

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
April 5, 2010
City Hall Council Chambers
(Immediately following council meeting)

PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm, Council Member-at-Large Anderson, Council Members Austin, McAlister, Martin, King, Clennon, and Pacholl.

ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Administrative Services Director Tom Dankert and City Administrator Jim Hurm.

ALSO PRESENT: Public, Mandi Lighthizer-Schmidt of the United Way of Mower County, KAAL TV-6, Austin Post Bulletin, and Austin Daily Herald.

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 7:10 pm.

Item #1. – United Way Community Assessment report: Mandi Lighthizer-Schmidt gave council an overview presentation of the 2010 Community Needs Assessment that was done by the United Way of Mower County. The United Way hired a firm to do the research and create the report about the community. Ms. Lighthizer-Schmidt noted a steering committee was in charge of this process including taking an asset inventory of the community and then doing the needs assessment. The needs assessment was based on a telephone survey with an attempt at getting 500 completed surveys. The telephone survey was *not* intended to get full representation as the goal was to reach 400 non-Hispanic/Latinos and to reach 100 Hispanic/Latinos. There were 12,114 calls made in order to reach the 500 completed surveys with the breakdown of 400 non-Hispanic/Latinos and 100 Hispanic/Latinos.

Ms. Lighthizer-Schmidt outlined the top ten (not in any order) of the issues that were identified out of the telephone survey, as follows:

1. Rent/Mortgage – problems affording the rent and mortgage payments.
2. Utility bills – problems paying the utility bills each month.
3. Employment – although unemployment rates in our area are lower than the State of Minnesota and the United States, our unemployment rates have gone up over the past few years.
4. Child care – large waiting lists for local child care facilities exist.
5. Language barriers – Hispanic and Somali interpreters are needed.
6. Food – 16% of children in Mower County are using food stamps.
7. Health care – uninsured residents of Mower County equate to 9.8% of the population. This is slightly higher than all of Minnesota (9.4%) and significantly lower than the rate of the United States (15.9%).
8. Prescription medications – prescriptions are more expensive in Mower County than other parts of Minnesota by approximately 15%.
9. Mental health – Mower County has a higher number of total clients per 10,000 capita than the State of Minnesota.

10. Education/training – 58.8% of Mower County’s students attended community or technical colleges, compared to 39.2% for the State of Minnesota. However only 12.9% have a bachelor’s degree.

Ms. Lighthizer-Schmidt stated the next steps include reviewing the data as there appear to be some real issues within the Hispanic/Latino population. The Steering Committee will now be looking at each issue and conducting further research. All of this data is available on the website at www.uwmower.org.

Item #2. – Administrator’s report: None.

Adjournment: Motion by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Austin, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Dankert