

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING,
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HOMELESSNESS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, April 3, 2017
3:17 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL - CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB - COCHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

RESOLUTIONS: 160077

1 - - -

2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

3 Good afternoon, everyone.

4 The Resolution No. 160077 is being heard
5 today. This -- the Committee is now in
6 session. This is a joint committee on
7 Education and Housing, Neighborhood
8 Development and the Homeless.

9 We will ask the clerk to read the title
10 of the resolution.

11 CLERK: Authorizing the Joint
12 Committee -- Join City Council Committees on
13 Education and Housing, Neighborhood
14 Development and Homelessness to hold public
15 hearings to examine the feasibility of the
16 having a pilot program in Philadelphia to
17 feed needy children when schools are closed
18 due to emergencies.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

20 We are going to ask if there is anyone
21 here who would like to testify?

22 We thank Reverend Jenkins for being
23 here, Chosen 300 Ministries. Would you like
24 to say something?

1 (Witness approaches Table.)

2 REVEREND JENKINS: Thank you,
3 Councilwoman.

4 My name is Brian Jenkins. I'm the
5 Executive Director at Chosen 300 Ministries.
6 We have two regional locations in this area.
7 One is on Spring Garden Street at 11th and
8 Spring Garden Street in Mark Squilla's
9 District. And also 40th and Lancaster in
10 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell's District.

11 More personally, I actually am a product
12 of DHS here in Philadelphia. My mother died
13 when I was five years old. Actually, lived
14 in Tasker Projects. And my father abandoned
15 me before I was born and actually was in
16 Stenton Child Center which was at Stenton
17 and Belfield and grew up in foster care.
18 And I was a product of DHS all the way
19 through age 18. And know what it was to be
20 on the school lunch program and to depend on
21 the free lunch program.

22 The challenges that we're facing today
23 in our communities, particularly in West
24 Philadelphia as well as in Center City, is

1 that we have not only homeless families, but
2 we also have a lot of children that are
3 dealing with food insufficiency. That
4 statistics are in the packet that was
5 provided to you. However, even in doing our
6 individual research, we are finding that
7 there is more than 185,000 people that live
8 off of less than \$10,000 a year in
9 Philadelphia, which encompasses about 60,000
10 to 70,000 children throughout our City.

11 And so, a lot of the challenges that
12 they face is that during the school year,
13 whenever school is closed for whether it's a
14 national holiday, whether it's spring break,
15 winter break or also the inclement weather,
16 they are running around without food because
17 their parents have gone to work. And they
18 have been left to pretty much fend for
19 themselves.

20 And the school Backpack Program was a
21 great program. However, it doesn't satisfy
22 the need for that cooked meal that is often
23 needed. So, one of the things we have
24 proposed even prior to this packet being

1 provided is that there would be pilot sites
2 developed where children could come and be
3 able to receive a meal during the lunch time
4 period whenever there was a national
5 holiday, whenever there was a spring break
6 or was there inclement weather.

7 The inclement weather is probably one of
8 the more challenging ones. One of the
9 things that's been very successful about our
10 organization for our evening meals is that
11 we have never been closed in 21 years. We
12 have opened every single day. And not only
13 in the recent blizzards that we have had
14 while I was actually in South Africa, my
15 team actually opened up. But also, even the
16 blizzards of last year, both of our
17 facilities were open and operating because
18 we really believe that we should never
19 close. If we eat when it snows, then the
20 children and the families that we serve
21 should eat, as well.

22 So, our goal and our hopes is that not
23 only will these recreation centers be
24 supplemented but also organizations like

1 Chosen 300 that do this year round would be
2 able to add to their services by being able
3 to provide for those children in those
4 communities and provide a great avenue for
5 them to be able to access a meal.

6 One of the things that is important to
7 recognize is that for every meal that is
8 served for about a hundred children, it cost
9 about \$350 per meal. But when you add in
10 the inclement weather factor, it doubles
11 because of the fact that additional
12 transportation has to be provided. Staff
13 has to be placed in the hotels. We have to
14 make sure that people are on staff. That no
15 matter what, those doors are going to be
16 open.

17 So, you have to be mindful that as you
18 develop and effective program, that you have
19 all those factors in place.

20 I want to thank you so much for giving
21 me the opportunity to testify today.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
23 Reverend Jenkins. And I would tell this
24 Committee that Reverend Jenkins knew Lucien

1 Blackwell. We've been fighting this battle
2 for a long, long time. We thank you.

3 Before I call on Councilman Domb,
4 co-chair, let me note that we do have a
5 quorum today. To my left Councilman Henon.
6 He is saying something to Councilwoman Bass
7 that we won't question. Certainly to my
8 right, the cochair of this Committee
9 Councilman Domb. And to his right
10 Councilman Squilla and then Councilman
11 Taubenberger.

12 Thank you all for being here.

13 Councilman Domb.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Reverend Jenkins, just
15 a quick comment. I want to make sure,
16 because we are 15 days away from April 18,
17 which is the earned income tax credit filing
18 deadline. I want to make sure, are you
19 aware of the earned income tax credit?

20 REVEREND JENKINS: I am aware of the
21 earned income tax credit.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I will give you an
23 example, just so we're clear. I can't
24 repeat this enough. We left a hundred

1 million dollars last year in Philadelphia
2 that could have gone to 40,000 families.
3 And example, single parent, two children
4 44,000 of income or less can get checks up
5 to \$6,000. And they can file back three
6 additional years, so they could get \$24,000.
7 It's a lot of money from the federal
8 government. Couple, \$50,000.

9 We have the forms for revenue housing.
10 If you need any information, I know you are
11 helping kids eat, but their parents should
12 be getting this information. 40,000
13 Philadelphians did not get the checks last
14 year.

15 REVEREND JENKINS: Thank you for that
16 information. I appreciate it. I will
17 definitely contact your office to --

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Or any of our offices.
19 We all have the information.

20 REVEREND JENKINS: Thank you so much.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
23 much.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Chair recognizes

1 Councilmember Blackwell for a motion on the
2 report of this joint committee on the
3 matters --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Hold on a
5 minute. They tell me that Parks and Rec
6 want to speak.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure. Is it Terri
8 Kerwawich?

9 MS. KERWAWICH: Very good.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Program Director for
11 Parks and Rec.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
13 much. Is there anyone else here to speak
14 after them?

15 (No reply.)

16 (Witness approaches Table.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

18 MR. RANDONE: Good afternoon. My name
19 is Orlando Randone. I'm the Deputy
20 Commissioner for programs for Parks and Rec.
21 Just here to support the initiative and
22 Terri Kerwawich in her statement.

23 MS. KERWAWICH: Good afternoon.

24 Good afternoon, Chairwoman Blackwell,

1 Chairman Domb and Committee Members. My
2 name is Terri Kerwawich. And I'm a Program
3 Director with Philadelphia Parks and
4 Recreation. I appear before you today on
5 behalf of the Department of Parks and
6 Recreation concerning Council Resolution No.
7 160077.

8 This resolution examines the feasibility
9 of having a pilot program in Philadelphia to
10 feed needy children when schools are closed
11 due to emergencies. Parks and Recreation
12 currently serves approximately 2300 meals
13 per day to 102 afterschool programs. In
14 support of this resolution, our Department
15 will create a pilot program at the following
16 Parks and Rec centers located within the
17 Third Councilmanic District located by
18 Councilwoman Blackwell: Christy Recreation
19 Center, Kingsessing Recreation Center, Miles
20 Mack Playground, Mill Creek Playground, West
21 Mill Creek Playground and James Wright
22 Recreation Center.

23 The pilot program will allow children 18
24 years of age and under to receive a

1 nutritious meal during a time when they do
2 not have access to meals at schools. The
3 six pilot sites will receive a total of 140
4 meals per day for about 560 meals for the
5 week. If the pilot in Council District
6 Three is successful, our goal would be to
7 introduce the program Citywide starting in
8 September for the new school year.

9 Our immediate plan is to begin serving
10 the meals on Monday, April 10 through
11 Thursday, April 13, 2017 which is the School
12 District of Philadelphia's spring break. We
13 will offer meals on a first come, first
14 serve basis. The meals will be delivered
15 daily by Parks and Recreation current food
16 vendor and the cost will be reimbursed by
17 the State of Pennsylvania through the Child
18 and Adult Care Food Program.

19 We are grateful for Councilwoman
20 Blackwell and her staff for their leadership
21 and tireless work to help Philadelphia's
22 youth.

23 Thank you. I'm happy to answer any
24 questions you may have.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
2 much. We also -- 48th and Woodland and Lee
3 Cultural Center were also included in the
4 list. So, we expect that they will be
5 continued to be included.

6 MS. KERWAWICH: There was an issue with
7 that, Councilwoman. 48th and Woodland
8 currently doesn't have an afterschool
9 program going on. And with Lee Cultural
10 Center, their supervisor just got promoted,
11 so we don't have a permanent full-time staff
12 person there at this time. So, we were
13 worried about the food being able to be
14 delivered in a timely fashion there and
15 someone there to receive it.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, you know,
17 we think when there's no person working
18 there, all you have to do is transfer
19 somebody in. I am willing to compromise
20 until September when the whole City goes so
21 that the those two are included.

22 MS. KERWAWICH: Yes, ma'am.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right.
24 Thank you very much. Let me say to my

1 colleagues that this is very important
2 because all your areas that give it now is
3 not a real hardship. It's only something
4 like 16 days or a little more. And it would
5 be the people whole who give it just give it
6 on days when -- when the City' open and
7 schools are closed. So, it's not a big
8 hardship and not a real big expense.

9 And so, we are looking forward to having
10 this program start City wide. We don't see
11 any real problems since it's the same
12 program we now have. Just extend it for a
13 few days.

14 Anybody have any questions?

15 Councilwoman Bass.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just really wanted
17 to thank Councilwoman Bass[sic] and Parks
18 and Recreation and everyone who is a part of
19 making this happen. This is a really
20 important program. And so, for districts
21 like mine that have high concentrations of
22 poverty, we need this. We desperately need
23 it.

24 We can't assume that just because the

1 kids aren't there, that the needs don't
2 exist. If they miss a day of school, then
3 someone is going to be there to provide, you
4 know, the food that they need for that day.
5 And for really for a whole week, when we
6 talk about spring break and, you know,
7 multiple snow days and things like that.

8 So, I just really wanted to say thanks
9 to everyone who has been working on this.
10 Thank you Pastor for all of the work and all
11 that you do, as well. And Councilwoman
12 Blackwell, for being so thoughtful about
13 this very important issue. And look forward
14 to this being a big success so that it can
15 come to the 8th District next.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

17 And we want to thank both of you who
18 were here and others who worked on this
19 Committee to make this day possible. I know
20 that -- we appreciate it. It makes a
21 difference if we all care and decide and try
22 to be creative, try to be thoughtful. As
23 the councilwoman said, maybe we can make a
24 different.

1 We thank everyone who worked on this, so
2 thank you very much.

3 And having said that, we will conclude
4 our Hearing and enter into our Public
5 Meeting.

6 (Public Hearing adjourned.)

7 - - -

8 (Public Meeting commences.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The Chair
10 recognizes Councilmember Domb for a motion
11 on the report of this Joint Committee --

12 - - -

13 (A discussion was held off the record.)

14 - - -

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: One moment,
16 please. Thank you all, everyone, who is
17 here, as well.

18 (Public Hearing reopens.)

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Maybe I can ask you a
20 question while we're waiting just to kill
21 some time.

22 What kind of food would be served in
23 this type of a meal? What would it look
24 like?

1 MS. KERWAWICH: They vary by day.
2 Normally, they be will get either a sandwich
3 with some of type either fruit or vegetable
4 and a drink. It could be milk, chocolate
5 milk, things like that. Some days it's --
6 there is five different components in the
7 meal. So you know, could be the sandwich or
8 it could be tuna and crackers along with a
9 vegetable or a fruit and something to drink.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Who prepares those
11 meals?

12 MS. KERWAWICH: Our vendor is Marimount,
13 which is a subsidiary of Preferred Meals.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are those specific for
15 children those meals?

16 MS. KERWAWICH: Yes. The menu has to be
17 approved by the State before we can serve
18 anything.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are they relatively
20 healthy?

21 MS. KERWAWICH: Yes.

22 MR. RANDONE: Absolutely.

23 MS. KERWAWICH: It's whole wheat bread.
24 We try to limit the sugar and salt contents

1 in them. Those are the things like we
2 developed the menu with the vendor, then it
3 gets sent to the State for them to look at
4 the nutritional values of everything.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So, what do you think
6 the pilot program is going to cost to do?

7 MS. KERWAWICH: So the meals -- our
8 meals are generally about \$3, \$3.10 per
9 meal. So, if we are doing 560 a week.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So \$1,600 a week?

11 MS. KERWAWICH: About that, yeah.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How many weeks is this
13 for?

14 MS. KERWAWICH: The pilot was just next
15 week during spring break, that is when
16 schools are closed.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.

18 MS. KERWAWICH: However, if we did
19 something --

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How about in
21 September? What do you think the budget
22 should be for this?

23 MS. KERWAWICH: That -- I didn't plan
24 out that far ahead. I could get some

1 numbers together for that.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I just want some idea
3 of what we are looking at financially.

4 MS. KERWAWICH: Sure. I can send that
5 over.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's a good thing. I
7 want to understand what the impact would be.

8 MS. KERWAWICH: Sure.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you very much.

10 MS. KERWAWICH: Sure.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The working
12 group, Councilman, comprised members of City
13 Council, Parks and Rec as is obvious, Free
14 Library, the Mayor's Office of Policy, the
15 Mayor's Office of Education, the Office of
16 Homeland Services, the School District of
17 Philadelphia, the Archdiocese of
18 Philadelphia, the Coalition Against Hunger,
19 Phil-abundance, Share Food Program, the Food
20 and Resource Action Center and Chosen 300 --
21 Chosen 300. And we talked with Reverend
22 Jenkins here.

23 They met consistently during summer
24 months and discussed in depth feasibility to

1 having this program. So, many people worked
2 on it and were involved in it. We hope this
3 is just a beginning of something that would
4 go even further to help children who are
5 hungry.

6 (A discussion was held off the record.)

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Another question for
8 you.

9 MS. KERWAWICH: Sure.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: If we wait long
11 enough, there will be more questions. p.

12 We are trying to figure out. I'm
13 looking at this resolution. And it says
14 here there are 200,000 meals served every
15 day in Philadelphia's public and archdiocese
16 schools. And using your numbers, that is
17 \$600,000 a day in food, which is about
18 3 million a week. And that's paid for by
19 the School District I assume?

20 MS. KERWAWICH: Yeah. I don't know -- I
21 don't have anything to do with the School
22 District meals.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Would these meals also
24 be paid for by the School District?

1 MS. KERWAWICH: No. These meals are
2 paid -- it starts out with federal money
3 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
4 They give the money to the State Department
5 of Education. And then they reimburse us
6 for the meals that we serve.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So, this is paid for
8 by the Federal Government?

9 MS. KERWAWICH: That's where the money
10 initially comes from, yes.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: A hundred percent? We
12 should get accelerated on this program now.

13 MS. KERWAWICH: Excuse me?

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: We should accelerate
15 this program and get it to everywhere
16 really. Federal money to feed our kids,
17 this is phenomenal.

18 MR. RANDONE: That's the reimbursement
19 based on consumption. If you don't actually
20 consume all the meals, you don't get
21 reimbursement.

22 MS. KERWAWICH: Right. We don't get
23 reimbursed. But we still have to pay for
24 whatever gets delivered to us.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
3 Councilman. All right.

4 We will reenter our -- we will again
5 close out our hearing and enter our Public
6 Meeting for Resolution 160077.

7 (Public Hearing concludes.)

8 - - -

9 (Public Meeting recommences.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The Chair
11 recognizes Councilmember Domb for a motion
12 on the report of this Joint Committee for
13 matters discussed at the Public Hearing held
14 on March 14, 2016 pursuant to Resolution No.
15 160077.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair. I move that the report of this Joint
18 Committee on the matters considered at the
19 Public Hearing held on March 14, 2016
20 pursuant to Resolution 160077 be issued to
21 the Council.

22 (Duly seconded.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It has been
24 moved and properly seconded that the report

1 of the Joint Committee on Education and
2 Housing, Neighborhood Development and the
3 Homeless on matters considered at the Public
4 Hearing held on March 14, 2016 pursuant to
5 Resolution No. 160077 be issued to the
6 Council.

7 All those in favor of the motion will
8 say aye.

9 (Ayes.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Those opposed?

11 (No opposition)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The ayes have
13 it. And the motion carries. The report
14 will be issued to Council at our next
15 session of Council.

16 This will conclude the business of this
17 Joint Committee today. The hearing will be
18 recessed pending the call of the Chair.

19 Let me thank all who were here and all
20 Members of the Committee.

21 Thank you.

22 (Public Meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

ANGELA M. KING, RPR
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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