

HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 13, 2021

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Monday, September 13, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom teleconference.

Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly, Chairman, presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright, Vice Chair
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman June M. Caron

Members of the Committee absent: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

Also in Attendance: Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-21-161

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza
Alderman Jan Schmidt
Alderman Skip Cleaver
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF AN ADDITIONAL \$621,556 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTO PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES GRANT ACTIVITY "COVID-19 ENHANCED DETECTION"

MOTION BY ALDERMAN HARRIOTT-GATHRIGHT TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE

ON THE QUESTION

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

Thank you. Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services. Here to speak on the additional funding in the amount of \$621,556 from the State of New Hampshire. These funds would be used to continue to support the work that we're doing to address COVID. As you have seen with the increase in the number of cases, we're still at substantial spread in our State as well as in our City of Nashua. So these funds have been granted to us to bring on some more support staff. So we're hoping once this gets approved bring on a Behavioral Health Specialist that will work with us in addition to getting in Administrative Assistant for additional support for the activities that we are working on with regards to COVID. So we continue to do case investigations but they are prioritized because there's so many cases that have been coming through. We continue to vaccination clinics and as the activities increase, we want to make sure that we have the appropriate staffing to help us address some of these activities. So we're looking forward to receiving these funds to support that work over the next – you know, hopefully this ends soon.

Alderman Klee

Fingers crossed.

Chairwoman Kelly

Amen.

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

Are there any questions?

Chairwoman Kelly

Yeah does anyone from the committee have questions for Director Bagley?

Alderman Caron

Yes thank you. How many people do you think you'll look for for additional staff to work on this project?

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

Thank you for that question. So we're going to look to bring on a full time Administrative Assistant, a full time Behavioral Health Specialist that will support this work. This also includes continued funding to support – we have at least one Community Health Outreach Worker who some hours are funded under these funds as well in addition to our Public Health Network Services Coordinator that we have on board with us. So it will be two additional staff that we're going to bring on. This also supports any per diem nurses that we have when we need to have the additional staff on to do the disease investigations. So it will be two FTEs and then possibly some additional hours for our per diem nursing staff.

Alderman Caron

Okay thank you.

Chairwoman Kelly

Are there any other questions from the Committee? I actually have one. I was just wondering about how you're doing contract tracing now. I know it changed quite a bit so I'm just interested in sort of what that looks like and how many staff you have to bring on to support this sort of new way that you're doing that.

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

So what we're doing is we're prioritizing individuals now that are under the age of 18 for our disease investigation. Our processes have changed because again there are so many cases that are coming through. We want to prioritize those that are most at risk. Because of school, we want to make sure that we can connect with families as quickly as possible to make sure that they quarantine and keep those kids at home.

So right now, we're able to manage because we've reduced the number by prioritizing on those under 18 years of age but that just happened last week. What the State will do if the numbers start to sort of level out, then they'll bounce it back up to the age we were doing 35 and under. So as the numbers go down, then they'll bounce it back up to that then what we were doing just prior to it dropping to 35 is we're investigating all the cases that came through. So if the capacity is too much for even the State to handle, then they have to prioritize those that are at most risk so that we can get those individuals quarantined as quickly as we can and our focus is really on the school so that you know we don't get outbreaks in schools to the point where classrooms are impacted or schools impacted greatly.

Chairwoman Kelly

Great. I had one follow on. So you talked about bringing on two FTEs. Do you have the funding after this runs out to keep those people on? Are the temporary? What does that look like?

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

No. We actually do Alderwoman Kelly we put in the grant when folks come on board, we make them aware of the fact that this is grant funding only. So this is funding that we'll have for two years. SO those positions will be limited to only as long as we have the grant funding. So once the grant funding is gone, we no longer can maintain those positions because we're not asking for any matching funds from the City.

Chairwoman Kelly

Perfect. I just wanted to make sure. Okay. I know you guys all were good. Double checking one more time. Okay.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

I do have one question.

Chairwoman Kelly

Sure.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

The \$896,349 – so this is part of that or this was additional?

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

This is additional.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

Oh, okay. Wow.

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

Yeah this is an addition. So what the State and the CDC has been doing is COVID really allowed for our nation to see how underfunded public health was because we didn't have enough staffing capacity to respond to this pandemic in the way that we needed to. You all saw we had the National Guard working with us. There was additional staffing that we brought on at the Health Department. We have a per diem pool now that when we need to call those individuals to work, we have the funds to be able to cover their support when they're providing those additional hours to us when needed. So this is in addition to that.

Alderman Harriott-Gathright

That's great. Thank you.

MOTION CARRIED

Chairwoman Kelly

Thank you Director Bagley.

Bobbie Bagley, Director for the Division of Public Health and Community Services

Have a good evening.

Chairwoman Kelly

Yeah you too.

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE - None

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN - None

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN HARRIOTT-GATHRIGHT TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Committee Clerk