



**Watertown City Council
Committee on Human Services
Monday, May 13, 2024
6:00PM**

Members Present: Councilor Tony Palomba, Chair; Councilor Caroline Bays, Vice Chair; and Councilor John Gannon, Secretary. Also present were Health Director Abbey Myers, and residents Alexis Khalid and Jackie Van Leeuwen.

The Committee on Human Services meeting was called to order at 6:03pm to continue the discussion regarding the city's ongoing efforts to create and implement a city rodent control plan.

Chair Palomba introduced Health Department Director Abbey Myers to inform the committee of updates to the ongoing city rodent control plan. Ms. Myers stated that the city rodent control plan has progressed significantly since the last committee meeting in December.

She introduced the latest version of the rodent control plan. She stated that the goal of the plan is to reduce rodent population to a manageable level, while also reducing the environmental impact. She prefaced her remarks by stating that the 100% elimination of rats in the community was not feasible; therefore, the rodent control plan is focused on decreasing the rat population and their negative impact on humans. The city plan is focused on integrated pest management, education and outreach. Such outreach includes mailings, social media and an updated and informative presentation on the Health Department website. Also, the Board of Health promulgated new dumpster regulations, with the effective date scheduled for July 1, 2024. The Health Department is now the focal point for rodent complaints. The Department monitors properties with rodent conditions, reporting monthly on progress, and baiting where necessary.

Councilor Palomba commended the efforts of the Health Department but expressed concern with the number of city departments involved in different aspects of the rodent control responsibilities. Ms. Myers stated that there is a city task force comprising the respective departments that have rodent control responsibilities. Councilor Palomba opined that there should be a city policy to the effect that the Health Department should be the lead department in rodent control enforcement.

Councilor Bays made a motion that the City's rodent control enforcement efforts be coordinated by the Health Department; the motion was seconded by Council Gannon, and the vote was 3-0.

Councilor Gannon made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilor Bays. The motion was approved 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Anthony Palomba,
Chair

Caroline Bays,
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,
Secretary