



MEETING MINUTES
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 14, 2022 7:00 PM

Social Services Committee

Members Present: Councilmember Reid, Councilmember Burns, S. Olds Frey, D. Ohanian, A. Ngola, D. Cravens, A. Sood, S. Lackey, K. Hayes

Members Absent: None

Staff: S. Flax, J. Wingader

Call to Order / Declaration of Quorum

Chair Olds Frey called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Suspension of the Rules

Vice Chair Ohanian moved approval, seconded by Ms. Sood; a roll call vote was taken and the rules to suspend to allow for virtual participation were approved 6-0.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 10 and March 10, 2022

Ms. Ngola moved approval of the meeting minutes for February 10, 2022, seconded by Vice Chair Ohanian; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Ngola moved approval of the meeting minutes for March 10, 2022, seconded by Ms. Cravens; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.

Public Comment

No public comment

ARPA Living Room Project Update

Ann Raney, Chief Executive Officer of Turning Point provided a history of living room projects in the surrounding community, spoke to the ongoing process of engaging partners and community members in shaping the project, and the goals of the living room including free, open access to anyone in crisis interested in receiving services. Ms. Raney outlined the role of recovery specialists and partners including Trilogy, Inc., PEER Services and AMITA Health Saint Francis Hospital. Members asked questions about project costs and ongoing financial support for the program.

2022 Funding Allocations (For Action)

Staff outlined the condensed allocation process for FY2022 due to the late release of 2021 funds and presented information about metrics and agency outcomes for the prior year. Staff presented the FY 2022 Allocation Spreadsheet. Councilmember Reid moved approval of the proposed allocations, seconded by Councilmember Burns. There was discussion about Family Focus exceeding the enrollment goal and ways to consider

agency outcomes in ongoing funding recommendation decisions. Members agreed that a framework for reviewing outcomes was needed for future discussions. Staff also noted the need to consider ways to increase program capacity, overall program goals and whether a review of the percent of funds assigned to each category could impact service capacity.

When reviewing Safety Net allocations, there was discussion about North Shore Senior Center, the reduction to the award for 2021 and the allocation recommendation for 2022. Members reviewed the types of services the agency provided to Evanston residents and the number of residents who went through intake in 2021; there was additional review and discussion about the number of residents enrolled in additional services and the possibility of expanded capacity. Councilmember Burns requested that staff include a notes section with additional information for all agencies when reviewing agency outcomes and allocations in future.

Staff noted that benefits enrollment and managed care were needed services provided by North Shore Senior Center; staff also noted that funds could be reduced during the allocation discussion and increased at a later date after further review of ongoing outcomes. There was discussion about the number of residents reported served and those enrolled in deeper services; participants speculated about whether the agency could serve additional participants or further engage seniors at specific locations in Evanston including the Levy Center and Family Focus.

Chair Olds Frey pointed out that public benefits enrollees were at risk of losing coverage when the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) ends; all recipients would undergo a redetermination process that might involve complex enrollment forms and documentation; this process could disproportionately impact BIPOC residents and those without access to supportive services. Chair Olds Frey recommended partnering with agencies that could provide additional benefits enrollment support.

Kathy Honeywell from North Shore Senior Center was invited to provide additional information about provision of services and outreach efforts. Ms. Honeywell confirmed that the agency provides benefits enrollment including LIHEAP and Medicare and that the agency, as a Coordinated Care Provider, was able to provide assessments and case management. Members asked additional questions about programs and eligibility requirements, there was discussion about the most challenging benefits for seniors to enroll in and referral partners for case management and legal needs.

There was further discussion about allocation amounts and the timeframe for reviewing additional funds; Chair Olds Frey noted that the PHE could end in July and public benefits redeterminations would begin in July or August. In an effort to determine best ways to support agencies, the Committee reviewed the allocation and funding timeline to understand when allocation determinations could align to provide needed community services. Staff suggested that support service funding could also be used to provide additional enrollment services.

After additional discussion about the amount available for allocation, Chair Olds Frey called for a motion to approve allocations in the amounts of \$125,000 to Family Focus, \$17,500 to the Housing Authority of Cook County, \$75,000 to Infant Welfare Society, and \$75,000 to the James B. Moran Center for a total allocation of \$292,500 to case management services and \$45,000 to Books & Breakfast, \$36,700 to Childcare Network of Evanston, \$150,000 to Connections for the Homeless, \$42,500 to Interfaith Action, \$50,000 to James B. Moran Center, \$30,000 to Meals at Home, \$23,750 to North Shore Senior Center, \$99,500 to PEER Services, and \$35,000 to the YWCA Evanston/North Shore for a total of \$512,450 for safety net services; Ms. Hayes moved approval seconded by Vice Chair Ohanian. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved 8-0.

Updates from Support Services Working Group

Ms. Ngola summarized information provided to the working group about counseling, psychiatric, and assessment services by agency representatives; she confirmed that agencies identified individual, group and family counseling services, and particularly services for youth and young children, were most needed. Ms. Ngola identified specific service provision components including a diversity, equity and inclusion index, telehealth and in-person services, and noted that there was less interest in assigning funds to assessment services. Ms. Ngola closed by requesting that the Committee decide a prioritization for support service funding. There was discussion about psychiatric services. Chair Olds Frey called for a motion to prioritize individual and group counseling for support services funding. Ms. Ngola moved approval to prioritize counseling services for the total amount available for support services, seconded by Ms. Sood; a roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 8-0.

Staff Report

Staff provided information about the mental health services funded by Oak Park, the community's funding models, and next steps to using support services funds to provide counseling services. A review of national and state metrics will be presented for consideration at the May meeting.

Public Comment

No public comment

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Wingader
Senior Grants and Compliance Specialist