

## A LAW

### *Creating an Alms-House Department, and prescribing the Duties of the Officers thereof.*

I. *Be it ordained by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City of New-York, in Common Council convened,* That there shall be created and organized a Department, to be called the Alms-House Department.

II. *And be it further ordained,* That there shall be appointed five discreet and proper persons to superintend the Alms-House Department, who shall be known and distinguished as the Commissioners of the Alms-House and Bridewell, and who shall not receive any compensation for their services.

III. *And be it further ordained,* That the Commissioners of the Alms-House and Bridewell, or a majority of them, are hereby vested with full power and authority to appoint all officers, agents, and servants that are or may be employed in or about the Alms-House, Penitentiary, and Bridewell, excepting those who by this ordinance are directed to be otherwise appointed; to fix the salaries of all such officers, agents, and servants; to superintend and direct all the business and transactions of the Alms-House, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, and all matters relating thereto, except the appropriation of money; and to make such rules and regulations for the government of the same, in conformity with the laws, ordinances, and resolutions of the Common Council, as will best promote the public interest.

IV. *And be it further ordained,* That the following rules and regulations be adopted for the better government of the Alms-House, to wit:

#### *I. Of the officers of the House.*

1. There shall be a Superintendent of the Alms-House, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, appointed by the Common Council, who shall, previous to his entering upon his office, take an oath or affirmation, before the Mayor or Recorder, that he will well and faithfully execute his said office; and that he will neither commit nor suffer any wilful waste or

embezzlement of any thing appropriated to the use of, or belonging to the Alms-House, Bridewell or Penitentiary, and that he will pay over to the City Treasurer all monies received by him for articles sold or disposed of belonging to the public, and under his charge as Superintendent; but no Commissioner of the Alms-House and Bridewell shall be eligible to the office of Superintendent, while holding the office of such Commissioner.

2. There shall be appointed by the Common Council, a Clerk to the Alms-House; and also, a Resident Physician to the Bellevue Hospital, who for his services shall be entitled to a salary, not exceeding one thousand five hundred dollars per annum, and whose duty it shall be, to reside in said Hospital, in such apartments as may be allotted him by the Commissioners of the Alms-House, and who shall have the whole charge of the medical and surgical departments of the Hospital, Alms-House, and Penitentiary; subject, however, to such rules and regulations as the said Commissioners may deem it expedient to make: And in order that the sick and insane may, at all times, have due attention and aid, he shall have authority to appoint, with the approbation of the said Commissioners, two Physicians, to be denominated a House Physician and House Surgeon, who shall have been regular students of medicine for at least two years, and shall be of good moral character, who shall reside in such parts of the establishment as may be assigned them by the Superintendent, and whose duty it shall be to perform all such relative services to the sick and insane, in the several buildings, as may be prescribed by the said Commissioners or Resident Physician. They shall not be entitled to any other compensation than that of boarding and lodging in the house, in like manner with the other officers thereof. Consulting Physicians and Consulting Surgeons shall, from time to time, be appointed by the Common Council, whose appointments shall be purely honorary and without salary: It shall be their duty to advise and assist in all such cases as the Resident Physician may deem it expedient to call them to. And also to visit the establishment at stated times, and also, at all times when their convenience will permit, with the right to examine the sick and insane, and to advise and consult with the Resident Physician, and with each other, upon all cases in which they or either of them shall deem it proper, and the opinion of the majority in such consultations shall be adopted in the treatment of any particular case.

3. The Commissioners shall appoint proper matrons to have the charge of such children as are in the house.

4. The Superintendent shall appoint proper persons as cooks, officers, and other domestics of the house, who shall be removable at his pleasure.

5. All articles that shall be required for the Alms-House, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, shall be procured and purchased in such manner and by such persons as shall be directed and ordered by the Commissioners.

6. There shall be appointed by the Common Council, a Clerk to the Alms-House, who, in a set of books to be provided for the purpose, by way of double entry, shall keep a clear and distinct account of all money expended, for the use of the Alms-House, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, distinguishing the same, and of all provisions, fuel, medicines, and other articles received and made use of in and about the same.

7. Once in each month, and oftener if required, a correct and fair statement of the accounts of the Alms-House, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, for the last quarter, shall be exhibited by the Clerk, after having been examined and countersigned by the Superintendent; and the same shall be examined and compared by the Commissioners with the proper books and vouchers, and a statement of the same having been signed by them, shall be deposited with the comptroller, and printed for the use of the Common Council.

8. The Superintendent shall also exhibit to the Common Council, annually, and oftener if required, a return of the several officers under him, and of the paupers in the Alms-House, showing their names, ages, and places of birth and state of health, and the several rooms to which they belong, and such as may have died during that period at or been admitted into or discharged from the Alms-House; which return shall be filed with the Clerk of the Common Council.

## II. *Of Admission into and Discharge from the Almshouse.*

1. No person shall be admitted into the Almshouse without a previous examination by one or more of the Commissioners, to ascertain whether the applicant is in such a situation as to require admittance. If upon such examination it shall appear, that the pauper is legally settled elsewhere than in the city, the said Commissioners shall cause an entry thereof to be made in a separate register to be kept for that purpose, together with the place of the legal settlement of such pauper, in order that proper estimates may be made of the expense of such description of paupers to the city and county of New-York.

2. No person having an infectious or contagious disorder, shall be admitted or kept in the house. The Superintendent shall give orders, when necessary, for the care and removal of any such person.

3. The Physicians of the Almshouse shall use all due diligence to have the children and other paupers in the Almshouse vaccinated who have not had the small-pox, and no children shall be admitted unless upon condition of submitting to vaccination.

4. When poor families are reduced to such a state as to require support, the Commissioners of the Almshouse, after making the necessary inquiries as to the propriety of their being relieved at the expense of the city, may, at their discretion, where the case will admit of it, administer relief out of the house in preference to taking such families into it.

5. Such persons as, in the judgment of the Superintendent, can maintain themselves, shall be discharged by him.

### III. *Rules relating to the Classing and the Conduct of the Paupers in the House.*

1. The paupers shall be classed into different rooms or messes, at the discretion of the Superintendent, who shall take care, in general, that persons of different characters or sexes shall not reside in the same room, unless as far as it may be necessary for the care of the sick. When married persons are in the house, they shall, as far as it may be practicable, reside by themselves.

2. All profane and loose conversation, quarrelling, and drunkenness, and in general, every thing of a criminal or immoral tendency, shall be restrained.

3. Such of the paupers as are capable of work shall be furnished with suitable employment. It shall be in the power of the Superintendent to reward the industrious by small gratuities.

4. None of the paupers shall be permitted to go abroad without license from the Superintendent, who shall give them a ticket, signed by himself for that purpose, if he thinks proper to grant such license. If any of the paupers shall be found abroad without such license, or having the same, shall be found intoxicated, or be guilty of disorderly conduct, or solicit or take alms, the person offending shall be proceeded against as a common vagrant; and it shall be the duty of all peace officers to apprehend such offender.

5. All paupers permitted to go abroad shall return to the house before sunset, unless specially licensed to the contrary.

6. To every room there shall be appointed a suitable person as an overseer, removable at the pleasure of the Superintendent, who shall take care that no disorders are committed in the same; to direct the beds to be properly aired; to cause them to be kept in a cleanly state, and to be made in due season; and shall from time to time report to the Superintendent, every offence that may have been committed.

7. At the hour of eight in the evening in the winter, and nine in the summer, all fire and candles are to be extinguished in the several apartments, unless where from sickness or other good cause, the Superintendent shall otherwise direct.

#### IV. *Of the House.*

1. The bedrooms and house in general shall be uniformly clean and neat; the beds made before the hour of breakfast; the rooms and bedding frequently aired.

2. If any of the paupers shall injure the building or any of its appurtenances, or commit any wilful waste or destruction, or embezzlement of food, provisions, clothing, or other articles intrusted to them, or belonging to the house, or be guilty of any immoral or disorderly conduct, they shall be punished in such way as the Commissioners may direct.

3. The several officers and attendants in the house, shall have it in their charge not to cominit or suffer any waste or destruction, and to report every instance thereof without delay, to the Superintendent.

4. No strong or spirituous liquors shall be admitted without the order of the Superintendent, unless prescribed by the physicians.

#### V. *Of Clothing and Diet for the Paupers.*

1. Each pauper shall be provided with food and clean and comfortable clothing, which shall be made as nearly uniform as may be convenient.

2. The Superintendent shall, from time to time, give such orders and directions as he may deem expedient or necessary in relation to the food, fuel, and other supplies of the paupers, and cause the same to be duly executed.

#### VI. *Of Fuel.*

1. The fuel shall be apportioned to the kitchen and several apartments of the house with due economy.

2. Every possible measure shall be taken to ascertain the necessary expenditure of fuel for every office and apartment of the house, and to regulate the delivery of it accordingly.

3. Every improvement in the management of fuel, which may be suggested with any probability of success, and for the easiest and cheapest manner of warming the house by stoves, flues, or otherwise, shall be fairly tried under the direction of the Commissioners.

#### VII. *Of the Sick.*

1. Such of the sick as can be removed with any safety, shall be placed in the hospital, or a proper apartment separate from those who are well.

2. The sick and convalescent shall receive such food and medicines as the physicians may prescribe, and have proper attendance, which shall be provided under the direction of the Superintendent.

3. In the management of the sick, there shall be the greatest care to remove from them every species of filth; to have their rooms sufficiently aired and kept in a proper temperature, and to avoid every

thing in their treatment which may be uncomfortable or injurious to the health of others.

### VIII. *Of the Children in the House.*

1. Care shall be taken to provide healthy and proper nurses for such of the children as may require them, and where this can be done out of the house it shall be preferred.

2. Such children as have arrived at a suitable age, shall regularly attend the school provided for them, and shall be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

3. Care shall be taken that the children be kept clean and neat; that they receive their food regularly; and that they behave themselves in a decent and orderly manner. They shall be allowed such sports and pastimes as may contribute to their health, but always in the presence of some discreet and sober person; and shall be kept, as much as possible, from any intermixture with the other paupers.

4. The children shall be kept in separate apartments, according to their different sexes.

5. The children shall be required to attend Divine Worship on Sundays.

6. When any of the children arrive at proper ages, they shall be bound out to suitable trades or occupations; and provision shall be made in their indentures, for their maintenance and instruction.

7. If any of those who shall have been so bound out, shall be injured or ill-treated, the Commissioners shall consider it their duty to procure them redress. They are to be considered, in every respect, as the children of the public under their care.

8. Whenever children are bound to a person residing out of the city of New-York, it shall be the duty of the Superintendent to send a letter, at least once in six months, to the Supervisor of the town in which the master shall reside, requesting information respecting such child, and its treatment by its master or mistress.

### IX. *Of Visitors.*

All decent and well-behaved persons may visit the house, in the presence of the Superintendent, or of such person as he shall appoint, at such seasonable hours, and under such regulations, as he shall prescribe.

### X. *Of Abuse of Office.*

If the Superintendent, Clerk or Physicians, or any of the other of the

officers or persons employed under them in the affairs of the house, shall directly or indirectly make or receive any emolument not allowed them by the Common Council ; or shall knowingly suffer any person to practise any fraud, imposition, or extortion, in any manner relating to the poor or the supplies of the house, or shall embezzle, or wilfully suffer to be embezzled, any matter or thing belonging to the house ; or shall conceal any of the said offences, or shall wilfully neglect their duty as prescribed to them by the Common Council, every person so offending shall be dismissed from office, and shall also be punished as the law may allow.

V. *And be it further ordained*, That the Commissioners of the Almshouse and Bridewell shall also be Commissioners of the Penitentiary of the city of New-York, with the like powers and duties as they now possess and are subject to in regard to the said Almshouse and Bridewell.

VI. *And be it further ordained*, That a suitable person shall be appointed by the Common Council, who shall be known as the Agent of the Commissioners of the Almshouse and Bridewell, whose duty it shall be to attend daily at the office of the said Commissioners ; to receive applications from all persons applying for relief ; under the immediate direction of the Commissioners of the Almshouse and Bridewell, to distribute such sums of money, quantity of fuel or provisions to the outdoor poor, as they may direct ; to keep a book, wherein shall be recorded the name and residence of each applicant for charity, and to perform such duties as may be required of him by the Commissioners of the Almshouse and Bridewell.

VII. *And be it further ordained*, That the Superintendent of the Almshouse, and Agent of the Commissioners, shall be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties, and give bonds with sufficient surety or sureties, to be approved by the Common Council ; the Superintendent of the Almshouse in the penal sum of                      dollars, and the Agent of the Commissioners in the penal sum of                      dollars, for the faithful performance of said duties.

VIII. *And be it further ordained*, That all monies received by the Commissioners of the Almshouse and Bridewell, Superintendent of the Almshouse, or Agent of the Commissioners, shall be deposited with the Chamberlain of the City, and the proper vouchers for the same shall be once in each month filed in the office of the Comptroller.

IX. *And be it further ordained*, That there may be appointed, from time to time, by the Commissioners of the Almshouse, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, a number of Assistant or Outdoor Keepers, who shall have the charge and safe keeping of the prisoners during their employment on the roads or otherwise ; and the said Commissioners shall have power

to employ four of the said Assistant Keepers as Watchmen for the Penitentiary, and to allow them such additional compensation for that service as they may think reasonable. *And further*, That the number of the said Assistant Keepers shall not exceed ten.

X. *And be it further ordained*, That all officers, agents, and persons employed in and about the said Almshouse, Bridewell, and Penitentiary, (except where by law they are differently provided for) shall be appointed by the said Commissioners of the Almshouse, Bridewell, and Penitentiary.

XI. *And be it further ordained*, That the Rules and Regulations adopted by the Commissioners for the government of the Almshouse, Penitentiary, or Bridewell, shall be reported, on the first Monday in April in every year, and oftener if required, to the Common Council, and printed for the use of the members, together with the officers, agents, and persons employed in and about the said Almshouse, Penitentiary, and Bridewell, their names and their compensation.