

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 9, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Jorge Cruz, Co-chair; Aikeem Boyd, Co-chair; Michelle Lyons, Samia Suliman

OTHER: Denzel Hunter, Department of Social Services; Cheryl Bell, Thomas Gaudett, Mayor's Office; Carmen Colon, Terrence Brown, Anthony Paoletto

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Cruz called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.m.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF AUGUST 10, 2022 (REGULAR MEETING).

- ** COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 10, 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

INFORMATIONAL SESSION WITH CARMEN COLON, ALPHA COMMUNITY SERVICES/YMCA; ALICIA FELLER, DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES; CHERYL BELL FROM RECOVERY NETWORK OF PROGRAMS; DENZEL HUNTER, DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL SERVICES, SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE AT THE MARGARET MORTON CENTER; SANDRA RIVERA FROM THE HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM REGARDING HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IN THE CITY.

Mr. Hunter came forward to speak. He is the Director of Clinical Services for the Department of Social Services. They are currently working to revamp the department. They are also working with the Police Department. They are primarily serving residents. Their current program is a pilot program, and they are in an experimental state. They have made contact with 100+ people over the past few months in regard to mental health, substance-based, or vocational resource help. He reviewed the current status and development of the program for those present, especially in regard to networking. He reviewed his upcoming scheduled meetings. They have performed homeless surveys to obtain a census of the demographics. They have found that most folks are already connected to a resource. He further reviewed the findings of the census.

Council Member Lyons noted she had seen homeless people in a certain location, and she was concerned as to if this was acceptable or not.

Mr. Hunter said they were keeping an eye on the locations and were trying to gather as much data as possible currently. He further reviewed their efforts to engage with the homeless and gather data.

A question was asked to clarify what was being done to deal with panhandling. It was also asked if there were brochures or some other method to distribute information to those in need.

Mr. Hunter said they were going to get their brochures printed out soon and reviewed the status on them.

Council Member Cruz recalled an issue several years prior involving the homeless and having identification. He reviewed the difficulties that had been present. He asked if Mr. Hunter could talk to his superiors about the ordinances regarding the identification and if a solution to it could be worked on. Further discussion followed regarding the homeless surveys.

Ms. Bell then reviewed the status of the homeless individuals under I-95 and their efforts to remove them from under I-95. She noted that 20 individuals had recently been at the warming center to spend the night. Further discussion followed. It is expected that there will be an increase in numbers in the warming center during the winter months. The preparation for the shelters for the winter were reviewed.

Council Member Cruz said he would follow up with various people regarding an email that had been sent out.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SULIMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services