

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 5, 2007

4:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Health & Human Services

***Mike Finnerty, Chair; Joan Cleary, Susan Caldwell, Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey,
and William Robinson - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Dr. Bruce Dixon, Director, Health Department or Designee

Rebecca Morris-Chatta, Solicitor, Health Department

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Jim Flynn, County Manager; Dr. Bruce Dixon, Director, Health Department; Rebecca Morris-Chatta, Solicitor, Health Department; Cindy Thomas, Executive Director, Tobacco Free Allegheny; Renee Cox, Executive Director, Prevention Point Pittsburgh*

Council Staff Present: Jared Barker, Jennifer Liptak, Stephanie Buka

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Brenda Frazier, Bob Macey, and Michael Finnerty
Absent: Joan Cleary, and William Robinson
Phone: Susan Caldwell, and Council Member Vince Gastgeb

III. Approval of Minutes

3318-07 Motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2007 Health & Human Services Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Frazier, seconded by Macey, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

3276-07 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: *Chairman Finnerty asked Dr. Dixon about the program requirements and the operating procedures. Dr. Dixon said the operating procedures are outlined in the Rules and Regulations. Chairman Finnerty said he would like Council to know what is going on with this program and Dr. Dixon responded that the Health Department could accomodate those reporting requests.*

Councilman Macey said he thought the community didn't have much input into this program and Ms. Morris-Chatta said the program helps people get into treatment, and every person is provided with risk-reduction education. In addition, she said they get a unique identifier code which allows them to remain anonymous.

Councilman Macey had concerns over changes that might occur within a municipality, such as a new elected Mayor or Council, and whether they would approve of such a program. Ms. Morris-Chatta stated that in the proposed regulations the program must be approved by the Board of Health and the proposed site's municipality, but they don't anticipate problems of that nature. They expect mobile units, rather than another permanent site. Ms. Cox said they always work with the community before moving into that community to offer help.

Councilwoman Frazier asked what kind of records have been kept in terms of how successful the program has been and Ms. Cox said they conduct an interview with a client on their risk practices, and 3 to 6 months later they conduct a follow-up interview to determine any behavior changes. The evaluation revealed there was a 60% reduction in needle use, and drug use decreased as well. Councilwoman Frazier asked for a hard copy of this data and Ms. Cox said she would provide that information for Council. Ms. Morris-Chatta added that HIV and hepatitis are reduced and drug use declines as well.

Councilwoman Caldwell was concerned that Council wouldn't have the necessary oversight of the program. Councilman Gastgeb agreed and said he wasn't aware of any mobile units traveling in the municipalities before now. Ms. Cox said a mobile unit is more desirable to most communities, rather than a permanent site.

Ms. Morris-Chatta asked for clarification of Councilman Gastgeb's request because she felt she was providing what Council wanted in the Rules and Regulations. It was decided that a meeting would take place where the desired language could be worked out. Ms. Morris-Chatta said the goal is to get as many clean syringes into the drug using community as possible, but they didn't put a specific number on needles in the regs. Councilman Gastgeb said the Rules and Regulations need to be very clear.

Councilman Gastgeb said that most other cities that have a needle exchange program are operating through the government, but since ours is a hybrid, the County needs to make sure the various communities are okay with this plan.

Councilman Macey asked what communities the mobile units would travel to and Dr. Dixon made it clear that there is only one single location in Oakland for the needle exchange program and currently there are no mobile units in operation.

Councilman Finnerty asked Dr. Dixon about a deadline. Dr. Dixon confirmed that the Health Department was on a 30-day deadline. Chairman Finnerty said it would be best to release the bill from the committee with a negative recommendation to go before the full Council, and then they will have the opportunity to rework the bill.

Action:

A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Frazier, that this matter be Negatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

3279-07

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 5, entitled "Health and Sanitation," through the creation of a new Chapter 580, entitled "Allegheny County Certified Smoke Free Program," in order to provide a means for the County's residents to identify nonsmoking food or beverage establishments, workplaces, and other facilities.

Sponsors: Rich Fitzgerald, Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, William E. Lestitian, Jan Rea, William Russell Robinson, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni and Dave Fawcett

Summary:

Councilwoman Caldwell asked if there was a plan for the smoke-free program and Chairman Finnerty said it's a work in progress.

Councilwoman Caldwell mentioned that there were different ideas about the program and asked Dr. Dixon for clarification. Dr. Dixon said they haven't studied this in great detail but the general idea is that there would be a separate decal that an establishment could place in its window or on its door. The Health Department website does have a listing of smoke-free establishments.

Ms. Thomas said Tobacco Free Allegheny has a monthly newsletter, and a listing on their web as well. They are asking people to notify them about smoke-free restaurants.

Councilwoman Frazier said she'd like to see something different from the usual sanitation sticker. Dr. Dixon said the green decal is used for sanitation, but they too would like to do something different. He said it should be placed alongside the Health Inspection approval sticker.

Councilwoman Frazier wanted to know what the state has done if anything, and Ms. Morris-Chatta said the same thing that happened at the County level will happen at the State level, regarding exemptions vs. non-exemptions.

Ms. Thomas said SB 246 passed, and it's in the House right now, but they haven't moved it.

Dr. Dixon said the Health Department is currently working on a design for the sticker.

Action:

A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Frazier, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Adjournment

Summary:

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.