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To: Board of Health & HR/IT Committee

**From: Charles E. Sepers, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H., Health Officer & Director, Appleton Health Department
Polly Olson, Police Chief, Appleton Police Department**

Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023

RE: Community Resource Navigator Table of Organization Request

Background

The Appleton Health Department have been closely partnered with the Appleton Police Department to improve the City's efforts to address persons experiencing homelessness within Appleton. In 2023, the Appleton Common Council approved moving the Coordinated Entry Specialist position from the Department of Community and Economic Development to the Appleton Health Department table of organization, and to embed within the Appleton Police Department.

The Appleton Police Department receives an increasing number of calls concerning individuals experiencing homelessness who, while not engaging in criminal activities, are in need of support to meet their basic necessities and secure shelter. Utilizing police officers to direct those experiencing homelessness to obtain services diverts critical law enforcement assets away from law enforcement activity and fails to provide a tailored response for the residents being served. Creating a new Community Resource Navigator position would address these issues by better preserving the Appleton Police Department's law enforcement resources for criminal activity and provide a vital link between individuals experiencing homelessness and the myriad of individualized services available within the Region. This role would be well suited to respond to the needs of residents in crisis and connect residents with support and services to address their short- and long-term needs.

Goals of the Position

1. **Addressing Community Needs:** There is an increasing need in Appleton to respond effectively to individuals experiencing homelessness and other crisis situations. This role is essential for providing necessary resources to ensure the basic needs and safety of these individuals.
2. **Reducing Non-Criminal Police Calls:** The Appleton Police Department (PD) has noted a rise in calls related to individuals experiencing homelessness. These individuals often do not require law enforcement intervention but need support and resources to secure shelter and other basic

necessities. The Community Resource Navigator can significantly reduce these non-criminal calls, allowing the police to focus on more pressing law enforcement matters.

3. **Streamlining Support Services:** One of the primary goals of this position is to decrease duplicate calls to police for individual clients. The Navigator will be instrumental in identifying clients and connecting them efficiently with service providers that meet their specific needs.
4. **Long-Term Support and Planning:** This role is not only about addressing immediate needs but also ensuring long-term support for residents in crisis. By connecting residents with the right services and support, the Navigator will contribute to their long-term stability and well-being.
5. **Knowledge Repository:** The Community Resource Navigator will serve as a central repository of knowledge about services and resources available to residents. This centralization of information will enhance the City's ability to assist residents efficiently.

Funding

The Appleton Health Department and the Appleton Police Department have submitted a joint application to the Department of Community and Economic Development for HUD's Community Development Block Grant for \$86,550 to cover this position. The position is expected to be funded annually by CDBG dollars, ensuring continuity and stability in service provision. While the available amount may vary depending on HUD's annual allocation, the role is projected to be a sustainable and integral part of community services by supplementing any shortfalls with available resources.

Conclusion

The Appleton Health Department and the Appleton Police Department request adding a 1.0 FTE Community Resource Navigator, under the Appleton Health Department's Community Health Section, to be supervised by the Community Health Supervisor. Creating this position is a strategic move to enhance the City's capacity to address non-criminal but critical community needs. This role will not only alleviate the burden on the police department but also ensure that individuals in crisis receive the appropriate support and services. This investment aligns with our commitment to public service and community well-being. Staff recommend your approval of the creation of this position for the betterment of Appleton's community services.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

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