

City of Cambridge

The Committee on Health & Hospitals conducted a public hearing, on Wednesday, September 26, 1990 beginning at 7:47 p.m. in the Activities Room at the Michael J. Neville Manor, 650 Concord Avenue, Cambridge. Members present were Councillor Francis Duehay, Chair, Councillor Sheila Russell, Councillor Walter Sullivan, Councillor William Walsh, Councillor Timothy Toomey, and City Clerk Joseph Connarton.

Councillor Francis Duehay opened the hearing by thanking all present and stated he had called this hearing for the purpose of receiving reports from the City Manager and the Commissioner of Health and Hospitals relevant to the recent inspection by the State Department of Public Health (DPH) of the Neville Manor. Furthermore in addition to introducing those city councillors present, Councillor Duehay introduced Robert W. Healy, City Manager and John O'Brien, Hospital Administrator, Judy McTiernan, Associate Administrator for Patient Care and Carolyn Anderson, Nurse Manager at Cambridge Hospital.

The Committee then heard from the City Manager who provided a brief outline relative to the inspection by the (DPH) of the Neville Manor which had concluded that 49 areas were deficient. Based upon a lot of hard work by the senior management at both the

Cambridge Hospital and the Neville Manor, he said a subsequent inspection was completed and all violations were resolved satisfactorily. The City Manager further stated he, along with the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Chalfen and the Hospital Administrator, John O'Brien, he was currently working on a new management structure for the Neville, called "vertical intergration", which will place the overall functions of the Neville under the control of the Cambridge Hospital. He further stated that with this change the present title of Neville Manor Administration will be abolished and two new positions will be created entitled Associate Administrator, Hospital/Neville Manor. Mr. Healy further stated that with the influx of new federal regulations and the potential for continued reduction in state aid, this new management structure will serve the patients at Neville Manor well.

The Committee then heard from Dr. Melvin Chalfen, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals who informed the Committee that everything the City Manager has mentioned is clearly addressed to continue first rate patient care at the Neville. Furthermore he stated he was satisfied that the proposed managerial change should preclude any further problems such as those outlined by the D.P.H.

Dr. Chalfen further stated that during the next few months he and Mr. O'Brien will be reviewing all departments of the Neville, and will be looking at appropriate levels of staffing, patient care, nursing and nursing aid education and budgeting. Once this review is complete appropriate changes will be instituted, he said.

The Committee then heard from John O'Brien who stated he saw this as an opportunity for the people at the Cambridge Hospital to accept the challenge of instituting some new management techniques at the Neville. Techniques, he said which have worked successfully at the hospital. He further stated that although he, himself, was not a nursing home administrator, he felt he was a proven hospital administrator and would do his very best to put in place a first rate management team so that the continuation of good quality health care will not be threatened by regulatory change. Finally, Mr. O'Brien stated that he believed some barriers will be encountered during the vertical intergration, but he believed they can be overcome.

The Committee then heard from Patricia Droney who had a relative living at the Neville and questioned whether or not such changes would not provide the same budgetary support the Neville had experienced in the past.

Councillor Duehay responded by stating that the City Council will do everything in its power to prevent budget cuts which could adversely affect the Neville, however reminded everyone present, that the national and state climate is not conducive for providing money to cities and towns.

The City Manager responded by stating he was committed to making the Neville a safe and viable facility for all the patients, Ahowever he too reminded everyone that all city departments and services will have to be reviewed should the Citizens for Limited Taxation (CLT) petition, rolling back state all fees to 1988 .

The Committee then heard from Honey Williams, who stated her mother was a resident at the Neville and questioned the hiring criteria for employees at the Neville.

The City Manager responded by outlining the various categories of employees including labor service, civil service and nursing personnel along with identifying those which are under the jurisdiction of civil service.

The Committee then heard from Virginia Goolskasian, Director of Social Services at the Neville who stated she was of the understanding that additional resources had been requested in the past but had not been granted.

The City Manager stated that without more specifics he could not really respond, but said that to the best of his knowledge he had made very few cuts in either the operating or capital budgets of the Neville.

The Committee then heard from Joseph Mannix, President of the Friends of the Neville Manor who thanked the members of the committee and city personnel for holding this hearing and listening to the concerns of the residents, relatives and friends of the Neville. Mr. Mannix stated he would like to see more training of the temporary personnel which are being hired at the Neville. Furthermore, he informed the committee that it was his opinion that the problems identified by (DPH) were not generated by the full time permanent help but by those hired on a per diem basis. He singled out the Administrator of the Neville Manor, Gerald McDonald

for his fine work and leadership, but stated that "if you tie a mans hands behind his back you can't expect him to push a broom with his nose".

Also speaking in support of additional training for the per diem staff was, Robert Shields, Frank Mullen, Vincent Millery, Dottie Rossi, Peg Callahan and Kay Cooney.

The Committee then heard from David Cushing a patient at the Neville who stated that patients sometimes have to wait up to a half hour for a response to their call for a nurse or nurses aid and stated this generally happens when the per diem employees are working.

Councillor Sullivan stated he wished to publicly acknowledge the efforts and dedication of Gerald McDonald aand thanked all those in attendance.

Councillor Sullivan moved adjournment. The hearing adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

For the Committee

s/ Francis H. Duehay
Councillor Francis H. Duehay

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COMMITTEE REPORT 8-982

Report from the Health and Hospital
Committee for a hearing held on Wednesday,
September 26, 1990 relative to receiving
reports from the City Manager and the
Commissioner of Health and Hospital relating
to the recent inspection by the Dept. of
Public Health of the Neville Manor.

In City Council,

October 15, 1990

*Report accepted
& placed on file*