



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MASSACHUSETTS
CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

HEALTH AND HOSPITAL

**MEETING HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL ON DECEMBER 17, 1976
MEETING CONVENED BY COUNCILLOR ACKERMANN AT 8:10 A.M.**

Doctor Comunale gave a verbal status report on the current fiscal status of the Hospital, Infirmary, Health Department and Neighborhood Clinics. He stated that the Infirmary was running slightly under budget, but that the revenues would not be quite as high as projected. In the Health Department, he said that \$ 17,000 outage had been charged to the Health Department salary account, which cannot be met. The Hospital budget is running at a rate which if continued would lead to overspending by about \$ 200,000. Dr. Comunale indicated he would recommend to this Committee a proposal for cutting back expenses.

The Hospital Revenue situation is more serious. Anticipated revenues will be approximately \$1.2 million short of those projected in the Budget.

This essentially has been caused by three factors:—

1. A drop in patients during the months of July, August and September resulted in a loss of \$ 450,000 of anticipated revenue.
2. The state cuts in Medicaid eligibility have resulted in a substantial increase in patients for whose care there is no reimbursement. The self-pay patients are only paying approximately eight percent of their outstanding bills, resulting in a loss of approximately \$ 600,000 of anticipated revenue.
3. A delay in welfare payments to the Hospital has resulted in an approximate loss of \$ 150,000 in revenue.

Dr. Comunale suggested a policy be established jointly by the Hospital and City Council relative to the level of aggressiveness that should be exercised by the Hospital regarding the collection of outstanding bills of Cambridge residents.

Furthermore he suggested the possibility of the Hospital providing health care for all municipal employees and industries in and around the City.

Mr. Edward Lehan, Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs, suggested "Enterprise Accounting", a system by which the Hospital would operate solely on the revenues collected as opposed to appropriations voted by the Council. This is the only way, he said, of determining the real costs and to locate any hidden subsidies.

Councillor Ackermann stated that prior to any of these decisions being made the City Manager should appoint the Hospital Board.

She also proposed a concerted effort to inform the Governor, our state representatives, and the press of the effect of the Medicaid cuts on our local taxes on cutting reimbursements for needed services for patients unable to pay.

The Neighborhood Clinics are running about 25% below budget, but both Dr. Day and Dr. Comunale expressed dissatisfaction with their cost effectiveness. They plan to propose ways to operate them more economically while providing service that is equally satisfactory and reaches more people. Dr. Day said that the Health Clinic at Jefferson Park should be open by April of 1977, and that she plans to operate Clinics both at Jefferson Park and M.E. Fitzgerald. Billing at the Clinics is expected to start by March 1.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:12 A.M.

For the Committee

Councillor Barbara Ackermann
Chairman



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January 17, 1977

COMMITTEE REPORT
HEALTH AND HOSPITAL
JANUARY 14, 1977 8 A.M.
HOSPITAL BOARD ROOM
MEETING CONVENED AT 8:26 A.M.

Councillor Ackermann explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the Committee to review the proposed budget of the Neighborhood Health Clinics for fiscal year 1977-78. However Dr. Heath Day, Director of the clinics, stated that the proposed budget had not yet been finalized and ready for review. Consequently, it was agreed to postpone the review until Friday, February 11, 1977 at 8 A.M. in the Board Room, at which time the Committee will also review the fiscal year 1977-78 Hospital budget. This cancels the originally scheduled date of February 4th for review of the Hospital budget due to the fact that Dr. Comunale will be unavailable on that date.

Much discussion was held and it was agreed that Dr. Comunale will submit to the Committee by April 15, 1977, a proposal to restructure the clinics to make them more economically efficient and improving services while keeping the basic Nurse Practitioner model.

Finally a sliding scale for payment of health care services at the clinics was briefly discussed, but the scale is not yet finalized. Billing at the clinics is scheduled to begin March 1, 1977.

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 A.M.

For the Committee

Councillor Barbara Ackermann
Chairman

S-47

Comm. from the City Clerk transmitting two reports from Councillor Ackermann, Chairman, Committee on Health and Hospitals, re: to recent meetings of the Committee.

1/24/77
- Reports Received -
And Placed on File -

In City Council,
January 24, 1977