

Minutes of Committee on Alcoholic Rehabilitation

May 10, 1961

Present: Mr. Gordon Tongue, Mr. J. E. Beardsley, Mr. W. J. Billings, Councilman J. D. Braman, Dr. Joan Jackson, Mrs. Arthur V. Lamphere, Mr. Robert J. Lavoie, Councilman Clarence F. Massart, Mr. Richard H. Powell, Mrs. Alice Ralls, Mr. Orville C. Scott, Mr. Stephen Selak, and Mr. Stanley S. Stretton. Also present were Deputy Chief Gordon McDougall and Dr. Cedric Northrup as resource consultants.

Absent: Mr. Walter B. Williams

Mr. Tongue opened the meeting at 3:40 p.m. and introduced Mayor Clinton for the opening remarks.

The Mayor expressed appreciation to the members of the Committee for being here, and particularly to Gordon Tongue for accepting the chairmanship. He read the City Council resolution setting forth the group's responsibilities, stating that this assignment presented a real challenge. The Mayor indicated that he felt that this was clearly a community problem and that the task of the Committee is to set the standard for what we, as citizens, should be doing. He said he will be glad to answer any questions the Committee might have.

Mr. Tongue asked the members to introduce themselves and announced that the meetings would be informal. He remarked that some of the members have direct knowledge of the problem; others are laymen who are performing a civic service at the request of the Mayor. Mr. Tongue is of the opinion that the Committee should be a policy committee. He feels that time and tempers will be saved if the members try to avoid minute details that would cloud policy. He announced that no action would be taken at the first meeting which is merely exploratory.

Mr. Tongue mentioned an article in the P.I. which stated that the first job of the Committee is to reopen the Farm. He does not believe this to be the case.

Mr. Braman stated that the Council appreciates the work being done in the face of a difficult problem. However, as chairman of the Finance Committee, he is faced with the day to day, month to month operation of the budget. He reported that the burden on the City is increasing because the per capita income is decreasing and no provision has been made for mandatory increases. He believes the question of whether or not Seattle should undertake the financing of an alcoholic rehabilitation facility is of great importance. He compared the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm to a poor farm and said we must realize that the City of Seattle was not set up as a welfare organization. No provision has been made for services beyond measurable

services such as police and fire protection, health services, etc. If the City had enough money, then services could be extended. He emphasized that the main function of the Police Department is to protect life and property. He believes that the Committee would be unrealistic if they gave hope that the Rehabilitation Farm could be reopened.

Mr. Massart suggested that the Committee urge joint action by the City and County and try to obtain State participation at the next session of the Legislature. The idea is to get started rather than do nothing because no funds are available.

Mr. Tongue asked if it were the intention of Councilmen Braman and Massart to attend all meetings of the Committee. Mr. Braman replied that they were asked to serve as Council liaison to the group and would be present whenever possible.

Deputy Chief McDougall gave a brief history of the Farm and listed the activities offered. He said that the patients were those alcoholics who had been sentenced to jail by the Court. They were admitted to the Farm from the jail by a screening process. Only prisoners with at least 10-20 days to serve were sent to the Farm. Dr. Jackson commented that an alcoholic must have a desire to be helped in order to gain admittance to the Farm. Chief McDougall stated that the Farm was originally set up to relieve pressure on the jail and was intended to be temporary. It was remarked that perhaps closing of the Farm was a blessing in disguise because the feasibility of establishing a new and better facility could now be explored.

Chief McDougall stated that there has been no relaxation of picking up drunks since the Farm was closed. As a result of the Farm closure and increased activity by the Police Department, the number of prisoners in the jail has risen. He said if the rate of increase continues, jail facilities will have to be expanded.

One of the members asked what the cost was per day to run the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm. Chief McDougall replied that an exact per diem figure on the cost to operate the Farm compared to the cost of keeping an alcoholic in jail is not readily available due to the fact that both units are carried on the City jail budget.

A question was raised as to the success of the Farm. Dr. Jackson replied that it is difficult to answer this question because facilities for follow-up are not adequate. Information can be gathered only on people in this vicinity. Many former patients move to another city or state. Skid road alcoholics particularly are transient.

One of the Committee members asked if other cities throughout the country have a plan such as the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm. Mr. Tongue replied that this will be one of the major considerations of the group.

Mrs. Ralls asked if there shouldn't be a County representative on the Committee. Mr. Tongue said that an effort was made to obtain County representation.

Dr. Jackson reported that there are approximately 30,000 alcoholics in Seattle and King County. Twenty percent come to the attention of the Police Department. Four-fifths are American males. Several treatments are known, but which treatment is the right one for each person is not known. She reported that jailing alcoholics tends to intensify alcoholism. She said that there are many expenses such as hospital costs, cost of welfare to the families of alcoholics, inability to collect taxes from alcoholics, etc., that come out of the City, County, State, and Federal tax dollar. Dr. Jackson observed that no mention had been made of prevention of alcoholism. She feels that as long as the Committee is going to do a job, they should do it well and take into consideration the entire problem of alcoholism in the community rather than merely whether or not the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm should be reopened.

Mr. Tongue presented an outline of matters to be considered by the Committee. They are: (1) Does the community have a responsibility to take care of alcoholics? (2) Is it a City, County, or State responsibility? (3) What body should have the primary responsibility? (4) If it is the City's responsibility, where should the facility be located and how should it be financed? (5) If it is the City's responsibility, should it be under the Police Department or the Health Department?

Mr. Tongue reported that he had received letters from several agencies such as the Seattle Committee on Alcoholism, Salvation Army, Municipal League, etc., to assist this Committee. Dr. Jackson suggested that the members of the Committee utilize the vast amount of information collected by the State.

An informal discussion was held. It was the general consensus of the group that there is a need for an alcoholic facility in the community. Mr. Tongue read the directive from the City Council and announced that each member would receive a copy.

Mr. Tongue informed the members that the Committee will be divided into subcommittees and each group will be given a topic for thorough investigation. He told the members that they will be notified by mail of the time and place of the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45.

JL:cdl

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
March 27, 1961

On motion, duly seconded and carried, the Council resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole.

On motion, duly seconded and carried, Mr. Braman was elected as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

All members present except Mr. Miller, who was excused.

The Committee of the Whole considered File No. 241992, Report of Chief of Police on reducing the Budget of the Police Dept. by abolishing the Police Rehabilitation Project and the police positions in connection with said project, and abolishing the Police Reserve and its program.

Motion was made by Mr. Levine, seconded by Mr. Alexander, that the Committee recommend to the Council that the Mayor be requested to set up a citizens' committee, to include representatives of the City Council, to restudy the matter of the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm and bring in a report as soon as possible; that in the meantime the recommendation of the Chief of Police as to his budget for the Police Rehabilitation Project be adopted; and that the Mayor and the Chief of Police be so notified. (City Comptroller to notify.) Motion carried. Mr. Massart requested that he be recorded as voting "No".

Motion was made by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Levine, that the Committee recommend to the Council that the question of continuation of the Police Reserve be taken under advisement, and that the Committee rise, report progress, and beg leave to sit again. Motion carried.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried that the Committee recommend to the Council that all files relating to the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm be held for use by the citizens' committee. (See below).

- No.
- 241858 Petition of Kate L. Kogan, Ph.D., et al., re possible closing of Police Alcoholic Rehabilitation Project due to lack of funds, etc.
 - 241912 Petition of Washington State Department of Health, et al., against the closing of the Police Rehabilitation Farm for alcoholics.
 - 241989 Petition of J. Thomas Grayson for continued operation of Police Rehabilitation Farm.
 - 242032 Petition of citizens re City's Alcoholic Rehabilitation Camp.
 - 242046 Petition of Municipal League, et al., in favor of retention of the Police Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm.
 - 242088 Petition of Washington Citizens Council for study to provide for continuance of Police Rehabilitation Project.
 - 242133 Transmittal of Mayor of letters of the Alcohol Problems Association, et al., re keeping the Police Rehabilitation Camp open.
 - 242187 Petitions of the Anti-Tuberculosis League, et al., in favor of retaining the Police Rehabilitation Farm project in some manner or form, etc.

Motion was made by Mr. Levine, seconded, and carried, that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole be authorized to prepare a statement outlining the actions of the Committee at today's meeting for press release.

Thereafter, at 4:25 p.m., the Committee of the Whole arose and reported to the Council as above set forth; and the Council, eight members being present and voting, adopted said report of the Committee of the Whole.

C O P Y

The City Council appreciates the widespread interest in the purpose of the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Farm in attempting to salvage some of the inmates who are assigned to it by the court.

However, in view of the fact that the State Legislature has in its recent session not only again refused to recognize the city's urgent need for financial relief, but instead imposed additional heavy financial burdens upon the city without providing any money whatsoever to implement them, and further, in view of the fact that it has become absolutely necessary to cut back in the 1961 operations of all departments to overcome the approximately one-half million dollar revenue reduction due to an error in computing assessed valuations, the Council has no alternative other than to give full consideration to the recommendation of the Chief of Police that this activity be terminated.

We believe all thinking citizens will agree with the Chief that the first and primary function of the Police Department is to provide the greatest possible protection to citizens' lives and property. The necessity for a financial cutback is an imperative one, and if any delay in this action were to be made the only alternative would be a reduction in police patrol strength. We believe this action would not be in the public interest.

We also believe, in view of the current opinion that the treatment of alcoholics is a medical problem, that the responsibility should not be given to the Police Department.

It is the intention of the Council to take steps leading toward the establishment of a committee to study all possibilities for the establishment of an alcoholic treatment facility under the proper auspices.

In the governmental organization of the state, all welfare activities, of which this is one, are centered in the county and the state. The principal buildings at the present Camp will soon be taken as part of the right of way for the freeway, which will lead to very heavy capital expenditures at some other location in the re-establishment of this facility. We believe that this should be undertaken jointly by the county and the state, with the City of Seattle providing all possible cooperation.

JIB:hj
3/27/61

5-17-61

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FILED
CITY OF SEATTLE

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C. G. ERLANDSON
COMPTROLLER AND CITY CLERK

Committee on

Alcoholics

Rehabilitation

May 10, 1961