as you did the year before. It is an ongoing challenge. I think with this being a three-year grant,

it may allow you a little bit longer period of time to try to reinforce those partnerships as well as have some of the participants apply for other mainstream types of resources, some of which are public housing and mainstream HUD vouchers that have two and three year waiting lists. By allowing them this opportunity for this period of time, they may become eligible for those other resources as this grant draws towards a close.

Alderman Tollner

Does Manchester or Portsmouth or Concord run programs similar to this?

Bob Mack

They have task forces that provide support services. They get some of the Ryan White Care Act funding which is another funding source that is often times at risk of being cut, but not so much a program to this extent that I am aware of.

Alderman Tollner

I think these programs are great. Given what we are going through and what we will be going through with our budget this year, I think it would be very difficult for the city to absorb the cost of running this program in the future without federal support of federal dollars. I am definitely in support and I commend your work in getting the grant and getting the award, but I also want to go on record that as we move forward I can't imagine the city bearing the total cost of this program in the future given the budget constraints that we are dealing with and we will continue to deal with.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER TO RETURN TO THE REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

MOTION CARRIED

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Sheila O'Riordan, Deputy Manager, Urban Programs Department
Re: Community Development Block Grant and HOME Program

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE

MOTION CARRIED

From: Sheila O'Riordan, Deputy Manager, Urban Programs Department
Re: Proposed Cutting of 07 HUD Budget by an Additional 25%

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE THAT THE RULES BE SO FAR SUSPENDED AS TO ALLOW FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNICATION RECEIVED AFTER THE AGENDA WAS PREPARED

From: Sheila O’Riordan, Deputy Manager, Urban Programs Department
Re: CDBG/HOME 2007 Proposal Summaries

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE
MOTION CARRIED**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

DISCUSSION

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed cutting of FY07 HUD budget by an additional 25 percent.

A discussion followed regarding the attached narrative summaries for the CDBG and HOME proposals for FY 2007, which were accepted under suspension of rules.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TABACSKO TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 10:32 p.m.

Alderman Richard LaRose
Committee Clerk, Pro Tem