

HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

January 17, 2023

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Thomas Lopez, Chairman, presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Thomas Lopez, Chairman  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly, Vice-Chair  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

Members of the Committee absent: Alderman Patricia Klee

Also in Attendance: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

**FY 2024 CDBG and HOME PROGRAM ANNUAL ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

Chairman Lopez

Just a note for the public, our usual Clerk, Alderman Klee, couldn't make it tonight so Alderwoman Kelly is filling in. She's our Vice-Chair.

Opening at the beginning, we have a Public Hearing on FY2024 CDBG and Home Program Annual Action Plan Development. Urban Programs Manager Long would you mind coming up and giving us a quick summary of that?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Good evening everyone. The Community Development Block Grant Program and Home Investment Partnership Program are both grants that the City receives from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. They're both focused on serving low to moderate income residents. For CDBG, we often provide sub-grants to many non-profit agencies. Funds can be used for housing, homelessness, educational needs, child care, a variety of services as long as they're focused on low to moderate income residents. The HOME Program is focused on affordable housing developments, again, for low to moderate income residents.

We do not apply for these funds. We are what HUD calls an "entitlement community" which means we receive them based on formulas every year. As part of that, we do have to submit an action plan every year to say how we intend to use the funds and also at the end of the program, you provide a report on how that year's funds were actually used. So as part of this process, we do consultations with service providers on community needs and also public engagement to determine what residents believe the funds should be used for. This will be the first of two formal public hearings. The second one will be held after the Action Plan is drafted and made available to the public but public feedback is welcome at any and all times. I encourage anyone who's interested in how these funds are used to feel free and contact me. My information is on the City website under Urban Programs.

Chairman Lopez

Thank you. So Just some clarifying questions. We received a communication with some information. Is that going to be on the Urban Planning's website or is that something they should look to the minutes for this meeting?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

It is not correctly on the website but I'm happy to make it available.

Chairman Lopez

Okay because I noticed it did carry some of that feedback you received from the community and things of that nature.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, that is correct. As part of the process of gathering public input, we did have an online community development survey this past fall. We received, I believe, eleven or twelve responses. A summary of those responses can be made available on the Urban Programs website as well.

Chairman Lopez

Okay and they've given us an estimate not a final number?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So the estimate is a number that I came up with. It's based on our current year grant minus fifteen percent. In my experience, and the data shows CDBG funding tends to be on a slowly downward trajectory. It varies year-to-year but the overall trend is downward. Fifteen percent is fairly conservative so hopefully when we get our actual allocation, it will be greater than that number and we'll be in the happy position of being able to increase grant allocations versus decreasing.

Chairman Lopez

But for public expectation purposes, we don't know exactly when we're going to get our formal allocation. Do you know generally when we'll expect it?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

So the earliest we could reasonably expect it would be late February early March. However depending on congressional budgeting, it can be as late as May honestly. Certainly as soon as I have that information, it will be posted to the website and provided to the Committee as soon as I have it.

Chairman Lopez

Yup. Just trying to scale expectations because last year we got a couple of like oh we didn't get it yet, oh we didn't get it yet. I mean we do our due diligence. We make our plan. We come up with the process for public hearings and take public comment well in advance of when it's necessary so we won't get stuck trying to make a last minute decision.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

That's correct. I believe for the current program year we're in, we didn't receive the information until May.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Any other Committee members have any questions before I open it up to Public Comment? Alright, seeing none. Thank you Urban Programs Manager Long.

Now seeking testimony in favor of our FY2024 CDBG and HOME Annual Action Plan Development.

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

Chairman Lopez

The public hearing was declared closed at 7:05 p.m.

We'll continue to monitor that as part of our ongoing monthly meetings. So anybody who's interested in learning more about that process or agencies that are applying, you're welcome to check out the Urban Programs website or check our meetings.

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Regular Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT- None

PRESENTATION

- Harbor Care

Chairman Lopez

Just a housekeeping note, they know our voices, especially those who take incessantly. You guys are new so our transcriber needs you to say your name and your title at the beginning of every comment that you make.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

My name is Henry J. Och. I am the President and CEO of Harbor Care at 77 Northeastern Boulevard, Nashua, NH.

Chairman Lopez

And you have a presentation here. Do you want to walk us through?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Yes I do. First off, thank you very much for the invitation from this Committee to present on Harbor Care. The purpose of this presentation is to give the Committee an overview of where we've been and where we're going. So these are our discussion points which I'll go over.

So the mission of Harbor Care is to provide vital services including housing and health care to all in our communities needing assistance. So our mission drives everything that we do every day. Our vision is more aspirational and has a more extended time horizon. Our vision is through our programs setting the conditions where everyone gets to live a safe, stable, and healthy life filled with purpose, respect, and dignity.

Now our history extends back 40 years with a group home established here in Nashua. Over the course of that time, Harbor Care has established partnerships with other agencies and expanded through the addition of many programs intended to address the social determinance of health within the communities that we serve. In 2020, many of those partnerships coalesced to become Harbor Care as a corporate entity. So currently, we offer many services based out of Nashua. However, many of these programs do extend beyond Nashua and across the State beginning with health care. We have a focus on the homeless population here in Nashua where we provide primary care, mental health, HIV case management, dental services, and home health services. We also have a housing program which provides (inaudible) support housing and we also own properties where residents of Nashua reside. We do have an addiction treatment facility located a 615 Amherst Street and we also provide peer recovery support services for many programs. We have a supportive employment program that has two arms - one of which is focused on our Veterans and the other towards patients of our clinic. We also have a very broad Veterans services program again focused on the homeless population within the broader Veteran population within the State of New Hampshire.

Through our many programs, we have had a quite a significant impact. We do touch the lives of over 5,000 residents across New Hampshire. Within the City of Nashua, we have ended Veteran homelessness and have also ended homelessness for people living with HIV/AIDS. We are currently working with many community partners to end Veteran homelessness across the State. A very pretty significant achievement that we have made over the course of the past eighteen months is we have been able to permanently house over 100 previously homeless Veterans and that's through the collaborative effort of not only our programs but our community partners.

Looking ahead at 2023, these are our areas of focus. Number one here is the CEO transition within my new role as CEO. I am meeting with many external stakeholders, legislators, leaders of other community agencies - not only Nashua but across the State to get an understanding of their strategic direction, what are the observations of challenges and opportunities so I can then take that information and bring it back to the team to influence the development of our strategic plan which I'll talk about in a little bit. We are in the process of renovating 615 Amherst Street known as that facility known as "Keystone Hall". The facility is not closed. This is something that we have heard throughout the community. We have limited operations and are currently focusing on pregnant and parenting women which is the second floor of the facility. The first floor is the floor that we are renovating. The plans are currently up for

State review. Once the State concludes the review, we will put the project out to bid. We're hoping that construction will start at some point in the spring.

We are in the process of developing a new three year strategic plan. I mentioned that the information that I'm gathering from our community partners will be an input to that plan. We're very excited over what the future holds there. We are also very excited to announce the launch of the (inaudible) Fox Suicide Prevention Program. This is a program that's in collaboration with the VA. We will be setting up a program that will have a State reach to identify Veterans that are at-risk and linking them and their families up to the appropriate supports. We are also working to expand access to mental health care across several school systems to include Nashua and Milford. It's very needed as all of you are all probably aware.

The last point is something that I reference earlier. We alongside with many community partners will be working on a plan to end Veteran homelessness across the State. Last summer we hosted a very successful summit on this topic where we convened many community partners across the State and really began to establish a common vision bringing in the various plans from the COC, from the State, and other areas. So that is really a snapshot of what we're going to be looking at 2023. We have a very dedicated, hardworking team, a very talented team, and honored to be leading this organization. That concludes my presentation. I'll open it up for questions.

#### Chairman Lopez

I have some. So it sounds like you guys are doing a lot of great work. Harbor Homes as it was previously was known for being a very holistic and wide-reaching organization. It's had a base at 45 High Street for some time and I know one of the precipitating requests that we had a few months ago was there was interest in using CDBG money, I think, for infrastructure support, or HVAC, or something to that effect. Knowing that Keystone is one of your major facilities and it's under construction since you are such a long-running program, do you foresee a need to kind of do a property evaluation and figure out what kind of upgrades you need or that is something you might have already been doing?

#### Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So we are undertaking a process called "a capital needs assessment" across our facilities. A capital needs assessment looks at the physical structure of a building and outlines what are the areas that need to be repaired or replaced over an extended time horizon. In some cases, it's twenty years. In others is thirty. So we have done that for many of the properties here in Nashua. We're currently going through that process with our 77 Northeastern Boulevard facility. We'll be doing that as part of the Keystone Hall renovation and 45 High Street is also part of that process. The elements that a CNA is looking at are HVAC systems and other systems to support the operation of the facility.

#### Chairman Lopez

I know first-hand the Ash Street Shelter is a very tired building have been in continuous 24/7 operation for thirty years. Buildings like the Winter Street Group Home you would expect them to be fatigued and kind of worn out but having worked there as recently as maybe five or six years ago, I didn't find that to be the case. I always attributed that to Harbor Care having an internal maintenance department that very diligently maintained the different facilities that were in place. So do you still have a program like that and are there buildings that might have maybe inherited complexities? I know the one on Amherst Street is pretty historic and so there's limitations on ways you can upgrade or modify it where you might struggle to find a place for it in your organization.

#### Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So to answer your first question, yes we still have an internal facilities department. We did decide to outsource the development of a capital needs assessment because it gives us an objective perspective on what needs to be done.

#### Chairman Lopez

Okay. Alright. Any additional questions? Alderwoman Kelly?

#### Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you and thank you for coming. I had a couple of questions around some of your upkeep. You were talking about Keystone Hall and how you're working on the second floor which is good information because people ask us lots of questions. Is the first floor do they do the same things there or are you putting in new offerings there? What are you

doing with the first floor?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So the second floor is what is currently in operation. On the first floor, we are extending our medical clinic to include two examination rooms, a nurse's station, some additional support areas for medical assistants. We'll have the ability to have other services provided there such as dental once the renovation is complete. What we're really excited about with the renovation project is we have hired an architect that has training in something called "trauma informed design". So as individuals are entering the facility, they'll be going into a building that is welcoming. It will have an appropriate color palette that is not triggering. In addition to that, we're making changes to the flow to make it a more pleasant experience for individuals coming to us in probably the most vulnerable state in their lives.

Alderwoman Kelly

Great. I have another question but I'll yield to Alderwoman Timmons.

Chairman Lopez

Alderwoman Timmons?

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you. I have some questions and then I'll give the floor back to my colleagues. One of the questions I have under the list of all the things that are under the Harbor Fund umbrella, I don't know specifically what they are other than some I do know, but what's under that umbrella?

Secondly, duplication of services. I'm talking about the duplication of services specifically because I'm a Veteran okay. I'm a retired Veteran and those same services that you talked about, the VA actually had them. So I want to know how yours differ from the other services that the VA offer homelessness for Veterans, Veterans primary care, and the list goes on, and on, and on. How is Harbor Homes taking care of the Veterans more so than the VA themselves and could you explain that?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Sure. To your first question in regards to the organizational structure of Harbor Care, I would be happy to submit an organization chart which would reflect that in a graphical nature. I can submit that after this meeting. In regards to the Veteran programs, thank you for your service. I am a Veteran myself - 21 years in the United States Army Infantry. So I can talk to the services that the VA provides for Veterans and they do great, great work. All of the programs that we have for the most part are in collaboration with the VA. They are our partner with the exception of one which I'll talk about in a second. So our transitional housing program - two of those facilities are here in Nashua. We have staff that provide case management services but we get clinical support through VA social workers. So they are in our facilities providing those services. So that is our transitional housing program.

We also have another program called the "Supportive Services for Veterans and Families". That's another VA funded program. They are what we like to call "our boots on the ground". They conduct outreach activities. They go to homeless encampments to identify homeless Veterans and they really do great work and go above and beyond. Once that Veteran is identified, they verify eligibility and then get them to a safer place than where they are whether that be in transitional housing, some type of shelter situation if that's appropriate, a hotel, but the goal with SSVF is to get individuals into permanent housing.

We also have a Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program. This is a program that is not funded by the VA. It's funded by the Department of Labor. What we do with that program is we work with previously homeless Veterans. We link them up with a job, resources, additional training. We have relationships with many employers. We get them jobs. If they don't have clothes that are appropriate for an interview, we go out and buy them clothes and make sure they get to the interview.

The last program that I'll mention is a Permanent Housing Program that we have in Plymouth, New Hampshire. We provide housing to thirty previously homeless Veterans. So everything we do is in collaboration with the VA and funded by the VA in many cases.

Alderwoman Timmons

Okay. I have a follow up question as well. Because I'm a Veteran 22 years will get (inaudible).

Chairman Lopez

Just a housekeeping note, just don't forget to identify yourself when you speak Mr. Och.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

What's that?

Chairman Lopez

Our transcriber needs you to start with your name when you speak so that they can identify who the speaker is.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Oh, okay. Thank you.

Alderwoman Timmons

Again being a Veteran and very involved in Veterans services myself, one of the things that's out there, I have a thing with duplication of services because when you have duplication of services, I understand what you're saying but I'm also very involved with the VA. I'm also involved with other Veteran organizations as well. It seems like a huge duplication of services with Veterans falling through the gaps. For instance, Easter Seals. What is the difference between Harbor Homes and Easter Seals if it's not a duplication of service and how you are letting Veterans fall through the cracks because we have programs where the Veterans themselves don't know which way to turn. How would you rectify that?

Henry Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So within the Manchester Continuum of Care, we are very active within that area. So is Easter Seals. Within that particular community, our SSVF teams do interact with Easter Seals. There is certainly a demand for beds. So we have transitional housing beds offered through our programs in Manchester. They have beds as well so in collaboration with them, we're hoping that we will and other partners, we're hoping that we can come together and address the needs of our homeless Veterans and hopefully get to a point where we end Veteran homelessness across the State.

One of the things that I want to make very clear is that not one agency can do all this work alone. It's in partnership but with other programs, with other non-profits that really is going to yield the results that our community and our Veterans need.

Alderwoman Timmons

All right. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alderman Moran do you have any questions?

Alderman Moran

Sure why not. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

So one, I think I speak for a lot of Nashua residents regarding the change in leadership. A lot of people are very happy that you've taken over. I think you can't go wrong with Mike Zechman as Chief Human Resources Officer. I do get quite a bit of complaints regarding Harbor Care whether it's from your employees or patients. One in particular, the Amherst Street School when I was a State Representative the social worker reached out and said they ended clinician there during the pandemic to provide counseling to these kids. There's nothing I can do. I'm not in charge of your agency. You guys make those decisions based on business needs but the social worker was upset that the clinician didn't get a chance to terminate with those kids. I understand at some point another clinician took over but I guess as an Alderman, it would be why would we allow you to use our infrastructure if that's going to be the type of management

style you have with treating children in our City. It hasn't happened since 2021. I'm sure things have changed since then. I know you guys just got a million dollars or so from the County so I'm hoping that, I believe, you're still using City owned infrastructure through schools. How do you prevent something like that from happening again?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you for your question and thank you for sharing that. Throughout the course of the past several years like other healthcare organizations, things have been very, very difficult. It's important to note that during the pandemic Harbor Care, like other agencies, stepped up and provided testing. Once the vaccines became available, we were providing vaccines as well. We did not shut our doors across any of our programs. We continued to provide services. Over time as the conditions changed with funding coming into the organization and other organizations, we did need to make some decisions to make sure that we kept operating. In some cases, those decisions might have had an unintended impact which we do take very, very seriously. So the comment that you have brought forth, I'll take back to my team to make sure that in the event we have any disruption of service in the future that that type of situation that's described does not happen.

Alderman Moran

Thank you. Follow-up Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Lopez

Yup.

Alderman Moran

I forgot you guys were coming tonight otherwise I would have had a list prepared. When I saw Mike I was surprised so I apologize.

Chairman Lopez

It's on the agenda.

Alderman Moran

I know, I work a lot. So another complaint I had gotten from a Veteran actually who's worked at Harbor Care for quite some time, he has insisted upon me that he has been passed over for Veterans Program Manager on numerous Veterans grants that have come through. At one point, you guys even used his resume to get the grant and he was still passed over for the position for non-Veteran. His belief about why he didn't get it is Human Resources related. I don't want to get into that but I think if you know it's a federal grant, I told him to reach out to Jean Shaheen. I connected him with the Senator's Office but he's a long-time employee of your agency. At one point, he had a leadership position but passing over a Veteran for a non-Veteran his idea is that the Housing Director installed her personal friends. I think if we want to promote Veterans Services, I think a competent person who is a Veteran within those agencies would be good. Also with the understanding that this is the government and we're not telling you how to run your company.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you for that. So when we're looking at filling positions within the organization, it is done in the very objective fashion. We look at not only experience, education, but also other factors. We bring all of that to the table to make sure that we make the right decision.

In regards to hiring Veterans within Harbor Care, our Director of Veteran Services is an active duty Veteran. The Program Manager for our Supportive Services for Veterans and Families is a Veteran. Our Program Manager for our SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant is a Veteran. I'm a Veteran. Collectively, we all appreciate the value that those who have served in uniform bring to the table and I think that the Board's selection, their selection of me as a candidate for this role demonstrates the organization's commitment to Veterans and the value that they bring to the table.

Alderman Moran

Thank you. Make one last follow up?

Chairman Lopez

I just want to comment that I appreciate the questions being brought up because a lot of these are concerns that get kind of telephoned around, or spread via rumor. So it's important to be able to air them and then have them addressed in a qualified and informed manner. So I also appreciate Harbor Care coming to present on their services, to set the record straight, to express who they are today, and the efforts that have gone into making their organization what it is.

Like Alderwoman Timmons, I find duplication of services to be something we need to be attentive to but in my opinion, duplication of services is more focused on somebody who is being over-served and over-supported. I think Harbor Care addresses a lot of area where there's a shortage of organizations that are actually willing to step forward and help commit the resources, their vision, their plan. So I commend the work that Harbor Care's Board has done on consolidating and contracting the organization to be more a more sustainable one. I do think there are some community concerns surrounding reliability because there is the old adage "beggars can't be choosers" but they can and they should be. People who are struggling in the most vulnerable states need to be served with the highest level of care so the City does have a role in assuring its citizens and its taxpayers who are funding our collaboration with different endeavors that our partners are reliable, and they're providing much needed services, and they're not frivolous, or duplicated, or unnecessary. There's a lot of hard work that goes into designing those programs, executing them every day. Those programs will be running tonight while we're all asleep.

So I appreciate all the work that Harbor Care has done on that end. I would just ask if there are any specific areas that you think might change the tone of Harbor Care, in particular, contracting your mission, some areas where you think you work really well, and some other areas where as a City maybe there's gaps or shortages that we could collaborate on?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you for the question. I think it's important to highlight that as Harbor Care's programs came together as one agency, it happened during the COVID 19 pandemic. It's very difficult to build an organizational culture when folks at that point were operating in a bit of a hybrid environment, largely remote for some programs. So as I look at my work looking forward as CEO, one of my priorities is to ensure we have a strong, collaborative, and inclusive culture within the organization that has the patient, the client at the center of everything that we do. We have several initiatives that are currently on their way to support that.

Chairman Lopez

So if I'm hearing what you're describing and if I recall from my own memory, the timeline that you were representing earlier, Harbor Homes started as an effort to provide group homes support for people who are in-patient and need a place to be discharged to, to provide medical supports. Over time, they acquired, or partnered with, or combined with like the Nashua Council on Alcoholism, the HIV Task Force, the Healthy at Homes, and a number of Milford Counseling. I forget the name of it but basically a number of different 501(c) 3s with different boards, different missions, and different purposes were all assembled under what was called "the Partnership for Successful Living". What we've been seeing in branding it as Harbor Care, and consolidating boards, and focusing on strategic planning is the unification of those different organizations but as you described, it's a little easier said than done bringing together such a diverse group of people with diverse missions under one roof and still maintaining the expected level of services, the arrays of things that had been established 40 years ago, and engaging the staff who many of whom have been present through it all but many who come in with new ideas and fresh voices. Is that a fair summary?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Yes, it is. The work to bring people together under a common mission/vision does not happen overnight. It takes time, and takes effort, and it's one of my primary responsibilities.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Alderwoman Kelly have I kept you waiting long enough?

Alderwoman Kelly

It's all good. I have a couple questions and then I'll bring us back to your focus for the strategic future. I actually wanted to bring up the mental health in schools. It perks my ears up. I know that school age children are going



through a lot, even adults are going through a lot of post-pandemic, and we have limited resources in the schools. What does that program look like? I know it was mentioned by one of my other colleagues but what are the success measures that you've seen and what would like you to roll out in the future?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So the need that is present within the school systems has really been exacerbated by the after effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with the isolation and all the many challenges that the pandemic has presented to our populations. Currently, our school-based programs are small. We have really one full-time clinician, a very talented clinician, that's providing support to the school systems. So in order to provide services, we will need to bring on board more clinicians, social workers, licensed clinical social workers, mental health providers. Currently, the market is very difficult. These professionals are in very, very high demand not only by agencies based here out of New Hampshire but also some national telehealth firms. So competition is very, very difficult right now.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could follow-up on that. So it sounds like you'd like to grow that but it's really going to be dependent on being able to staff it?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Yeah.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

And we're not unique in that challenge. I've had the opportunity to meet with the CEO of the Great Nashua Mental Health Center and hiring challenges exist there. Lamprey Health - challenges exist there and we're working through them but it is difficult.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. The other big piece I'm sure you know housing is huge in Nashua and in the nation in terms of having enough of it, having enough affordability. I know you touched a little bit on having group homes. I'm not as familiar with your organization so could you give me a sense of what your housing or affordable housing portfolio looks like now and what you might see it looking like in the future?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Sure. So through our housing department, we have a number of different services. We do own properties within Nashua which we do rent out. We also provide permanent supportive housing services. These are trained professionals who work with individuals who need additional supports to remain housed. We also manage a Mainstream Voucher Program also known as "Section 8". So we do issue those vouchers through individuals within the community. Sometimes they stay within the City of Nashua and in other cases it's very difficult to find housing so we look at other areas. We continue to be open to explore acquiring additional properties to provide more housing but the market conditions right now are very unfavorable and we're very, very cognizant of that but it's still an open door for us.

Alderwoman Kelly

I have one more follow up. Did you want comment?

Chairman Lopez

Urban Programs Manager Long?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

I think it's also important to note that Harbor Care is the lead agency for the Greater Nashua Continuum of Care, which is the big collaboration that addresses homeless in the greater Nashua region.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you for that.

Alderwoman Kelly

My follow up will be some statement, some question but I think this year, especially the last couple of years for whatever reasons whether it's COVID, homelessness has been something that I've been continually approached by citizens about whether it's from the downtown area or just people are really struggling, coming out of COVID, that kind of thing. I'm on the Soup Kitchen Board so I hear how much the community needs so it's really, really important for me.

You may not know this answer but I'm wondering if we're getting any faster on when you put on that Section 8 line and then when you finally get a call because I've heard anecdotally it can be years. Is that still the case?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So we have a limited amount of vouchers. We do have some cycling of those vouchers. We might see a situation where an individual might exceed the income guidelines. So then that voucher becomes available and almost as soon as it's available, it's consumed. We also have individuals that move out of the area that frees up a voucher. Again once it's available, it's consumed. So yes, the wait can be extended.

Alderwoman Kelly

Great.

Chairman Lopez

It's also worth noting that having a voucher doesn't mean you have a place to use it.

Henry Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

That's the other challenge. We do have individuals that have vouchers in-hand and have had them for 30, 45, 60 days and finding an apartment is very, very difficult.

Alderwoman Kelly

Can I ask a follow up? I was going to ask him a question but you made one. In that case is it because fewer apartment buildings are willing to accept them or there's just no vacancies at all?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

I think it's a combination of both.

Alderwoman Kelly

I'll have to see us work on that.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Yeah.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

I think it's worth noting that when you have high competition and high like the opportunity to charge high amounts of rent, then maybe you're not really trying to help our your fellow man and take in people who are in structured programs. If you're working in programs that are voucher driven, there are a lot of really good incentives and a lot of oversight that goes into those in partnership that makes them a safer long-term investment. So I would hope landlords are starting to look in that direction instead of trying to just raise rents, and increase capital, and those types of things. There have been a number of factors that are regional in nature, including our own property revaluation which drove prices up because it was very poorly timed. That puts landlords in a bind. It's difficult to help others and to take on maybe more complex clients when you could take the young professional from Boston who's just going to use it for the weekend and then during the week he's not going to cause any trouble. What you do get in my experience has been a lot of support from Harbor Homes, Harbor Care, from their staff. You get people who are a known quantity who understand the value of having a place. There's a lot of attributes that I think Harbor Care could probably promote with their housing program more publicly because I know the housing program probably has the biggest list of landlords in the City - like the most number of relationships but there's always new people who are intimidated by the idea or the belief that it's going to take some kind of major overhead to serve these different programs. It's very much needed and just because the capacity isn't immediately here today doesn't mean that the problem is going anywhere. Alderwoman Timmons?

Alderwoman Timmons

Yes. I have I think two other questions and then I'll leave you alone. Okay? Dalianis House falls under Harbor House right? The turnaround time for living at Dalianis House is how long?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So within - the Dalianis House is part of what we call our "Grant Per Diem Program" and within the program, we have a goal for our Veterans there to be in the program no more than 24 months. So upon entry in collaboration with the VA, we develop a service plan identifying what their needs are and mapping out milestones with the goal of getting them to a permanent housing situation. So within that facility, however, we do have five permanent housing units. Some of our Veterans were able to shift from a previous transitional housing situation to a permanent housing situation within the same facility.

Alderwoman Timmons

Well you just cleared up one of my questions but I thank – I'm glad you pointed that out.

Also, what happened if the 24 months is up and they're not ready to transition out? What happen at that point?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

So that does happen from time to time. It doesn't happen very often. When we're coming close to that threshold, we work with the VA to develop alternate plans. Ultimately, we're providing support to our Veterans during that two year period getting them linked up to a job if they can work, to a voucher, and helping them look for apartments. What we convey to them is we're giving you the tools and resources to succeed and many times it's a great success. If they get to that point, then we need to look at other arrangements in collaboration with the VA. Ultimately, that service intensive bed is in demand. There's somebody else that's coming in with probably more acute needs. So we want to make sure that we continue to have that cycle continue.

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Just to confirm the obvious, you can't exactly kick someone out on the 24<sup>th</sup> month, day two, and then have them be homeless in the community that you're trying to end Veteran homelessness. So clearly, that's not just like oh come back and start over. Alderman Moran more questions?

Alderman Moran

Yeah maybe one or two. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So I guess one of the other big things that I hear all the time is sustainability of programs and employee turnover in the community. Unemployment and people losing their jobs is a big deal because a lot of your employees live here in Nashua. We had just heard your response to Alderwoman Kelly regarding it being difficult to maintain those mental health clinicians. I know for a fact, at least some of the folks you've been releasing from employment are licensed clinicians, I know that because I've hired them and they work for me. They're licensed and I feel for them. So in that same vein, I don't know what the HR stuff is. Don't care but when they're so in need and they are treating people, what is the goals of your company to maintain the ones that you do have so you don't have to fight over private companies like mine or larger nationwide companies like Better Health?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you for the question. So when operating a program, specifically a non-profit program within the non-profit agency, the main driver is the mission but alongside that, we also need to make sure the program is financially viable so we can continue to provide services. As we are looking at new programs, evaluating new grant opportunities, the area of sustainability is receiving a significant amount of focus. When non-profits acquire a grant, often times that's a one-time funding source. When we're looking at the three to five year projection of a program, we need to factor in what happens once this grant funding is gone.

Can we sustain this program? If the answer is yes, then looks like a viable program option. If the answer is no, then perhaps another agency can utilize those grant funds to make that happen. So that's the lens that we're looking through as sort of evaluating program opportunities. It's an approach that is objective while also looking at the needs of the community and again, understanding that not one agency can do it all. Perhaps another community partner can do it better.

Alderman Moran

And your goal is to retain existing clinician staff?

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Our goal is to retain as many employees as we can to include our clinical staff. Right now what we're seeing within the health care community is quite a bit of burnout which we're very aware of. It's causing staff at all levels to, specifically clinicians, to ask themselves is this the job that I want right now? There aren't many options unfortunately for employers like us.

Alderman Moran

I definitely hear you on the difficulty in finding clinicians. I only deal with mental health and nurse practitioners. Maybe a psychiatrist one day but private companies, especially things like Better Health, they're in a much better position to pay better and offer better benefits because they most likely only take private insurance. I do understand you guys get the FQAT rate which is a lot better than anything I can get from Medicaid. I think people listening at home should know that private companies are a lot more competitive with pay and benefits than local non-profits which is understandable given the business that you're in. You're not in it to make a profit.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Right and thank you for bringing up the federally qualified community health center rate. As an FQAT, one of the driving tenants behind that program is to provide care regardless of a patient's ability to pay. So we have a sliding fee that individuals are placed on based on family size and income. In some cases, an individual's visit if they don't have insurance can be a really a small fraction of what the actual visit would cost. The reimbursement that we get through the federal government accounts for that uncompensated care. So that's one of the main reasons why I joined Harbor Care because of its FQAT program and mission. They're in to provide equitable access to care and we're very lucky to have Harbor Care here in the community in addition to Lamprey, the other FQAT in town.

Alderman Moran

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman Lopez

Alright. Any further questions? Thank you very much for coming and presenting on the different work that your

organization is doing. Thank you to everyone in your organization that's doing it. As was said like private practitioner therapists could totally work for some company from their house and not really have to put themselves right in the same room with people who are really struggling but yours do it every day. Your staff are working to run group homes and programs for Veterans and all that kind of stuff every day and we really appreciate it. Thanks for coming up.

Henry J. Och, President and CEO Harbor Care

Thank you. Thank you everybody.

Alderman Moran

Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

### COMMUNICATIONS

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: Community Development Block Grant Reallocation – Sewer Projects

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: Urban Programs Department Updates – November/December 2022  
From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: Community Development Block Grant FY2024 Grant Applications

From: Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager  
Re: 2022 Nashua Community Development Citizen Survey

***There being no objection, Chairman Lopez accepted the communications and placed them on file.***

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

### NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

#### **R-22-078**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

**AMENDING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 RELATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (“CDBG”)**

#### **MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

#### ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Lopez

Urban Programs Manager Long would you like to come up here and give us a quick summary? I know we all received a communication regarding this.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Good evening - Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager. This resolution is pretty simple. We had two sewer projects

that were already approved and CDBG funded for the current program year. One was for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua and the other was for the Nashua Children's Home, I believe. Yes, Nashua's Children's Home. The bids came in low for one and came in high for the other so what we are requesting is simply to move the unused funds for the one project to the project that came in over estimates.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. I think that was Boys and Girls Club was getting their backing up swimming pool fixed and managed to do it on their budget. I forget exactly what the Children's Home was doing but the Children's Home was the one who needed a little bit more because we have it, we're shifting it over.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. Both involve their sewer pipes.

Chairman Lopez

Alright. Any questions from the Board? Alderman Timmons is that your hand up?

Alderwoman Timmons

Oh no. I was thinking about the Children's Home. This is my Director Long might answer this question. Are they doing renovations on that home right now? Children's Home? It seems like every time I go passed there, there's something going on.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. We're doing something on two other buildings this current year. One is getting the sewer. The other is getting insulation installed.

Chairman Lopez

It's kind of made a reference to older buildings. Some of the older programs in Nashua are using like truly historic buildings and the Children's Home might be one of them. I think if not the oldest, one of the oldest non-profits we have. So they're always struggling to keep it running because you can't exactly say like well we're not going to do it this year because those are orphans. They need the support. Any further questions?

Alderwoman Timmons

No. I just was wondering.

Chairman Lopez

Alright. Without objection, we will – well...

Alderwoman Kelly

So we have to vote on it.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None**

**TABLED IN COMMITTEE**

**R-22-060**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.  
Alderwoman Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**ACCEPTING FUNDS AND ADOPTING AN ALLOCATION PLAN FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM FUNDS RECEIVED THROUGH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT**

- Tabled at 10/17/22 meeting

Chairman Lopez

There is business Tabled in Committee. Urban Programs Manager Long must we take that from the table?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

This is still tabled. We did finally get response for our request for technical assistance for our allocation plan draft. They were very generous. They provided a lot of comments and currently working on revisions. So this will be back up in February so we can meet our March submission deadline. Now I will get you my revised draft as soon as it's finished.

Chairman Lopez

So then remaining on the table is...

Alderwoman Kelly

R-22-060.

Chairman Lopez

Yup. Accepting Funds and Adopting an Allocation Plan for the US Department of Urban Housing and Development Fund Home Investment Partnerships Programs Funds received through the American Rescue Act. So we'll keep that on the table until at least next month.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Alderman Moran

Thank you. I would like to thank Harbor Homes for coming in tonight. I think many in the community had concerns about the previous leadership there. That person has since gone and been replaced by it seems to be a quality-type person who answered our questions pretty directly and seems to be following up on our concerns that we voiced today. So I think as a whole the community should give them a second shot.

Chairman Lopez

In the spirit of discussion, I think the community has no choice. I think there's a lot of need in Nashua and there's a lot of gaps to be filled. We do need to make sure that there are good stewards and good people working in those programs but we also need all the help we can get in a lot of areas because we're seeing so many other municipalities even in NH struggling with the load of need. We can't turn away from people when there's someone who is able to help them.

Alderman Moran

I do hope they take our concerns seriously so our constituents don't have to keep calling us when they get laid off here and there, and fired, and most importantly the children of Nashua have a school counselor when they walk into school during a pandemic.

Chairman Lopez

Yes, that's particularly important. Any further items for discussion? Urban Programs Manager Long?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

One item regarding the grant applications received for FY2024 Community Block Grant Funding. It was not received by grant application but I did talk with Urban Program staff. They would like to request \$125,000 for the Housing Improvements Program and \$25,000 for the Rental Improvements Program, which are both not run by non-profits but programs we run in-house. Those numbers will be reflected in an updated memo I will send to you.

The other item I have is a request for information on how you would like to for the grant application review process to proceed, especially whether you would like to invite grant applicants to present before you on their applications.

#### Chairman Lopez

So speaking for myself, I think going to the Board I would absolutely like them to present because I think it's important for transparency and for them to be able to express their needs in their own voice before the Committee. How do other people feel? Alderwoman Kelly.

#### Alderwoman Kelly

I know in the past I obviously think that having people come in if they have the ability to do so makes the most sense. I know in the past we've done sort of a general set of questions at the beginning. What would you do if you only got partially funded? How important is this for this year? Could you spread it out? Things like that. That's also a really nice way to sort of start the conversation with these applications and then when they come in, we have a little bit of context. So I'd love to see us go that way again. I believe Julian Long your previous position holder helped us facilitate those conversations.

#### Alderman Moran

I concur. I would love to see public presentations. It also gives us a chance to see everything in more detail not that Director Long would misrepresent anything but I think us getting to see the overview of the project ARPA fund with the people who are going to be instituting that's a great idea.

#### Chairman Lopez

I think particularly for the work of this Committee, it's educational too because it's really important to stay informed and knowledgeable about the different programs that are going on. I pride myself on really trying to keep up with the different organizations but it seems like the more you get to know and connect with the newer emerging ones, the less time you have to connect with the more established and traditional ones. It's important to keep them all in line. So I hope that guidance is helpful for you.

#### Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, that is very helpful. I will check to see if I can find the copy of questions from previous year's grants and/or draft something to submit for the Committee's review.

Another follow-up question. Would you like all the applicants invited to present on the same Committee meeting or would you like them divided into two groups in interest of time management?

#### Chairman Lopez

There's no guarantee as Chair. I can't say that we won't have other grants coming in either so it might make more sense to spread it out a little.

#### Alderwoman Kelly

So if I could. My question was do we already have all the applications? How many do we have because some years we get a lot? It would be interesting to know the number.

#### Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes. The applications were due in December so we do have them all. We received ten applications from nine different organizations. So there will be nine organizations presenting. There is the possibility that we will have another request for funding from within a City Department. I don't have that information yet but I received indications from Director Matt Sullivan that that might be forthcoming. If that does come, I will let the Committee know as soon as I receive that.



Alderwoman Kelly

My preference would be to do it all at once and then any internal departments that have needs could come the same night. It's nice because you hear everybody at once. You're not trying to remember back two or three months. I know there's a timeline for finishing this stuff.

Chairman Lopez

Urban Program Manager Long could you clarify that timeline for us. Is that the one that could vacillate anywhere between April and the end of May?

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

Yes, that is correct. So I think it would be a good target to have your recommendations for the full Board of Aldermen finalized by your March meeting. Then we can have the second public hearing in ideally April and full Board of Aldermen approval by May. Theoretically, May 15<sup>th</sup> is when we're supposed to submit our action plans. However, that changes if we don't receive our actual grant allocation within sixty days of that deadline. Then it gets extended.

Chairman Lopez

A recommendation I may offer then is that you also coordinate with Alderman Dowd so that hopefully we can get our meetings done before he starts with Budget Committee meetings. Once we start talking about the City budget, he's got every square inch booked up. It does make sense to try to review these kind of things and have everything done early. I like to be slightly more efficient than Congress if we can. But at the same time, we don't want to rush the non-profits either so maybe leave the door open that if there's a couple stragglers maybe we could put them in a different meeting if needed.

Alderwoman Kelly

That would be good.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

If there are no objections, I can request that they come present at your February meeting?

Chairman Lopez

Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

That was going to be my comment given that the timeline you just laid out, February we'd listen to everybody and March we would spend the time doing our fun excel document fill in, which is mostly conjecture until we get the numbers and then we have to table it, come back, and fix it once we get the actual numbers.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

I do have a recommendation as to that. You can also when you vote on your allocations, you can build in contingencies if you wish to do so and that can be incorporated at the Board of Aldermen level as well. Such as if we receive more funding than anticipated, it's evenly distributed, or it all goes to this non-profit, or there's a variety of ways you can structure it but that way you'd...

Chairman Lopez

You park down the hill and have like a pig run around.

Alderwoman Kelly

We haven't done it that way in the past but that's actually smart.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

But that way you don't have to repeat public input processes or do another round of resolution review and voting.

Alderman Kelly

Awesome.

Julian Long, Urban Programs Manager

It is an option. It's not a requirement.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Any further input from the Committee? Seeing none.

Any further topics for discussion?

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Moran

So Manager Long, so I won't be here in February. I'll be on medical leave so I'll catch whatever the presentations are via YouTube. I'll announce that at the full Board but in case anyone's wondering, I'll be out 4 to 6 weeks having a surgery. Where's my Alderman? Don't pay me if you don't want to if I miss enough meetings. I don't care but I just need to have the surgery.

Chairman Lopez

I believe medical exemptions are part of the....

Alderman Moran

Oh, they are.

Alderman Timmons

That wouldn't be fair.

Thank you. I want to report on the seventeen year old missing young lady from Manchester. She hasn't been seen for fourteen days. She is Lorraine Springer Aidoo. She was last seen outside of Manchester High School on January 4<sup>th</sup> around noon. She was seen walking across Main Street near the school. Springer is described at 5 feet 4 inches, 150 pounds, with white and black hair, and dark round glasses. She was last seen wearing a back pack and dark colored jacket. They are urging the public to call Manchester Police about Lorraine whereabouts at 603-668-6711. This is a picture of how she look. Her parents called me today and left this information in my box here at City Hall. So she may be in Nashua. She may not be but if you see this young lady, please call that number. Thanks.

Chairman Lopez

Thank you for sharing that. Alderman Kelly anything?

Alderman Kelly

I'm good.

Chairman Lopez

I have a bunch of announcements. So this Saturday, Involved Impact is having a charity trivia match at Liquid Therapy. Anybody interested in signing up is definitely encouraged to do so in advance. You can go to [involvedtoimpact.org](http://involvedtoimpact.org) if you're interesting in participating in that.

The Ward 4 Town Hall meeting is next Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

The Mayor's Opioid Task Force is Wednesday morning. For more information on that, you can contact the Public Health Department.

And then finally, the Main Street Crime Watch – we're having our inaugural meeting at Caribbean Breeze right next door to City Hall. That will be on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. We'll be talking about current police activities on Main Street, any concerns on the part of business owners. We will have some of the outreach programs there to share information about their programs. So anybody who's able to attend, that's Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m.  
Alderswoman Kelly?

Alderswoman Kelly

I changed my mind. Thank you. I just wanted to thank everybody who made the new shelter at 35 Spring Street. They were able to open for the first time as a permanent overnight shelter on the 13<sup>th</sup>. They had over 40 people stay that evening and they're still working on finishing opening the rest of the different levels. It was a really huge undertaking and such an important piece of meeting the needs of the community so thank you.

Chairman Lopez

It's definitely needed. Alderswoman Kelly if you have information that contradicts this, my understanding is they are not currently taking new intakes because although when the shelter is completed, it will have greater capacity. They haven't fully completed it yet so they're able to transition people over to it but they're not taking new intakes?

Alderswoman Kelly

I don't have the answer for that but I can get it for you at my Board meeting on Thursday.

Chairman Lopez

Okay. Anybody attempting to find shelter, I would highly recommend calling 211 or using the City's coordinated access system which is 1-844-800-9911. The coordinated entry system is staffed by the Soup Kitchen outreach staff even on the weekends. So again if you're trying to get into shelter, the best way is to call that number 1-844-800-9911. With no further business, can I have a Motion?

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERSWOMAN KELLY TO ADJOURN  
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Alderswoman Shoshanna Kelly  
Committee Clerk, Pro Tem

# Presentation to Human Affairs Committee

01/17/2023



# Discussion Points

- Mission
- History
- Service Offering
- Impact
- Areas of focus for the coming year
- Questions

# Harbor Care Mission

Our mission is to provide **vital services**, including housing and healthcare to all **in our communities needing assistance**.

# Harbor Care Vision

Harbor Care's vision is one where everyone gets to live **safe, stable, and healthy lives**, filled with **purpose, respect and dignity**.

# Our History

1980  
Harbor  
Care is  
Established

1997  
Healthy at  
Home  
established

2020  
merged to  
become  
Harbor  
Care

1982 Winter  
St. Opened

2002 - 2014  
Partnership  
for  
Successful  
Living



# Our Service Offering

- Healthcare
  - Primary Care
  - Mental Health
  - HIV Case Management
  - Dental Services
  - Home Health
- Housing
- Addiction Treatment and Recovery
- Supported Employment
- Veteran Services



Harbor Care HIV Services Team  
Supporting our food pantry program

# Impact

- Provide services to over 5,000 residents of New Hampshire
- Ended Veteran homelessness in Nashua
- Ended homelessness for people living with HIV/AIDS in Nashua
- Working with other community partners to end Veteran homelessness across the state

# Areas of Focus for 2023

- CEO transition
- Renovation of 615 Amherst Street
  - Facility is not closed, focused on Pregnant and Parenting Women
- Development of new three year strategic plan
- Launch of the SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Program in collaboration with the VA
- Continue working with area schools to expand mental health care
- Ending Veteran Homelessness in NH

Questions?