Identity Statement

Reference Code: CP/CO/TB/M
Title: Cork County Borough Tuberculosis Committee Minutes
Dates: 1947 – 1960
Level of description: Series
Extent: 1 volume (132pp)

Context:

Creator:

Cork City Council (formerly Cork Corporation)

Archival History

Deposited in Cork Archives Institute in ca.1985 by the Town Clerk’s Department, Cork Corporation. Previously stored in strongrooms at City Hall.

Administrative History

The forerunner of the present day Cork City Council was Cork Corporation which was of ancient origin. The first Charter was granted in 1185. Various other charters were to follow over the centuries, granting and establishing numerous rights, privileges and responsibilities to the citizens of Cork City, which was established in the 1600’s as a County in its own right, called ‘The County of the City of Cork’. Cork Corporation was reformed in 1840, 1853 and in 1899. In 1924 the city council of Cork Corporation was dissolved and its powers and duties transferred to Mr. Philip Monahan, who was appointed City Commissioner, taking office on 31st October, 1924, continuing to administer civic affairs until 1929 when the Corporation was reestablished and Monahan became the first City Manager. Under the Local Government Act 2001, Cork Corporation was renamed Cork City Council. Under the various Management Acts, the functions of local authorities are divided into two classes - Reserved Functions, performable directly by the elected members, and Executive Functions, performed by the city or county manager by order. The reserved functions of a local authority (those performed by the elected members by resolution) comprise decisions on all major matters, for example: adopting the annual estimate of expenses and striking the rate; borrowing money; making or varying a development plan; making, amending or revoking bye-laws; nominating persons to act on committees or other public bodies; demanding expenses from any other local authority; the adoption of house-
building programmes; adopting a scheme of letting priorities. (See the Cork City Council administrative history for further information).

Content and Structure

Scope and Content
The Tuberculosis Committee for the County Borough of Cork first met on 1 April 1930. Its minutes up to 22 April 1947 are recorded in a Special Committees minute book (CP/CO/SP/M/6). The present volume, which contains minutes of the Tuberculosis Committee only, begins with the meeting of 27 May 1947, and continues up to that of 26 April 1960.

TB was a pressing medical and public health problem in Ireland throughout the first half of the 20th century, and State responses to it were complicated by changing structures and events, including the transition from British rule to independence, the abolition of the workhouse system in 1925, the creation of county boards of health and public assistance, and the provision of public health services by local authorities. The Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Acts, 1908 and 1913, and the Tuberculosis (Establishment of Sanatoria) Act, 1945, provided the legislative basis for TB services, including Tuberculosis Committees in Ireland. Such committees were generally part of the County Boards of Health and Public Assistance until the 1930s, when their functions were transferred to local authorities. In Cork City, the new Tuberculosis Committee took over the duties of the County Borough Insurance Committee, which was abolished from 1 January 1930. It was responsible for the operation of the County Borough Tuberculosis Scheme. The existing Corporation Public Health Committee also had some financial and other responsibilities in respect of TB and other public health services (CP/CO/PH/M). The Cork Sanatoria Board (created 1953; first created as the Cork Sanatorium Joint Committee of Management in 1948) had administrative responsibility over sanatoria, and consisted of Cork Corporation and Cork County Council representatives.

Unlike other committees described as ‘County Borough’ committees (eg, School Attendance), the TB committee consisted entirely of city councillors, with no Council or external appointees. The City Manager and Town Clerk, and the Chief Staff Officer, generally attended meetings, which were held monthly. Meetings read and approved minutes of the previous meeting, heard and approved the report of the Corporation’s Tuberculosis Officer, sometimes made decisions on matters arising from the report or from letters received, and passed accounts for payment. TB Officer’s reports are not inserted or summarised in the minutes, which are generally brief.

The TB officer’s report to the committee’s first meeting on 1 April 1930 noted numbers of persons (insured, uninsured, and ex-servicemen) receiving treatment in Heatherside Sanatorium (Doneraile), St Patrick’s Hospital, Cappagh Open-Air Hospital (Co Dublin) and the North and South Infirmaries [details of report not recorded]. Heatherside Sanatorium had been set up in 1910, with the support of the Corporation, Cork County Council, and the National Association for the Prevention of TB, and was one of one two sanatoria in Ireland at that time.

At the meeting of 2 June 1930, it was reported that the city’s Tuberculosis Dispensary had examined 33 new cases in May, that the total number of attendances was 138, that the Tuberculosis nurse had made 30 home visits, that the number of persons being treated at
institutions under the County Borough Tuberculosis Scheme was 99, and that 36 sputum examinations had been carried out. It was noted that the city’s doctors were not fully availing of the facilities for sputum examinations available to them at the Dispensary.

At most subsequent meetings, it is simply noted that the TB officer’s report was read and adopted. From May 1932 on, the passing of monthly accounts is briefly recorded, with total amount usually noted (eg, 5 July 1932, £715 10s 1d passed for payment). No copies of County Borough Tuberculosis Schemes have been inserted into the minutes.

At the meeting of 25 November 1941, reference was made to deaths at St Joseph’s Hospital, Mount Desart, and to sanitary sub-officer inspections of ‘defective houses’. At the meeting of 24 June 1942, a councillor noted the large number of deaths, 16, in the preceding May. The Medical Officer of Health was asked to make observations, and on foot of his report it was agreed that he be asked to prepare a dietary scale of ‘wholesome cheap food for the information of the public’. In October 1943 and March 1944, reference is made to the Red Cross Society’s Anti-Tuberculosis campaign. The meeting of 23 January 1945 appointed a sub-committee on implementation of TB officer’s proposals to reduce incidence of the disease. In October 1946, the City Manager submitted a report stating there were about 30 cases in the city where use may be made of provisions under the Housing (Amendment) Act 1946 to provide a separate room segregated from other members of the family for persons suffering from TB.

The Health Acts, 1947 and 1953, and mass immunisation (from 1948) and radiography (from 1950), gave fresh impetus to TB treatment and eradication efforts throughout the country. Unfortunately, the minutes for the Cork TB Committee continue to be brief. In August 1947, it was agreed to send a TB officer for special training abroad under a scheme approved by the Minister for Health. In January 1949, a statement from the Minister was sought regarding erection of a regional sanatorium at Sarsfield’s Court, Glanmire. It was completed in 1956, and was called St Stephen’s Hospital. In February 1952 the Minister for Health was asked to provide further beds in the area of the Committee of Management of the Cork Sanatoria, it being noted that 66 patients awaited treatment. In November 1953 it was enquired whether education was provided to children at St Raphael’s Preventorium, Montenotte (Irish Red Cross Society). In August 1955 increases in new cases and in waiting lists were noted (a special Council meeting on public health was held on 5 October). At later meetings, eg 22 April 1958, the greater number of male to female cases was remarked. Cork Sanatoria Board was asked to seek to ensure Cork patients were treated at St Stephen’s or St Michael’s Hospitals (24 October 1957).

Medical Officer reports on pulmonary, non-pulmonary, and primary cases of TB, and the Mass Radiography Service, 1956-58, are inserted into the minutes of 26 May 1959. At the meeting of March 1960 the public were urged to present themselves for x-ray when the mass radiography unit visited the following month. The Health Authorities Act, 1960, created regional health authorities and removed public health functions, including TB schemes, from local authorities.

While short on detail of the City’s TB Schemes and services, the minutes do help chart responses to the disease in Cork City. Other records at CCCA, including a Sputum Examination register (City Public Health Department), County Council TB committee minutes and Cork Sanatoria Board reports provide further context (see ‘Allied Materials’).
Arrangement
Single item

Allied Materials

CCCA:
CP/CO/M City Council Minute Books
CP/CO/M Minute Books of Various Other City Council Committees, especially:
  CP/CO/SM/M Cork City Council – School Attendance Committee Minutes
  CP/CO/PH/M Cork City Council – Public Health Committee Minutes
  CP/CO/GP/M Cork City Council – General Purposes Committee of the Whole Council
  CP/CO/SP/M Cork City Council – Special Committees, incl Tuberculosis (1930-47)
CP/CO/CP Cork City Council – Council Papers
CP/CO/AR Cork City Council - Committee Agendas and Reports
CP/CO/GC Cork City Council - General Correspondence Files
CP/Files Cork City Council – Officers’, Departmental, and Committee files, 1918-70
CP/PHTB Register of Sputum Examinations, City Public Health Dept, 1946-55
SCBPA South Cork Board of Public Assistance, Minutes and Report Books, 1927-60
CC/CO/TB/M Cork County Council Tuberculosis Committee Minutes, 1929-35
CC/SB Cork Sanatoria Board Press Reports, 1950s

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Language:

English

Finding Aids:

Descriptive List

Rules / Conventions

ISAD(G)

Archivists Note / Date of Description

Timmy O Connor, Local Government Archivist
October 2012