



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 1, 2019

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	

Others present: School Committeewoman Carrie Normand, Christine Trevisone - School Dept., Doug Kress - HHS, Chief David Fallon - SPD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Clingan and adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Approval of the March 6, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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205684: That the Director of Health and Human Services appear before this Board to discuss efforts to support individuals on the autism spectrum and educate first responders about autism.

Mr. Kress and Chief Fallon were in attendance on this matter, as well as, several people from the community. Chief Fallon discussed crisis intervention training for the police officers to help first responders have better understanding of how to interact with people with autism. There were discussions about a system that you can voluntarily provide information to the police department that a person with autism lives in the house. Chief Fallon also talked about a program called STEPS that focuses on police officers interacting with kids in grade school and maybe extended to have interactions with children with autism. Several parents of children with autism attended tonight's meeting. It was stated that parents have to all the research themselves to find out what's available for their children. Somerville Public Schools do not have enough resources to assist with children who have autism. Additionally, it was stated there are no recreational activities for children with autism. It was stated that some children with autism are non-verbal and can be intimidated and stop speaking. There were discussions about a recent lock down at one of the schools. Mr. Kress stated that the HHS staff is very well trained and work well with special education and school nurses. Ms. Trevisone stated there are 12% children with autism

may not be on an IEP. The largest population is in Pre-K with 45 students. It was also stated that 34% of the children with autism are in Pre-K in the Winter Hill program. Next year, it is expected to be 52 students in the autism program.

Chair Clingan talked about a video 1, 2 3 Grow to help parents understand how to look for milestones and what to do if they suspect their child is delayed. Additionally, he stated that Mass Act Early website provides helpful resources. Also that MassHealth now covers ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) and on-dedicated devices (iPads) for communication for individuals with ASD.

One of the parents stated that higher grades are not well supported in the schools and have very limited resources. Another parent stated that her child has not had the same teacher in 2 years in a roll because they all quit.

There were discussions about sensory-friendly activity, which could be walks through city hall, library day, leaving lights on in a movie, or no loud speakers.

Councilor Hirsch motioned and it was accepted **that the Parks and Recreation department work with interested parents and care givers to design a "summer program" to support those who have children with autism disorder.**

Chair Clingan made the following suggestions for the city:

1. City to dedicate a webpage on autism
2. School department special education have more training
3. Schools after-hour program have clubs for children with autism
4. Specialized camps for autistic children
5. Look into developing a checklist with steps on what to do if you have an autistic child.
6. State/locally resources who can answers questions about schooling
7. Children with autism have a social group

Additionally, Mr. Kress volunteered to work with parks and recreation and interested parents on where to put information on the city's website about children with autism, as well as, activities for the children.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207162: That the Director of Health and Human Services develop a resident checklist for emergency preparedness, including plans to help needy neighbors, and including the "Are You OK" Program.

Mr. Kress stated this item has been responded to in a previous meeting. Please see attached memo from Mr. Kress dated January 28.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206854: That the Director of Health and Human Services work with the Public Schools to allow whole fruits to be saved for use as snacks, given that many children often go without

snacks.

Mr. Kress provided a document from the Somerville Board of Health addressing this matter. This item was also discharged to the Youth Committee.

RESULT:	REFERRED FOR DISCUSSION
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207328: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board of the protocol for notifying the public and families when there is an incident in a public building.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207574: That the Chief of Police develop a kindergarten pedestrian safety program for all children entering public schools.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207329: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board on school-related safety policies and procedures listed within.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207658: That the Chief of Police provide this Council with a list of the unsolved homicides over the past 35 years.

Chief Fallon stated there are currently 13 unsolved homicides in the City of Somerville. The Somerville Police officers collaborate with the state investigators on these matters. The SPD are in the process of posting a list of cases on the SPD website, which will not include missing persons. Chief Fallon will also forward the list to Chair Clingan.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- HHS response (with 207162)
- Share table guidelines (with 206854)