

April 20, 1954

Mr. Thomas Libby
Town Manager
Town Hall
Provincetown, Mass.

Re: Town Infirmary

Dear Mr. Libby:

In accordance with our recent conference relative to the need of continuing the present Town Infirmary and the economic factors relative to abandoning the facility I have completed the study and wish to report as follows:

The Property:

As near as can be determined by old town records the Town Infirmary (Alms House) was built by the town in the year 1874. It was first occupied in 1875. The main structure is seventy-three (73) feet long by thirty-one (31) feet wide and 3 stories high. There is a fifty-seven (57) by eighteen (18) foot addition, also 3 stories high, attached to the center, rear, of the main structure making a T layout. There is a total of twenty-seven (27) rooms including basement, attics and baths.

The construction is entirely wood, cedar roof shingles, clap-board finish and a brick foundation.

The Matron and husband live in a four (4) room apartment on the first floor but use the kitchen in common with the inmates. There is a large inmates sitting room, three (3) inmate rooms and a women's bathroom on the first floor. In the el there is a large combination kitchen dining-room, a secondary kitchen and a storage room. A new deep freeze unit was installed in the secondary kitchen in March 1954. The attic over the el is 57 by 18 feet with full headroom the equivalent of a third floor.

The second floor has eleven (11) rooms for inmates (five not heated) and a large bathroom for males only which has a tub, shower, urinal, toilet bowl and lavatory. There is also an attic (57 x 31) running the length of the main structure which has full headroom equivalent to a third floor.

Heat is provided by a hot-water oil burning system using an electric circulating pump. This unit also provides all of the continuous supply of hot water for other uses. The boiler and burner were installed new in 1941 by Anthony Alves. Except for minor repairs to radiator valves and flushing out the system the unit is in good condition.

Cooking is done in either of the two kitchens. The main kitchen

facility has a modern combination gas (bottle) and oil range. The secondary kitchen has an old fashioned cook stove fired by oil. (There is no regular weekly menu or dietary schedule. Food is purchased retail on a monthly basis and the business is rotated locally.)

All rooms are sparsely furnished with a bed, bureau, and chair. Only one room has closet space. The building and contents are insured for \$13,700. (There is no inventory of the properties.)

Laundry is done by the Matron & Inmates in two electric washers.

Sewage disposal is handled by means of three (3) six or eight foot cesspools. The first time that any of them have required attention was last Fall when one had to be cleaned.

There is a one car garage on the premises which was built in 1932 at the matron's expense for her own car.

The infirmary building covers approximately 3,290 square feet of a plot of land containing 24,734 sq. ft..

At the present time there are six inmates in the infirmary.

Costs Based on Five Year Period:

Since 1/1/50 up to and including the present date the total cost of operation of the institution has been \$33,954.01. (This includes fire insurance premiums proproated and based on a five year period.)

During this same five year period the total number of inmates was Seventy (70).

Average yearly cost of operation \$6,798.00

Average yearly number of inmates 14.

Average yearly cost per inmate \$485.58

Other Financial Data:

(From December 1, 1950 the town received \$40.00 per month room & board from Jesse Enos which totals \$440.00 up to present and from 4/1/54 the rate will be \$43.33 per month for Mr. Enos (board and an additional \$43.33 for board of Isaiah H. Lewis, State settled, making a monthly income of \$86.66. None of these items have been figured towards reducing the average yearly per inmate costs.)

The infirmary must be licensed under Chapter 111, sections 71 to 73, inclusive. This is a mandatory situation and is overdue by at least one year. The costs of repairs required before the premises can be properly licensed (See attached reports of Mass. Dept. Public Safety Inspector, local inspector Wires and Deputy Fire Chief) is approximately \$770.00. (This is only the estimate made by the Agent after inspecting the premises.) The licenses fee is \$25.00 per annum.

Other repairs needed and requested by the Matron, but, not mandatory; \$30.00 for papering and painting men's bathroom and inmates sitting room, \$5.00 resetting front and back doors, \$15.00 repairing and replacing broken gutter drain and conduit, \$200.00 to reboard kitchen floor and point-up foundation. A total of \$250.00.

(The yearly income from room & board in the amount of \$1,039.92 will offset the estimated costs of repairs by about \$20.00.)

Possible Abandonment Infirmary:

If the Town was fully responsible for the six (6) inmates and had to place them on a Room & Board basis in a regular licensed boarding home the rate would be \$25.00 per week. Each recipient would receive about \$9.00 per month personal care and approximately \$20.00 per month for medical costs. The total yearly costs would thus be \$10,292.00.

However; such is not the case and the financial status would be as follows:

Jesse Enos, is not indigent and pays a monthly room & board bill of \$43.33. He has conservators to handle his funds and the balance of the account is \$1,700.00. He would definitely be a Disability Assistance case when his funds are exhausted.

Joseph Costa, young, ablebodied and able to support self, should not be considered as a full time indigent person. He should not be supported by the town in the infirmary and could be discharged without any financial arrangement.

At least two of the cases (Annie H. Dears & Anthony F. DeCosta) might be Disability Assistance recipients and the costs to the town would be approximately \$1,000 for both cases ($\frac{1}{2}$ of D.A. budgets based on \$25.00 per week Room & Board rate.)

The feeble minded female inmate Edith LaCount could be transferred to the State Hospital & Infirmary, Tewksbury, Mass., at \$23.65 per week or a yearly total of \$1,229.80.

The "unsettled" (State) case, (Isaiah Lewis) might also be transferred to Tewksbury, providing Mr. Donnelly's office would agree, but regardless of living arrangement or budgeting the costs in this case are fully reimbursed by the State.

Actual Costs To The Town If The Infirmary Is Abandoned:

Edith LeCount, Tewksbury State Hospital & Infirmary	\$1,229.80
Anthony DeCosta & Annie H. Dears, if they do not qualify for D.A. and come under General Relief.....	2,856.00
Total...	\$4,085.80
Minus \$1,408.00 (Town's Share for Costa & Dears if they qualify for Disability Assistance).....	1,408.00
Total...	\$2,677.80

Conclusion And Opinion Of Agent:

It is my firm belief and conclusion after making this exhaustive study that the Town should abandon the Infirmary. This opinion is supported by the estimated yearly costs as shown in the previous two paragraphs. The savings to the Town will increase each year thereafter as more and more persons become eligible for some kind of assistance benefits. The costs of operation of the Infirmary will increase each year, while the number of poor and indigent persons will decrease. The age and type of construction of the building is such that possible major repairs will be necessary in the near future. It is apparent that the Town is maintaining an institution for which the need thereof has long since passed. It is also obvious that as long as the Infirmary is maintained by the Town it will be used by persons who can afford to pay room and board, persons who could well be with relatives and rest home for alcoholics and vagrants. The sale of the property should net the Town approximately \$10,000.00. This building as a licensed boarding home for the aged could receive public assistance town cases and would be commercially saleable.

Respectfully submitted,

Irving S. Rogers, Agent

Out of 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts only 89 operate infirmaries according to a 1945 study made by the Massachusetts Public Welfare Department.

The trend over the past 30 years, during which period other types of public assistance, including Old Age Assistance, Aid to Dependent Children and Disability Assistance, has been a decreasing number of local, and particularly small town, infirmaries. Under the provision of the newer public assistance programs and the broadening of General Relief many small communities now provide for cases in the Tewksbury State Hospital & Infirmary, in other local infirmaries or in private boarding homes.

Our own small infirmary cannot be converted into a resource such as a public medical institution because of its size nor can it be adapted to the special needs of the increasingly large group of old or chronically ill people. As it now stands it is and will always be a general institution for miscellaneous dependent persons many of whom can be cared for adequately, and even more satisfactorily, by means of categorical assistance in the community. Suitable hospital care for the chronic sick is now available in Massachusetts and such facilities are being increased as rapidly as State Institutions can be converted to provide this care thereby decreasing the need of local infirmaries.

In conclusion I must reaffirm my statement of April 20, 1954, that the town should abandon the infirmary.

Very truly yours,

Irving S. Rogers, Agent

March 16, 1955

Mr. Francis E. Wallace
Welfare Agent
Board Public Welfare
Wakefield, Massachusetts

Re: Town Homes

Dear Mr. Wallace:

I regret to inform you that my experience is nil as far as changing over Town Homes to Public Medical Institutions but, I do believe that such a change is only feasible on a population basis and possible use of such institution by surrounding towns. Although I acknowledge a lack of experience in this matter I can refer you to Joseph D. Murphy, Agent, Board of Public Welfare, City Hall, Lynn, Mass.. He was instrumental in making such a conversion in his city and has made a continuing study of the matter.

I have been supervising our infirmary (Town Home) since April 1954. The enclosures whereby I have evaluated the possibilities and advisability of abandoning the infirmary may be of some help to you.

We have passed article #40 with a report and recommendation to be in the next Special Town Meeting or not later than the next Annual.

I hope this is of some help.

Very truly yours,

Irving S. Rogers
Agent

TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

MASSACHUSETTS

Department of
PUBLIC WELFARE

Francis E. Wallace, Agent

March 1955

Irving S. Rogers, Agent
Department of Public Welfare
Town Hall
Provincetown, Mass.

Dear Sir:

We are conducting a study of our Town Home in order to check the advisability of changing to a Public Medical Institution.

In this connection I wonder if you have had any experience with your Town Infirmary on a contemplated change-over. If so, I will appreciate hearing from you covering such points as:

1. Your bed capacity.
2. Approximate cost of an allowed weekly rate for patients.
3. Any indication of an allowed weekly rate for patients.
4. Size and type of additional staff.
5. General Attitude of State Building Inspector and State Department Health Nurse Inspector.

Thank you for your courtesy in this matter.

Very truly yours,

FEW/abw

/s/ F. E. Wallace
Francis E. Wallace - Agent

Bureau of Old Age
Assistance

Lock Draw 243

Provincetown, Mass.



Provincetown, Massachusetts

April 7, 1955

M.F. Patrick, Chairman
Finance Committee
Town of Provincetown

Re: Town Infirmary Data
Article 40 Town Meeting

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with instructions from Mr. Libby I have transmitted herewith copies of all the study, evaluation and recommendations, of the Welfare Agent supervising the Town Infirmary in relation to abandonment possibilities of the present facility.

At the present time we have eight (8) inmates, counting one temporarily in the hospital, with a full time resident Matron and husband, assistant, or a total of ten (10) people living on the premises.

Edith LeCount, age 66, feeble minded female.
Annie Dears, age 56, temporarily hospitalized congestive heart disease.

Arnold Encarnartion, age 34, on trial from Taunton State Hospital.
Anthony F. DeCosta, age 44, Permanently & Totally Incapacitated.
Joseph Costa, Jr., age 37, released Barnstable House Correction 12/24/54. 3-19-55
Isaiah Lewis, age 79, State Settled @ \$43.33 per month.

Howard Slade, age 45, Room & Board brother as guardian pays \$43.33 month.
Jesse Enos, age 72, Room & Board Robert Welsh Conservator @ \$43.33 month.

Out of this group of eight (8) inmates the Town can automatically refuse to assume any responsibility for the care or support of Slade and Enos. The Guardian & Conservator would have to make other boarding arrangements.

Edith LeCount, who has been an inmate since 1913, is beginning to require medical care and attention which our facility cannot provide. She will be a transfer case to Tewksbury State Hospital and Infirmary regardless of the future plans for the infirmary.

Annie Dears cannot qualify for disability assistance, although eligibility is being attempted, but she can live here with relatives and as her medical condition warrants can at a future date possibly qualify for D.A.



Provincetown, Massachusetts

Town Infirmary Date Article 40 Town Meeting (Continued) Page 2

Isaiah Lewis would automatically qualify for O.A.A. and regardless of the categorical arrangement his case is fully reimbursable as State Settled.

Anthony F. DeCosta and Arnold Encarnation would both qualify for Disability Assistance and be placed on room and board with relatives, friends or in any available licensed boarding home.

Joseph Costa would be a temporary relief case pending physical rehabilitation and given a budget to provide shelter and necessities of life until employable.

Therefore; no hardship would be placed on any of these cases and their financial, physical and personal, needs would be well provided for through other categorical public assistance methods.

Costs:	Edith LeCount, Tewksbury @ \$23.65 per week, \$102.48 month (4 1/3 weeks) or \$1,229.76 per year.....	\$1,229.76
	Annie Dears, figured on General Relief	\$1,000.00
	Joseph Costa temporary General Relief	800.00
	Encarnation & Costa on Disability Assistance (Town Share) two @ \$500.00 each	1,000.00
	Isaiah Lewis case totally reimbursed by State	

Total Costs Town \$4,029.76

Annie Dears, who previously did laundry, ironing and scrubbing paint, will no longer be able to work, Matron, who is also in poor health and advanced age, cannot and will not do these chores. We have hired a woman at \$1.00 per hour for ten (10) hours per week (\$10.00 week) to do these necessary jobs. This has added approximately \$520.00 a year to the costs of operating the infirmary. (This of course could not be foreseen when the 1955 budget requests were computed and we are taking the costs out of the item shown in our 1955 budget request as Building Improvements. This has been done to avoid requesting a transfer from your committee at this time and in view of your possible recommendations to the town.)



Provincetown, Massachusetts

Town Infirmary Data Article 40 Town Meeting (Continued) Page 3

The approximate costs of operating the Town Infirmary for 1955 will be \$4,940.00, plus \$520.00 for extra labor and \$500.00 licensing repairs, or a total of \$5,960.00. As compared to the estimated \$4,029.76 if the infirmary operation is abandoned.

It is my firm belief that the costs of operation of the Infirmary will continue to increase although the needs for such a facility actually decreases.

Trusting the data furnished herewith is adequate for your study and recommendation under article #40, I am,

Very truly yours,

Attachments:

Report dated 4/20/54
Additional Report 4/28/54
Supplement 11/23/54
LETTER 1/4/55
G.L. Change 47
Letter dated 3/55
Letter dated 3/16/55

Irving S. Rogers
Welfare Agent
Supervising Town Infirmary

Mr. Irving RogersNovember 4, 1955

Such patients as might be admitted to an approved institution during the course of the year naturally would increase that income and would allow during the first year of operation such other improvements as would be necessary to increase the standards of service which your board would be anxious to give to the people of Provincetown who are in need of such service.

The issues discussed with you above constitute a challenge and a responsibility which I knew that you and your Board will not ignore. Such issue has been met here in Lynn for the past 3 years in a manner that has left nothing to be desired.

You know that my pleasant visit of yesterday can be only the first, if you express a desire for me to return not once but as many times as you might think it necessary.

Very truly yours,

Joseph D. Murphy
Agent

JDM/sml