

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
May 13, 2019
East Conference Room

Present: Councilmembers Litten, George, Anderson

Also Present: Councilmembers Bullock & Rader, Mayor Summers, Director Gelsomino, Jessica Parker from the Human Services Department, Allison Urbanek John Sobolewski from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ms. Casey Tobik, a couple members of the public, and Deputy Clerk Lascu taking minutes

Call to Order: 7:02 p.m.

RESOLUTION NO. 9066-19 - A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, authorizing the Mayor as the Director of Public Safety or his designee to enter into a Vehicle Lease Agreement with the Lakewood Foundation to lease a 2019 Starcraft, Allstar 13-2 Shuttle Bus for \$1.00 annually to be used by the Department of Human Services. (Referred to HHS 4/1/19)

Councilman Litten opened the meeting and deferred to Director Gelsomino to discuss Resolution 9066-19. Director Gelsomino explained the structure of the grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) that enabled the Lakewood Foundation to acquire the new Human Services van. The Lakewood Foundation can receive the vehicle and the city will take care of its licensing and maintenance, along with the provision of services listed in the original RFP.

Councilman Litten moved to recommend adoption of Resolution 9066-19, which was seconded by Councilman Anderson. All members voted yea. Motion passed.

Communication from Councilmembers Litten & Rader regarding lead exposure among children. (Referred to Health & Human Services 2/19/19)

Councilman Litten and Councilman Rader then opened the discussion to the issue of lead exposure among children. Allison Urbanek of the non-profit organization Lakewood Alive spoke about the Paint Lakewood program, which is designed to offer sliding scale grants up to \$1,500 for individuals making 80% of median area income. The program is designed to include labor and materials, that way people are not doing the work themselves improperly and are working with registered contractors. Lakewood Alive ensures that these contractors are lead-safe certified. The contractors are not renovators and only do exterior work on homes. Ms. Urbanek herself is a lead certified inspector, who can do visual inspections of the property. In the past, the grant program only covered materials and not labor. On average, Lakewood Alive receives

\$28,000 each year to put into the housing grant program. None of these funds are put towards administrative costs and 12-13 households are done annually. Ms. Casey Tobik, a member of the public, asked whether soil samples are taken after any exterior work is done and Ms. Urbanek indicated that none are taken, noting that the program is designed to take care of blistering/chipping paint. Ms. Tobik inquired as to who she could report chipping paint to and Ms. Urbanek replied that she can connect people to Lakewood Alive and the program for home resources. Ms. Urbanek added that most companies they work with have 5 year warranties on their work and that a pride fund is available for people who cannot get conventional bank financing. She gave an example of that type of funding helping to fill a \$10,000 gap for a family whose child was suffering from a lead exposure.

Councilman Rader asked Ms. Urbanek about what resources could Lakewood Alive use to improve the program. Ms. Urbanek stated that Lakewood Alive would love to serve more people and offer larger grant amounts, as \$3500 is often not even more than half the cost of a project. She added that the program was failing when the organization could only provide funding for materials. More money and staff would help make the program better.

Councilman Litten asked how supportive Lakewood Alive's board is of the program and if administrative costs affect this program. Ms. Urbanek stated the program is a key component to the organization's mission and the board is very supportive.

Councilman Anderson asked if any of the homes are painted by volunteers. Ms. Urbanek stated that they do not let volunteers prep the home and that they only let them paint.

Director Gelsomino and Jessica Parker of the Human Services Department provided updates on their department's efforts regarding lead contamination awareness. Lead safe information largely from higher levels of government has been posted on the city webpage, which is growing. The Building Department is enforcing lead education and certification. Inspectors have begun to focus on interior paint violations.

Councilman Rader asked if citations actually lead to remediation and if the Building Department can go far enough with the current city code to ensure remediation. John Sobolewski of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health stated that the HUD lead inspection training is the model program. He noted that a citation does not specify if the paint condition is lead-based and the key to remediation is to contract with a contractor who is lead-safe certified. Ms. Urbanek added that a homeowner has the option to prove that it is not lead based paint, which can be cost prohibitive, so it just makes sense to hire a lead safe contractor. Councilman Anderson added that he has been working with the Housing Department on reimagining what inspectors look at when they go into a home.

Councilman Litten inquired if there is on-going training opportunities for inspectors and whether Ms. Tobik could give an overview of her personal experience with her family being affected by

lead exposure. Mayor Summers stated that the City has the desire and capacity to do that type of training.

Councilman Rader asked when a city inspector sees peeling paint, does the law require that the work be completed by a lead safe contractor. The group concluded that yes, that is the case, however the homeowner also has the option to do the work him or herself. Ms. Urbanek stated that Lakewood Alive does home education classes and encourages people to call the organization to get guidance on how to do projects safely. She added that people are starting to think before they start their projects, as she frequently gets calls with questions.

John Sobolewski stated that this problem is fundamentally a housing issue and the goal to solving it is to prioritize primary prevention. Lakewood's robust rental registry and regular inspections are good practices and put them in a stronger position to stop lead contamination among children than neighboring communities, such as Cleveland. He proposed adding RRP contractor requirements and 3rd party clearance requirements to the rental registry as ways to enhance Lakewood's efforts to remediate lead paint. These components, along with a robust rental registry, stem from a program originated in Rochester. He stated that Lakewood's housing stock has value and does not raise concern about rent stability, making these efforts doable. 75% of lead exposures are coming from rental properties and these exposures can be largely eliminated in Lakewood over a couple 3 year cycles of rental registry inspections. Mr. Sobolewski then transitioned into efforts the Cleveland is taking to ensure safety from lead paint exposure. Lead Safe Cleveland introduced 33 draft recommendations to Cleveland City Council recently, with the first 16 being focused on primary prevention efforts. He detailed some of the dialogue the Lead Safe group had with Cleveland City Council. He stressed that a strong rental registry is the way to make this project go.

Councilman Litten engaged Mayor Summers on ways the City could beef up its response to the lead exposure issue and proposed forming a task force to come up with recommendations to combat the issue. The mayor committed to dedicate time in the City's upcoming landlord training programs to educate people on lead paint and its effects. Mayor Summers did not believe a task force was needed to address the issue at this point, as many of the solutions appeared to be administrative and that a potential task force would not have any clear goals or deliverables upon its creation. Litten stated that he did not want momentum to stop with just a committee conversation. Mayor Summers stated the reality that the City is not able to take incidents and work them backwards to find the source of a lead exposure and that it would be helpful if the City had access to the data to do that, however HIPPA stops that. Mr. Sobolewski added that 80% of single-or-two family homes in Lakewood have a chance of being a lead exposure. He stressed that the only way to move forward is with primary prevention. He brought up an example of Toledo delegating authority to their county health department and their effort failing. He added the main effort must come from the City because it is the only one that can legislate action. Mayor Summers asked Mr. Sobolewski if the county possesses data on where the kids

are that have been diagnosed with lead exposures and Mr. Sobolewski confirmed that the county does.

Councilman Anderson highlighted the differences in the terms lead free and lead safe. Addressing the mayor's concerns about a lack of goals, Anderson brought up past examples where pre-advisory groups were created to set up a structure for a task force. Mayor Summers stated that if the Rochester standards and legislation are the gold standard on the issue, he thinks his administration can figure out how to solve it using the Rochester materials as guiding documents. In the event his staff cannot figure out how to address the lead problem, he would then enlist a task force. Councilman Anderson restated his desire to see that this issue is addressed by future administrations and councils.

Councilwoman George expressed an interest in creating an ordinance similar to that of Rochester's. Councilman Anderson cautioned against the possibility of creating an unfunded mandate, but also spoke of how a lead safe certification for a property could create an opportunity for competitive advantage in the landlord community.

Councilman Rader expressed a desire to set a goal for 0 incidents of lead poisoning in the near future.

Councilman Litten asked the mayor if he could convene a conversation with landlords based on what the committee has talked about today. The mayor committed to getting landlords together quickly to convene on the issue.

Councilman Litten said that the City may need to incorporate lead safety into point of sale inspections. Ms. Tobik proposed the idea of requiring a county inspector to inspect the property and provide notice of lead safety so that way people can know the potential hazards of what they might be buying. Litten agreed that a process like this would be a throw in cost considered part of closing costs. Councilman Anderson posed the question to what point can the City mandate this process if at all and whether this mandate would need to be required by municipal code.

The group then checked out lead safety information updates on the city's website.

Councilman Litten made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Councilman Anderson. All members voting yea. The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned: 8:03pm