

Allegheny County Council

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Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Health & Human Services

***Mike Finnerty, Chair; Joan Cleary, Jim Ellenbogen, Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey,
Nick Futules, Chuck McCullough, and William Robinson - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:10 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Dr. Bruce Dixon, Director, Health Department

Dr. Roger Westman, Health Department

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn, Dr. Dixon, and Dr. Westman.*

Recognized attendees: Sandra Etzel and Rebecca Morris-Chatta - Health Department

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio and Jared Barker

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Joan Cleary, Nick Futules, Chair Michael Finnerty, and Council Member Matt Drozd
Absent: Jim Ellenbogen, Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey, Charles McCullough, and William Robinson

III. Approval of Minutes

3701-08 Motion to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2007 Health & Human Services Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by the following vote:**

Votes: Yes: 3 - Cleary, Chair Finnerty and Council Member Drozd
Abstain: 1 - Futules
Absent: 5 - Ellenbogen, Frazier, Macey, McCullough and Robinson

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

3671-08 An Ordinance of the Council of the County of Allegheny adopting and approving of a proposed Allegheny County Health Department Rule and Regulation (Article II - "Needle Exchange Program for Communicable Disease Prevention and Providing Drug Treatment Opportunities").

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *The Chair provided a summary of the bill. He asked Council Members to refer to the Briefing Report prepared by staff. The Briefing report indicated that the approval of these regulations was originally attempted in late 2006 through Bill No. 2838-06 and again in mid-2007 through Bill No. 3276-07, both of which were voted down by Council due to concerns over certain portions of the regulations. This bill would authorize a set of regulations that was created by the Health Department with Council's concerns about the previous versions in mind.*

He noted the features of the "new" regulations are as follows:

Notice must now be given to Council before a vote on any proposed alterations to the program's operating procedures is taken by the Board of Health.

Basically creates a notice requirement; no program may operate in any location until that location address is specifically approved by both the Board of Health and the host municipality through legislative action. Locations in operation prior to the regulation's enactment would be grandfathered for approval purposes (i.e. the City of Pittsburgh's approval is necessary for Prevention Point Pittsburgh's location in Oakland to remain open, but it would be necessary if they were to try to open additional locations within the County), but these municipalities must still be informed of the existing location(s) within ten days of the effective date of the regulation.

Establishes documentation protocols (every encounter must be recorded, and the person providing services will be identifiable). Documentation must be preserved for three years.

Allows for dispensing only the number of syringes that are reasonably necessary for one month's worth of injections.

The reporting section requires a semi-annual report by the program to the ACHD indicating number of visits, number of individual participants, total number of syringes dispensed, the number of treatment referrals made, and the number of infectious disease tests performed.

Says that a program that does not follow the regulations may lose its authorization, subject to the discretion of the ACHD or the repeal of approving legislation by the host municipality.

In addition to the above characteristics, all references to secondary exchange have been eliminated from the proposed regulation.

Dr. Dixon said that he is convinced that this bill represents a consensus of opinion with Council, the Administration, and other interested parties. The Chair agreed.

Discussion Topic:

Air Quality Permitting

Summary: *The Chair invited Dr. Dixon, Dr. Westman, Ms. Etzel, and Ms. Morris-Chatta to the committee table. He asked Dr. Westman to provide the committee with a detailed explanation of the permitting process. Dr. Westman provided this explanation.*

Dr. Dixon distinguished between the different types of permits. He said they fall under Title 5. He said that one permits installation and the other grants authority to implement. Dr. Westman provided a detailed explanation of Title 5 operating program and the requirements. He said it is a national program and all state and local agencies have to abide by it since it is a portion of the Clean Air Act. He explain the fee process of the program.

Ms. Morris-Chatta said that permits are being issued more expeditiously now than they ever were. She said the process radically improved within the past 5 or 6 years. The Chair asked her if she had any statistics with her. She said no, but they will be presented at the next Board of Health meeting and that she would send him a copy of them.

More discussion took place regarding the permitting process. Dr. Westman provided a time line for the process. He said the applicant obtains the permit and completes it. They make sure that it is complete. They then draft the permit and share it with the company, and make available public comment for 30 days. They then analyze the public comment and make any necessary changes. Then they issue the permit, test the equipment and verify that it is operating properly. If the test results are good then they issue the operational permit.

The Chair asked Dr. Westman if he could send him a written outline of the process. Dr. Westman said he would do that.

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM*