

23-0827 Changes to the Table of Organization for Health and Community and Economic Development

Human Resources & Information Technology Committee

Wed, Jul 12, 2023, 4:30PM • 29:54

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 00:57

We have no public hearings or appearances. So, we'll move on to action items number 23-0827 changes to the table of organization for Health and Community and Economic Development. I'd like to ask please, Dr. Sepers to begin, please.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 01:15

Sure. And I can outline this item. So, the proposal you have here is for the creation of a community health section. Community Health is a function that is mandated by the state of Wisconsin in Statute DHS 140. And some of the activities under that community health function include the collection of community health data that is then used for things like informing the community health assessment. Those data are then used to inform things like the Community Health Improvement Plan, all of which are required by the DHS 140 statute.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 02:04

The infrastructure to be able to collect those data are incredibly important because all of the decision making that we do in a programmatic aspect rely on those collected data, right? We're—the interventions that we that we implement are evidence based, and if we don't have those data that community health function is very difficult. It's limited in its impact and scope. So, the creation of a community health supervisor position to lead this section of Community Health is one that really provides that that infrastructure for that data collection and ensures the compliance in in our state statute in the collection and use of those data.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 03:10

I'll give you one example of how we've done it in the past. Previously, all five health jurisdictions—Calumet County, Outagamie County, Winnebago County and the City of Menasha, including the city of Appleton, combined with our four health—our large hospital entities have all been a part of what we have termed the Fox Valley, CHIC the community health improvement planning coalition. And that that process was such that the last time the city of Appleton had conducted a community health assessment, which would have been 2015. Needed every five years. We're out of out of compliance and looking to stand this up to begin our Community Health Assessment this year.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 04:04

Our data collection—our primary data collection included 147 cold calls to landlines. That was our data collection as a as a joint entity of all nine of these health groups. That is not sufficient to meet the needs of the state statute. In so much as standing up a more robust data collection statute compliance element is really warranted and frankly needed for ensuring the health and wellbeing of the of the citizens of the city of Appleton. That's one aspect of this.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 04:57

The other aspect of this is without a dedicated community health section, all of the federal monies that are available to local health departments, things like federal monies set aside for things like opioid misuse, smoking cessation, these other health promotion functions underneath the Community Health function, these are programmatic dollars that we do not have the infrastructure to be able to accept because we don't have the

human capital to be able to expend, to ensure that we are going after these funds, and then managing those dollars once they come in.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 05:42

Because of that, there's a lot of health promotion activities that we are not engaged in that would benefit the residents of the city of Appleton because that that capital is not in place, those human resources are not in place. So that's another aspect of it.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 06:01

The other aspect of the Community Health section is the move of the Coordinated Entry Position currently under community and, and economic development, sort of a community and economic development frame into—it brings that position into what we would call a social determinants of health framing. That framing is the understanding that those elements related to human health extend beyond things like clinical services, right? So, assuring that folks have access to healthy foods, safe housing, transportation, all of these things, these have a greater impact on human health than what we would consider even personal behavior, right? And we think about clinical interventions, education, that kind of thing—those have a much smaller impact on human health than what we would consider social determinants, and housing is one element of that. Because of that, that's a natural fit under our Community Health framing, through our social, our social determinants framing for that piece. And so, all of that together.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 07:19

The other element of this would be that the coordinated entry position would be housed within the Appleton Police Department under a plan that Chief Olson, Director Homan, and myself had had thought through as an aspect where a lot of the Coordinated Entry services do flow through the sort of APD police contact, right?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 07:56

Thank you. Prior to your speaking, we have a motion on the table. Do I have a second?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 07:56

So many times, those that are in need of coordinated, coordinated entry services, first have their contact with the city of Appleton through a APD contact. And so, with that, to streamline what that contact looks like to ensure that the Coordinated Entry function is well aligned with what those contacts are. Having that position physically located within APD assures that the maximum—I can't speak today—the maximum efficiency of that position is assured by that that physical location.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 08:48

Second?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:49

Motion and a second. So, Director Homan, do you have anything to add to this in this regard?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 08:57

I don't, but I'm happy to field questions.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:59

Thank you. Director Ratchman?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 09:02

Just talk briefly about the process to get here. Just to give the committee reassurance that a lot of work goes into a reorganization before we bring it forward. In fact, a lot of conversations happen behind the scenes that are not brought forward for whatever reason.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 09:18

Our discussion started way back in April. At the table was human resources, community economic development, health department, police department, and finance. So, it started from the ground up of why is this a need? What's the best way to fill the position? How do we define the position. Even further from there of how do we compensate this position appropriately? So just want to give the committee my support but also reassurance that this was flushed through with the process that we go through anytime we do a reorganization or looking to add a position.

Alderspersion Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 09:54

Thank you. Do I have any questions from the committee? Alderman Croatt.

Alderspersion Chris Croatt (District 14) 10:00

Thank you, chair. Couple questions. I just want to clarify that what I heard was correct. If we don't do this, we lose the ability to secure other funding, or we don't have the means to go? We couldn't manage it.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 10:14

We did not have the means. Right. So, for example, this past year, there were three federal programs that that we could have applied for had we had staffing to be able to manage those grants.

Alderspersion Chris Croatt (District 14) 10:30

Okay. And then the last question that I had, or I guess, if someone could expand on the financial impact of this. Where's the funding coming from long term, short term and long term?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 10:41

Sure. Yeah, I can, I can talk about that. So short term—so for 2024, we do have, we call it DHS ARPA funding, this is—these are COVID-19 dollars that have been allocated to local health departments and have to be used in that way. That that funding stream will get us through 2024.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 11:11

There is a new funding stream that is coming online through DHS. It is a CDC federally funded program. It is specifically designed to, to do this sort of thing. It's close the gap in in services and local health department capabilities in order to better meet the needs of local residents.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 11:39

One of the things that we're looking for long term is starting with the 2023 budget, we've drilled into operating very closely and have begin looking at our fee structures and sort of right sizing those, right? So as in 2022, for example, 53% of the environmental health budget was actually funded through general fund dollars. What we did was we increased our fee structures in our EH program to bring back some of those dollars. We did not reallocate them within the Appleton health department. We allowed those to go to the general fund, or I should say we did not, you know, move those into another program; we simply allowed that fee structure to, you know, bear out as it would, saving on paper as we projected for the 2023 billing about \$54,000.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 12:48

So those are the sorts of operating changes that we're looking to do. And long term, I'm confident that enough changes can be made to where we can fully fund those programs through revenue, and possibly offset those dollars to be recaptured to increase our total capacity in programs like this.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 13:12

Overall, it would be a budget neutral proposition moving forward. But with the current funding, the current external funding, we have funding at least through 2026. It would—possibly part of 2027 as well. And again, through the spirit of the of the federal dollars that the this will be used for to close those gaps that are, that that we see.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 13:43

Okay, thank you,

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 13:44

Alderman Fenton.

Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 13:45

Thank you. Thank you, chair. And I suspect that this question might be partially to Dr. Sepers and partially to Director Ratchman. Looking at the job posting, we've got some pretty high-level educational requirements for this job. And I know that it took us a really long time to find, to lure Doctor Sepers here. How—what are we what are we think we're looking at lead time in terms of getting a candidate and bringing somebody into the to the position?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 14:28

Yeah. Honestly, it's hard to answer at this point because it is a new position. It is a high-level position, but not what I would say at the Health Officer position. I think it's actually a really an attractive role for someone who's in public health who has the education background. I also look at—like a common position that you see in the market today is like data analyst type positions, and there's a lot of that in this this role as well. So, I'm hopeful that we might draw some of those candidates who also have the education that go with it.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 15:02

It's hard to say what that timeline would look like. But I, I'm pretty optimistic that we would be able to fill this position. I don't see it as specialized as maybe like the ERP position that we've talked about with tech services. But I see no reason why we wouldn't want to try. I think there will be candidates out there.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 15:21

Can I?

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:22

Yes.

Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 15:23

Thank you. Um, so assuming that this position is approved by Council, we would immediately open it up and start taking applicants?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 15:32

That is correct.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 15:33

Okay. And another question. Given that, you know, that this that the candidate will not start working in two weeks. And so, in our org chart, we have the Coordinated Entry specialist. In the meantime, the Coordinated Entry specialist, I assume, will be physically housed at the police department. Would—what would the reporting be because this is an existing position, obviously. So, we're—how would that change that person's reporting in the meantime?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 16:06

So, on an interim—and director Homan can correct me if she feels otherwise, but we would keep the structure as is until we have the supervisory position filled.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 16:20

Okay. All right. Okay. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:23

But physical location would be within APD. Physical location of that coordinated entry?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 16:29

If I—

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 16:29

Yes.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 16:30

Yes, thank you. Yes.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:31

Thank you. Thank you.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 16:32

Thank you.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:34

Alderman Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 16:35

Chair, just a recognition of the interdepartmental communication and coordination that is going into this process. I think it speaks volumes to see all these departments come together to try to figure out solutions that—you know, they're precipitated by downward pressure from not having budgetary dollars and looking for ways to fund things like this. But they're also an effect of upward pressure from trying to figure out how to deal with individuals in our community that need more assistance.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 17:05

It used to be that APD would interact with an individual who's consuming alcohol and creating a public nuisance on public private property, get a citation, and nothing would be resolved. And I think we're moving into that space now where we're trying to recognize and abate some of this behavior and understand that, short term, yeah, that's quick solution, but you're never going to get a long-term solution. So it just really—when I when I

hear what you guys are all doing collectively as, as the city of Appleton to try and work through the things that we all have to deal with in our in our community, I'm just super appreciative to hear this and that we're moving forward and trying to find dollars to fund this when those opportunities arise, and I think make us a stronger and more resilient community. So just a note of thanks for that.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 17:51

Thanks. Alderman Hayden, any questions? I have a couple questions. Um, I spoke directly with Chief Olson in this regard. And I'm happy to see that the proposal is that this position be housed within APD, and I think there are some other external positions that might benefit from having this sort of physical structure, something to the effect of some social work positions, something of that sort. Do you want to expound upon that? Chief Olson? Or it's okay, if you don't.

Police Chief Polly Olson 18:26

I'm happy to. Yeah, I mean, we just wanted—didn't want to get too far ahead of ourselves. But that is something that's part of the bigger discussion that we've been having at the director level. A goal of ours would be to also find funding for—whether that would be through a third party contract position, or city position, or the county or something, but a social worker that would be housed at APD that would work in conjunction with the coordinated entry position to, again, address basic needs issues that people are experiencing in the city, understanding from my perspective, that lack of access to basic needs and health and housing are leading to repeated contacts with the police. So, trying to be a little bit more creative and how we're addressing those issues instead of adding additional police staff which we still need, but again, trying to address that, you know, in a in a very fiscally responsible manner.

Police Chief Polly Olson 19:29

And quite honestly, the way the community should be treated is by not necessarily increasing resources, because we're not doing that. What we're doing is increasing accessibility to resources and allowing for those resources in place to find you know, where they need to be found by the consumers that require them. And right now, I feel like that's lacking in our city which is leading to the increased calls to police because people just aren't getting connected the way they need to in the way they should.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 20:02

Do we, as directors of the city of Appleton feel that that can be done without this community, this new position within the Health Department? Or is that a requirement, essentially, to make this happen?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 20:21

I can speak to that. We do need the community health unit. The—moving the coordinated entry position and then what could possibly be a social work position—if it's contracted or city staff—within that that social determinants framework is essential because of all of the other things that need to go into it. We need that measurement component; we need that that—sorry—that supervision component. This project as a as a package will address both of those issues.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 21:08

Thank you. Dr. Sepers, you mentioned that we—and you confirmed it to Alderman Croatt—that we haven't had the opportunity as a city to take advantage of some of the federal grants that are available, etc. Director Ratchman, did we hire a person in a sort of a broad general position, sort of data analyst position, to try to help our city overall get do grant applications and that sort of thing.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 21:37

We did hire a data analyst, but that position was funded through a position that was on the table of organization as haltime, and then I have to go back and look at because that was that was back last year already. But that position does have a global view of the organization, but it's not just health related. It's for the entire organization.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 21:58

But were there perhaps missed opportunities there if that was one of the goals of this position was to try to procure grant dollars for things that would assist the city?

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 22:08

I don't think so. I see the scope of that position--the data analyst—as being very different—

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 22:13

Okay.

Director Jay Ratchman (HR) 22:14

—than what this position is, or even the getting the funding for this type of position.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 22:18

Okay. And then also, Dr. Sepers, you mentioned that some of the things that we could procure federal dollars for would be like smoking cessation, etc. I work directly with—I'm on the board of directors of Community Action for Healthy Living. They are a standalone organization that is able to use those grant dollars to do what you are saying that this health that our health department could also do. Would we be in direct competition with that? And if that's the case, then I would hope to see more individual organizations rather than the growth of the city's health department do that those sorts of things.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 22:59

Yeah, that's a that's a great question. So, one of the modern roles of local public health is to do exactly what it is that you're that that you are talking about, right? So, we are not looking to be in competition with to our with our with our 501c3s, our hospitals, other entities that are providing services. We don't want to be in the service provision game, as it were.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 23:28

As we talk about public health 3.0, or the modern role of what public health is, is it the convening of these partners to understand what those gaps are, right? So, as we as we see—and I used smoking cessation as one example, not that that would be something that we would look after. There are just a number of different long standing noncompetitive federal grants that could have been secured if we had the that sort of that infrastructure in place.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 24:06

And it's not so much we can't write this grant because we don't have time, or it wasn't able to be flagged by finance or something like that. The requirements behind many of these grants require that that infrastructure be in place for you to even write for those grants. So that's more about what I'm talking about. Not that we've had missed opportunities, per se, in writing a particular grant. It's just that the infrastructure to be able to manage that grant, to be able to implement those services. Because you've got to get—you have to start right away. And so, if, you know, if you don't have that that infrastructure in place, it's hard to demonstrate the capacity to be able to do it.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 24:48

Thank you. My primary concern is the creation of a new position within city government is generally a we're creating a position and it's never gonna go away. And that would be okay if that's what we're, that's—if that's the intention to better serve the citizens of Appleton. But are we sure that's the way to go? So that's my concern. My primary concern.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 25:09

My secondary concern is the funding for this position and how long we have before we're hitting the general fund and hitting taxpayer dollars to be able to keep doing these things. So, you initially said in your, in your memo that it was till 2024 through 2024. But now you also mentioned 26-27. Where are we?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 25:32

I believe the memo says 2026?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 25:34

Okay, I was looking at the wrong thing.

Health Officer Charles Sepers 25:37

So, I'm confident that without knowing the exact dollar amount, it's hard for me to project because that that funding level has changed probably two or three times since we talked about it. I know, ballpark figure based on what we have been told, we have funding at least through 2026 for this position.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 26:01

My only then concern would be should there be a revisit or a sunset clause on that position so that it is analyzed to have—what are the metrics that prove that what we have created in this new position is doing what we expected it to do for the citizens of Appleton? So, is there a way to assure that we've got some metrics setup for this and that by 2026, when other for outside funding runs out, that we're able to do that review? And could it, could that be added to this request?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 26:37

I think the one metric that would be very impactful is the DHS 140 audit. So as this was identified as a as a need, I think that the most powerful metric would be, with this position added and being able to provide the services identified in the DHS 140 audit, which happens every five years, that would not be a finding moving forward.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:07

So, when do we see this audit next?

Health Officer Charles Sepers 27:10

So, we went in 2022. We would be re audited in 2027—calendar year 2027.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:20

Okay, thank you. Anyone else have any other questions or follow up? There being none, let's vote. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Opposed? Aye. That motion carries. Thank you.