

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

JULY 23, 2024 – 5:30 PM

City Hall – Second Floor Conference Room
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

Watch the livestream on the City of Geneva's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/cityofgenevany>

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Lavin, Clr., Grimaldi, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Moracco, Clr. Whitfield

Absent: Clr Brennan, Clr. Pealer, Clr. Gillotte

2. DISCUSSION – FLACRA Project

FLACRA CEO Jennifer Carlson began the discussion by thanking City Council for the invitation to discuss FLACRA's 116 Lewis Street clinic, and provided a brief overview of FLACRA's 50 year history. Ms. Carlson noted that FLACRA has been in Geneva for 25 years offering primarily outpatient services via several locations in the Geneva area which has been identified as an area of larger need and service. Ms. Carlson also reviewed FLACRA's Mission, Vision and Broad Pledge model for recovery.

Senior CCBHC Project Manager John L'Hommedieu reviewed FLACRA's programs and services, and thanked City Council for hosting the FLACRA group. He explained that FLACRA's growth is directly related to the population needing services. Mr. L'Hommedieu went on to share that substance abuse and mental health issues are a family issue, a generational issue, which has led the agency to expand into mental health services in Penn Yan and Geneva clinics. A community needs assessment shows a need for help with heroin and opiate services, noting that opiates are the number one source of use and abuse seen in the Geneva clinic, and that FLACRA is pivoting to best treatment for people with these use disorders. FLACRA boasts the largest peer program in New York State, with more than 100 different partners for treatment and referrals with the goal of families being successful.

Mayor Valentino wondered if FLACRA works with AA or Clifton Springs Hospital and Clinic mental health services, or law enforcement responding to mental health crisis. Mr. L'Hommedieu shared that FLACRA has a leadership role with Clifton Springs Hospital and Clinic CPEP, who is the primary responder, however noted that CPEP can't get involved if the patient isn't suicidal or homicidal.

Councilor Lavin requested FLACRA's budget. Ms. Carlson shared that FLACRA's budget is \$32 million annually, with state and federal funding, with most of the budget being paid out in payroll. She

also shared that many staff members are reciprocal, clients become staff in the circle of recovery, discussing how work is healthy for recovery.

Councilor Petropoulos shared that he worked for Veterans Outreach Center for a time and wondered how many of FLACRA's clients are in the workforce. Ms. Carlson explained that 75-80% of outpatient clinic clients are in the workforce. She went on to explain the behavioral health philosophy of care, and that New York State wants ambulatory clinics to run with primary care, substance abuse and mental health care under one roof.

Councilor Whitfield wondered what the overall success rate is versus recidivism in the program. Mr. L'Hommedieu shared that depends on how one defines success, noting that clients can keep coming back as they need to. Ms. Carlson further explained that treatment in a recovery model views relapse as a recurrence of disease, taking morality and stigma out of addiction, treating it as a disease. COO Ruth Donk shared that FLACRA has 25 prescribers on staff and over 100 therapists. Ms. Carlson shared that healthcare is moving into all in one clinical settings, like the clinic at 116 Lewis Street, using a total wellness and integrated care model.

Councilor Petropoulos wondered what the agency does with clients who don't succeed. Ms. Carlson advised that these clients are recommended a higher level of care, including residential treatment. She noted that substance abuse beds are available, while mental health inpatient beds are tough to find. Councilor Petropoulos raised concerns about able bodied people causing trouble, that he wants to see a line in the sand and consequences, and that he came prepared with 20 questions related to a methadone clinic. He began by asking what the plan is, raising concerns about patients and wondering if they would be inside a fenced off compound. Ms. Carlson assured Councilor Petropoulos that clients are brought in and out of the clinic. Councilor Whitfield then wondered if the programs set up currently are working. Ms. Carlson stated that they absolutely are, shared examples of connections made, and that FLACRA has served over a million people in the region. She went on to explain their Good Neighbor Policy, advising that if there is a problem, FLACRA wants to be made aware of it, and that there have been zero issues with the Castle Street clinic. Councilor Petropoulos countered that there are problems on Castle Street, and that he wants to be able to give out a business card for outreach, and that he is rooting for those who want help. Ms. Carlson asked for clarification on the problems Councilor Petropoulos referred to, wondering if the concern was for people loitering and hanging out. Councilor Petropoulos stated that is part of the problem, and that he wants to see outreach and their plan, making references to a New York City plan he doesn't believe works. Ms. Carlson asked for further clarification on what "trouble" means, Councilor Petropoulos shared that urinating in yards and disruptive behavior is some of the trouble he's been made aware of. Ms. Carlson assured Councilor Petropoulos that FLARA has the largest outreach and engagement program in the state, with on call staff who are anticipatory of the population that FLACRA works with. She then provided an overview of the One Stop Wellness model, that sees the whole person. City Manager Hendrix asked Ms. Carlson about regulatory authority. Ms. Carlson shared that FLACRA is regulated by the OMH and OASIS, who put grants out in two year increments, noting that funding via CCBHC grants produce high outcomes.

Councilor Whitfield noted that ACC (detox at Clifton Springs Hospital and Clinic) is the beginning of FLACRA treatment for many clients, and wondered if there can be changes to the program for clients to remain in that process, which typically lasts 7-10 days. Ms. Carlson shared that CCBHC has been very successful in Geneva, noting that AUD (Alcohol Use Disorder) presents often in this community. She went on to elaborate on extensive partnerships FLACRA has throughout the region including 400-500 MOU's with other companies and agencies, which is beneficial for their model of care management and outreach work. Geneva is one of the first places that FLACRA is implementing this innovative model. Ms. Carlson went on to clarify that FLACRA isn't running a huge methadone clinic, it's simply an additional tool for treatment provided locally, so clients can get back into the workplace and to their families. Councilor Moracco wondered what the Lewis Street clinic is being used for, Ms.

Carlson advised that it is an outpatient clinic that anyone looking for services can use. Councilor Morocco then wondered if clients would be coming from all over to Geneva. Ms. Carlson advised that anyone can walk in and initiate services, but there is no bussing in, as previously questioned.

Mayor Valentino complimented FLACRA on the great services they provide, and noted that their other locations in Geneva are almost invisible. He wondered what Lewis Street will look like in comparison. Ms. Donk advised that it will be almost identical to 246 Castle Street, and will hopefully serve children as well with expanded mental health and children's services. Mayor Valentino clarified that if it does look different, he would expect some level of communication around that. Ms. Carlson assured him there would be, noting that FLACRA's chief concern is how vulnerable clients will be treated, noting that it's not often that they experience any problems with clients. Stephanie Smaldone assured the group that the Lewis Street clinic isn't a methadone clinic, and won't have people lined up on the street to receive methadone treatments, noting that there will be a security guard on site. Ms. Carlson elaborated that security is something most clinics across the state are moving towards, also reassuring the group that the Lewis Street clinic is not a methadone clinic. She further shared that if FLACRA stayed within the Castle Street clinic and added methadone as a treatment option, the community would have had no idea. She went on to explain that methadone is intended to be embedded, and can be prescribed by any physician. She also shared that the reason FLACRA is in the City offering this treatment option is because people are physically ambulatory without other transportation, and this serves a treatment need. She also elaborated that FLACRA isn't creating anything in the City to cause a problem, that services are changing to help people in the community that others don't want to help. Councilor Morocco wondered if people would come from out of town for methadone treatment at the Lewis Street clinic. Ms. Carlson shared that FLACRA is serving about 30 people who will use this medication. City Manager Hendrix further shared that there is a small group of clients traveling away from Geneva for their medication, and this clinic will serve them. Ms. Carlson added that Strong has a mobile methadone clinic, and nobody is anticipating a surge at the Lewis Street clinic. Councilor Whitfield wondered if FLACRA providing security will make matters worse, adding that he's wondering why in Geneva when other clinics also need security. Ms. Carlson shared that more and more health care centers are adding security, and that FLACRA is in fact considering security for other locations as well. Councilor Whitfield shared that he doesn't see the methadone clinic causing problems that would require security, shared that he believes this makes Geneva look bad, as FLACRA doesn't have security at their ACC in Clifton Springs. Mr. L'Hommedieu explained that clients are more volatile than they used to be and explored the difference between security and police, what that represents to clients.

Councilor Lavin thanked FLACRA for the services they provide to families facing these problems, and went on to note that drugs and alcohol are the source of most police calls, citing that alcohol has been legal for 100 years here. He once again asked to see FLACRA's budget because it shows the need and the drug problem, and again thanked the agency for being there for families.

Councilor Petropoulos stated that he's satisfied for now, and wants a phone number to call for when there are problems. Ms. Carlson encouraged him to come meet with staff and make a connection, noting that FLACRA meets with neighbors frequently, and overall has a good relationship with their neighbors. Councilor Petropoulos acknowledged that it seems like FLACRA has more than a half baked plan.

Councilor Grimaldi noted that zoning brought this here, and wondered what the building was like before FLACRA purchased it. Ms. Donk shared that former uses included Geneva Pediatrics, then an adult daycare that closed during covid. It was an empty building that FLACRA came upon when looking for space, noting that it was already set up perfectly for them. Councilor Petropoulos added that the only reason FLACRA can exist on Lewis Street is due to the use variance. Attorney Robert Marks provided some background to the use variance that runs with the land and was added in 1984, which is not specific, and does allow for a medical office on the site. Councilor Petropoulos countered

that FLACRA isn't a medical office, and Ms. Carlson confirmed that they are. Mayor Valentino agreed that FLACRA is doing things the legal way, and provides a valuable service to the community, and wondered what FLACRA would like to see from City Council and the City. Ms. Carlson shared that she'd like a phone call when any concerns arise, and for the City to work and consult with FLACRA as partners. She explained that they are running a business, and if there are complaints or problems, she wants to hear from the City. Councilor Lavin wondered where FLACRA administrative offices are, Ms. Carlson shared that they are in Clifton Springs and Newark, and reminded the group that FLACRA aims to be part of the thread and fabric of the community.

3. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Lavin; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 6:47pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6-3 Absent)

Nicole Tillotson

City Clerk