

APPROVED ON 4-6-06

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CAC MEETING**

MARCH 8, 2006

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Bob Layton, Vice Chairman Cicero Lewis, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, William Thorpe, Dani Rooney, Stephen Lichtenstein, Algene Bailey

Absent: Nancy Emerson (called)

Staff: Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager; David Moore, Program Manager

Chairman Layton opened the meeting and recognized David Moore to provide some background relative to the FY 2006-2007 agency funding requests and introduce the evening's first presenters for the Public Service Agency Grant Program. Mr. Moore said that 19 applications had been received requesting a total of \$169,425 in funds. He reminded the CAC that \$120,000 in CDBG funds are available for the program this year.

Chairman Layton then recognized Wendy Noyes, AIDS Response Interim Executive Director and Dawn Mahoney, Director Client Services. Ms. Mahoney began the presentation by describing the typical client, noting that the agency is experiencing an increase in heterosexual transmissions and female clients. She noted particularly that federal funds for AIDS programming are decreasing so the agency is continuing to conduct major fundraisers. Mr. Moore asked what the goal of the capital campaign was. Ms. Noyes said that the agency is working to build reserve funds and beginning planning for a living center for clients, which will provide one stop services for counseling, support, and other services offered through the agency. Ms. Hayden asked what effects the new federal Medicare prescription assistance program is having on the agency's prescription assistance efforts. Ms. Mahoney said that the new program has added to the difficulty in providing prescriptions for clients, which is further threatened by funding cuts in the State prescription assistance program. Vice Chairman Lewis asked what are the ages of the Portsmouth clients are and if they were native to the Portsmouth area. Ms. Mahoney said that the ages range from 25 to 64 and that often clients have local roots in Portsmouth, but life circumstances sometime require clients to move from community to community in order to find affordable housing. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Mahoney and Ms. Noyes for their presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Susan Baker Chase, Executive Director of the Community Child Care Center (CCCC). Ms. Chase explained that the CCCC's mission is to provide both quality child care at rates affordable to working families. She said 50-60% of the clients served are families who earn low or moderate incomes and 50% of those clients receive some form of tuition assistance. She explained that sometimes families receiving assistance from the state for childcare lose their subsidies when they earn more income through their employment. Mr. Bailey clarified that the change in status relative to childcare subsidies can happen very fast. Ms. Chase confirmed that

often families have little or no warning to plan for the added child care expense. Ms. Hayden asked how many potential clients are turned away from services because of a lack of available subsidy funds. Ms. Chase replied that they are beginning to count those families now. Mr. Lichtenstein asked: if the agency had to decrease its spending due to lack of funding, where the agency would cut back? Ms. Chase replied that they have not had to do this as of yet, but they have looked at streamlining staffing especially in light of cuts from the United Way. Ms. Rooney asked if CCCC was required to have mandatory ratios for child care workers to pupils and Ms. Chase said that those figures depend on the age group of the child and that those requirements do affect staffing costs. Vice Chairman Lewis if the agency receives corporate funds and specifically funds from Walmart. Ms. Chase said the agency did receive direct corporate contributions, but received no contributions from Walmart. Chairman Layton asked if the agency had satellite operations separate from the campus. She said that the agency had programs in the three Portsmouth elementary schools as well as in Greenland. Chairman Layton thanks Ms. Chase for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Frank Nappo, YMCA Executive Director who spoke about the YMCA ACCESS subsidy program. Mr. Nappo began by stating that 25% of Portsmouth residents seeking services at the YMCA received access subsidies. A total of 107 families were assisted in FY 2005. Generally, Mr. Nappo said that competition by for-profit exercise facilities in Portsmouth and utility costs, combine to provide financial challenges for the YMCA. He explained increased membership costs affect directly the need for the subsidy program. He added that no family is ever turned down for service and that currently the YMCA is looking at a sliding fee scale based on income for all of its members. Ms. Langley asked about the condition of the YMCA building. Mr. Nappo replied that the building is costly to operate and is over 20 years old; a new roof is needed, as are new heating and air conditioning systems. Ms. Hayden asked what the impacts would be if fees were raised. Mr. Nappo said that while the YMCA's usefulness for families is unique in the community, adult members would probably be lost to competitors. For example Mr. Nappo said that the YMCA lost 7-10% of its adult membership with the opening of Portsmouth's Spinnaker Point Recreation facility. Chairman Layton thanked Mr. Nappo for his presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Deborah Anthony, Executive Director of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast. Ms. Anthony generally described how the agency matches adult mentors with at risk children. She pointed out that a lot of investment by the agency goes into each match including recruiting mentors, ensuring safety, following-up with the families and the matches, and the organization of events for all mentors and mentees. She explained that the agency recently expanded to include a program for children with disabilities; the agency is seeking funding from State agencies who benefit from the agency's work; and the agency is researching a move into Portsmouth to better meet client needs and to be close to their financial and programmatic supporters. Mr. Bailey asked why other towns don't provide financial support for their services. Ms. Anthony replied that she wished that they did because residents in those towns definitely benefit from the services. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Anthony for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Bill Chausse, Vice President of Child and Family Services. He spoke in support of the agency's Family Counseling Program, which is located in the Seybolt Building and provides counseling services to Portsmouth families. He said that the agency particularly benefits from the reputation of the counselor assigned to the Portsmouth office, and that word of mouth about positive experiences spreads knowledge about the services they offer. He spoke about the agency's strategy to teach clients skills for dealing with life's situations and how this approach allows the agency to have an impact beyond the interactions with the counselor. Ms. Hayden asked if any clients are turned away and Mr. Chausse said no clients are turned away, but that in some cases they may have to wait for available times. He said the fees are based on a sliding fee scale and the lowest fee is \$5. Mr. Thorpe asked how the agency defined success and determined need for the program. Mr. Chausse said that an outcome instrument is used to track the success of the clients and he said over 80% of clients report doing well after five sessions with the counselor. Vice Chairman Lewis asked if there was a protocol to determine when counseling services are no longer needed. Mr. Chausse said that these decisions are made on a case by case basis by the counselor. Mr. Thorpe asked if the agency mediates between clients and third parties that are involved in conflict with the client. Mr. Thorpe said the counselor uses appropriate techniques to learn about the situation and to provide the skills to the client for handling the situation. Chairman Layton thanked Mr. Chausse for his presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Paul Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director of SeaCare Health Services who spoke in support of SeaCare's Health Access Component. He explained that SeaCare secures free doctor's appointments from area physicians and specialists to assist the uninsured. He said that physicians' offices like to work with SeaCare because they identify bona fide clients in need of medical services. He said SeaCare only assists those patients who do not have insurance. He pointed out that SeaCare's services are different from Families First because Families First provides direct care as a community health center and SeaCare provides referrals to physician's participating in the program. He said they work with Families First when their clients need specialized services. Ms. Langlely asked if the agency charged any membership fees. Mr. Fitzpatrick said clients pay co-pays and only do so when they access services. Mr. Thorpe asked for an explanation as to why the agency requested double the amount of funding they received the previous year, but is not proposing to double their number of clients. Mr. Chausse said it is very important to increase funds from various sources in case there are decreases in funds from other sources. Chairman Layton thanked Mr. Chausse for his presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Julie Stone, Executive Director of Compass Care who spoke on behalf of the Senior Companion Program. Ms. Stone said the Senior Companion Program is the largest of its kind in the State; it is funded by the Merrimack/Belknap Community Action Program. It services 45 elders with nine senior volunteers. She explained that the agency is trying to expand to offer a second adult day program in Dover. Ms. Hayden asked how Compass Care's services differ from Area

Home Care. Ms. Stone explained that Senior Companion volunteers have more time and freedom for activities and social interaction with the seniors and that Area Home Care Homemakers provide cleaning and errand services to seniors to help them remain in their homes and often don't have time for the social interaction that a senior companion can provide. Ms. Hayden also asked about the agency's outreach strategy. Ms. Stone said that the agency uses services like the United Way Volunteer Action Center on the world wide web, but that the definition for the volunteers who are eligible for the program is very narrow. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Stone for her presentation.

After the presentations, Chairman Layton moved to acceptance of the minutes for the January 26, 2006 meeting. Ms. Rooney moved that the minutes be accepted and the motion was seconded by Mr. Lichtenstein. All voted in favor. Chairman Layton then moved to acceptance of the minutes for the February 9, 2006 meeting. Ms. Hayden alerted the committee to a misspelling of the word "park" on the second page of the minutes. Ms. Rooney also noted that she had called to alert staff that she would be unable to attend that meeting, but the minutes did not indicate this. Mr. Moore thanked Ms. Hayden and Ms. Rooney and noted the changes. Mr. Thorpe moved to accept the February 9 minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bailey and all voted in favor. Chairman Layton then moved to acceptance of the February 9, 2006 Public Hearing minutes and pointed out that this set of minutes should also be amended to reflect that Ms. Rooney had alerted staff about her attendance on February 9th. The committee agreed and Ms. Pecunies moved to accept the minutes and Ms. Langley seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

Ms. Lichtenstein pointed out that the roster of CDBG-funded agencies did not include any duplicated services. Ms. Rooney said that the non-profit agencies in town have, among themselves, worked to fill gaps and ensure there are no duplication of services.

Hearing no other business Mr. Layton adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.