



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF NEW JERSEY
TRENTON

RICHARD J. VANDER PLAAT
ASSEMBLYMAN, DISTRICT 13C (BERGEN)
41-25 DUNKERHOOK ROAD
FAIR LAWN, N. J. 07410
201-797-3500

March 16, 1972

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TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FROM: Richard J. Vander Plaet, Chairman
New Jersey Task Force on Urban Programs,
"

Inasmuch as the basic activity of this Committee at its various meetings during the months of December, January and February was discussing the Interim Report with Officials of the City of Newark and preparing an answer to Mayor Gibson's response, the Task Force on Urban Programs as provided for in Chapter 325, Laws of 1970, submits herewith, in lieu of its regular monthly report for December, January and February, the Reply (of the Task Force on Urban Programs) to Mayor Gibson's Response to the Interim Report. ,

During the month of March, the members of the Task Force met with representatives of the Mayor's Office and the Council's Office to discuss the 1972 allocation. It is expected that the City of Newark will have their plan for use of the 1972 allocation ready for presentation on April 15th.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Vander Plaet
Richard J. Vander Plaet, Chairman
Task Force on Urban Programs

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Reply

of the

TASK FORCE ON URBAN PROGRAMS

to

Mayor Gibson's Formal Response

to the

Interim Report

Richard J. Vander Plaats, Chairman
Gerald D. Hall, Vice Chairman
Ernest C. Reock, Jr., Secretary
Jack Gottdenker
William H. Shine
Stanley VanNess
Abram Vermeulen

March 14, 1972

The Task Force has carefully considered Mayor Gibson's response to our "Interim Report" and it is our considered opinion that any fair-minded person who can and will read the "Introduction" of the "Interim Report" will recognize immediately that our report was a positive approach to fulfill our obligation as set forth in Chapter 325, Laws of 1970, to both the State of New Jersey and the City of Newark.

In preparing our report, our staff people reviewed previous reports of others. Mr. Bodine, the City Administrator, assigned a member of his staff to work with our Mr. Pellack and Mr. Bellack, along with Mr. Bodine's representative, observed the operations of the departments. If the Mayor was not aware of what we were doing, then that fact points up the lack of communication and coordination between the Mayor and the members of his staff.

The "Summary of Findings" and "Deficiencies Observed" tells the story of Newark as it was when we looked at it.

Before our report was submitted to the Governor and the Legislature, the Task Force gave the Mayor a copy of our report and then discussed it with him. At that time the Mayor acknowledged it as factual.

Special attention should be called to the "Recommendations" and we point out that of the eleven recommendations, six of them pertained to the State Government, while five pertained to Newark City Government.

The "Overview" section of the "Interim Report" is a positive attempt to point out a direction governments could follow to provide more accountability as well as better results for and with the massive amounts of tax dollars that are being spent. This section also reflected the direction the Task Force will consider in future reports.

Although we do not agree with many of Mayor Gibson's conclusions as set forth, we do not intend to rebut item by item. However, it is appropriate to comment on several important points.

In our view, the response was overly defensive. It is recognized that many of the deficiencies noted in our report were inherited from previous administrations, that some of the problems are not totally controllable by Newark or any municipality, and that other matters do not lend themselves to simple or rapid solution.

The categorization used in the Mayor's reply was not particularly logical, meaningful or pertinent, in our opinion, and tended to becloud, rather than clarify the intent of the report. The cited phrases often suffered by being quoted out of context. Many of the items labeled as "Will take longer than November, 1971 to do", we feel should have shown far more progress to date. For example, the reports of the State Health Official were submitted between December, 1970 and February, 1971, and included recommendations on critical matters which could have been promptly corrected. There are many similar points of disagreement.

With regard to recreation, our report noted the absence of a coordinated program. The reply pointed out the Administration's attempt to create a position of Director of Recreation and Parks, together with a complete department. This misses the main thrust of our point, which was the need to coordinate the City Government's program with the present extensive program of the Board of Education which has been operating the recreation program in the city for over 50 years and is regarded by recreational authorities as being an excellent program with a strong "educational" input making use of school shops, classrooms, auditoriums, gymnasiums and playgrounds with certified teachers in charge. It also provides recreation services and programs for all age groups except pre-school children. This recommended coordination would prevent possible duplication and

waste of "scarce" city, state and federal funds.

The Mayor's reply notes that a number of our observations are derived from previous studies -- namely, Dr. Sussman's reports and the Touche Ross study. Our report openly acknowledged this, and our concern was with the lack of corrective action after these reports were issued.

Great issue was taken with our comments on the lack of accountability over Federal and state urban aid programs. We were gratified to read in the Business Administrator's Budget Message dated January 15, 1972 that one of his aims in the budget preparation process was:

- "2. Inclusion in the budget of all city activities so programs can be fully seen. There is a myopic tendency to assume that programs funded by the state or Federal Government are not integrally related to anything else the City does. Programs not shown in the budget are probably half again as large as those shown."


On a number of points, it was stated that action had been taken, or completed. We would be happy to see evidence of this. At the time of preparation of our report, we were not aware of progress in many areas.

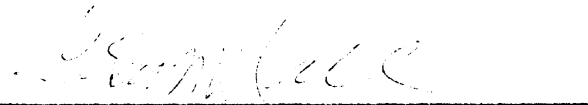
The city expressed considerable pride in having a remainder of \$640,000 (at year end it is over \$730,000) from the \$9.25 million of state aid, and questioned why we had not complimented them. The Mayor did not make it clear that this under-expenditure was a result of accountability controls instituted by the Task Force, and also that the city had requested permission to spend those funds in other areas. We suggested that it be carried over to the next fiscal year.


The Task Force was gratified to learn that, despite the disparaging nature of the Mayor's reply to our "Interim Report", the city is acting on several deficiencies we listed. In addition to the accountability for state and Federal aid noted


above, the Budget Message also recognized the need for improved personnel administration, setting of objectives for operating departments, and establishing production measurements. It should also be noted that the city has now engaged an insurance consultant to improve the operation of the insurance program as recommended by the Task Force.

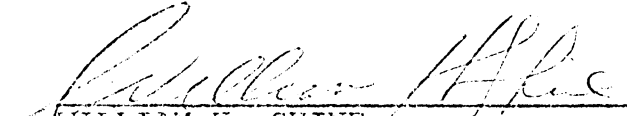
The members of the Task Force are determined to move forward in a positive manner and complete the task assigned to us by Chapter 325, Laws of 1970. Hopefully, it will not be necessary to waste any more valuable time bickering over minor sensitivities and all of us will move forward and do the job that must be done.

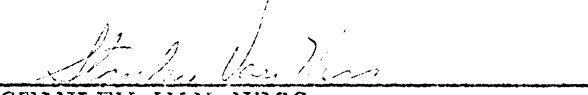

RICHARD J. VANDER PLANT,
Chairman


GERALD D. HALL,
Vice-Chairman


ERNEST C. REOCK, JR.,
Secretary


JACK GOTTDENKER


WILLIAM H. SHINE


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