

*The Human Services Commission approved these minutes on February 18, 2016*

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 21, 2016  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-120

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson McEachran, Commissioners Bruels, Kline, Mercer, Oxrieder, Villar

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Perelman

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Dee Dee Catalano, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair McEachran who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman who was excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Villar reported that she attended the January 14 meeting of Leadership Eastside where the focus was on arts and the environment. The group will be taking two of the seven elements at every meeting and discuss how they intersect. Councilmember Robinson was present and suggested it would be a good idea for the Arts Commission to visit separately with all of the city's boards and commissions to discuss how their work intersects.

Commissioner Villar said on January 15 she attended a talk at City Hall about diversity. Those who attended were urged to learn more if what they heard had not changed them.

Commissioner Kline said she attended the City Council study session on January 11

where the Needs Update was presented and discussed. The presentation was well done and there were good comments from various Councilmembers. Councilmember Slatter noted that she found the document to be compassionately written, something unusual for the data-driven document. Mayor Stokes mentioned that the city is working on an action plan for affordable housing, and Councilmember Lee praised the Commission by saying it is the hardest working of all the city's boards and commissions.

Commissioner Oxrieder said she also attended the Council study session and watched the reaction of the Councilmembers when it was suggested that a few more million annually is needed to address the housing issue. The presenters were very good and the Council was very receptive. Deputy Mayor Chelminiak highlighted the connection between affordable housing and transportation, calling it a social justice issue.

Chair McEachran said he attended the study session as well and came away thinking the Needs Update had been very well received. He congratulated the staff on making a great presentation.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie noted that the One Night Count was slated for the early morning hours of January 29.

Ms. Leslie announced that the new shelter for women opened on January 20 at the First Congregational Church. On the first night, the shelter housed 20 women, while there were 52 people in the family shelter.

The Commissioners were informed that internally a staff team is working to identify an interim site for the men's shelter because it is unlikely the current building will be available next winter. The desire is to find a building with 4500 to 5000 square feet with a warming kitchen and restrooms, hopefully with showers. The preference is for an open space that can be partitioned off as needed. The site needs to be on a bus line or very close to one, needs to have parking for 15 to 20 cars, and should not be in a neighborhood.

Grant Coordinator Dee Dee Catalano reported that earlier in the day she visited Jewish Family Service. She said she observed an ESL class and learned about the agency's job training and assistance in cultural navigating.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said she is working to schedule presentations regarding the Needs Update. She said on January 20 she spoke with the planning group for a model called Virtual Villages, a program focused on helping older adults remain in their homes. Senior Services, which is in the process of changing its name to Sound Generations, began exploring the national program some six years ago and has been working to provide support and technical assistance to communities wanting to provide the Virtual Village structure. She said she also will be sharing information with the Parks and Community Services Board on February 9.

## 5. FUNDING GAPS & FOCUS AREAS FOR 2017-2018 HUMAN SERVICES FUNDING

Ms. Leslie said prior to each funding cycle, the Commission typically undertakes a process of reflecting on what was learned from the Needs Update and other presentations throughout the year. She provided the Commissioners with reference materials, including an outline of the gaps identified in the Needs Update and where they fall on the continuum, a revised version of the identified funding gaps by service area, and information regarding what was funded in the previous cycle by goal area, and what agencies were funded by the other cities in east King County. Additionally, she provided a spreadsheet showing the focus areas for the last four funding cycles.

With regard to the application review criteria, Commissioner Mercer commented that diversity or cultural sensitivity is mentioned only once. She suggested that diversity needs to be a part of the review criteria.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that one key policies in the Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan is the notion of supporting the full spectrum of communities or the continuum. That has always been the underlying approach Bellevue has taken and is something the Commission should continue with. Even if the Commission elects to give particular attention to one area or another, the need to focus on the continuum should carry through.

Referring to the summary of funding focus areas, Ms. O'Reilly said the idea of funding the continuum includes funding for a range of things. She noted that there are a number of overarching factors that prompt the Commission to select certain focus areas. Several years ago the economic recession grabbed the focus and the great need was to fund basic services; the Commission continued to fund the continuum, but paid more attention to, and gave more funding to, basic services. There is no requirement to have a set number of focus areas, and concerted effort is always put into making it clear that focus areas are not listed in any priority order. In establishing focus areas, it is helpful to make them as broad as possible while making sure they are helpful to the Commission in making recommendations.

Continuing, Ms. O'Reilly said other factors are relied on when reviewing applications. Contract performance is a big one, but the Commission can determine additional factors. Diversity could be included in the mix, particularly since the city has established the importance of diversity beyond just culture and race. Agencies should pay close attention to the focus areas, though they do not always do so.

Commissioner Mercer asked if there is information about the impact the Affordable Care Act has had on the areas agencies are funding, specifically if there are areas no longer being targeted because the Affordable Care Act is taking care of them. Ms. O'Reilly said generally speaking, even though there are now far more people who have insurance now than had it prior to implementation of the Affordable Care Act,

the feedback from providers and the county has been that many are still not covered to the extent they need to be. Others have not signed up to receive healthcare because their co-pay or premiums would be too high and they earn just above the level that would allow them to receive subsidies.

Commissioner Bruels said the Affordable Care Act has in fact made things far more complex. There are certainly more people who are accessing services, but they are not accessing the services they really need. Those services they are able to access are severely curtailed because of the financing that is involved. He shared the story of a woman with severe multiple sclerosis who cannot tolerate transportation by wheelchair and thus must be transported on a stretcher. She lives in an adult family home and receives good care. The physician that was treating her concluded she should be treated at the adult family home. Doctors who do house calls, however, are not easy to find; one was found who only accepted coverage from a certain provider. While the woman could have switched her care to the managed Medicaid program, it would have meant the medications she needs would no longer be covered because they were not in the formulary of the provider. The woman was left with a choice between getting the care she needed or the medications she needed. He said healthcare needs to be kept on the Commission's radar in making funding decisions.

Ms. O'Reilly commented that the Washington Budget and Policy Center has a legislative agenda and tracks certain budget items. For the current year they are following and supporting a bill that is based on approach called two generations. The focus is on the economic success of the whole family, as opposed to focusing on only the children or adults within a family. Drawing on the Aspen Foundation, the Washington Budget and Policy Center has identified the top ten policies that would promote the two generations strategy. Interestingly, there are many similarities between those policies and the programs Bellevue already funds at the local level. Big structural changes are needed to implement systems changes, but local jurisdictions can participate in bringing about local changes by working with their city councils and boards and commissions.

Ms. O'Reilly shared that staff have been hearing from various sources that there are going to be funding shifts. That was in fact the focus of the annual meeting of the Eastside Human Services Forum in December. The resulting funding gaps will undoubtedly show up in the applications submitted by agencies for the next funding cycle. She stressed that focus areas do not dictate funding levels, but they can bring more attention to certain populations.

Commissioner Kline asked what areas the Seattle Foundation funding shifts will affect. Ms. O'Reilly said that was not yet clear. Commissioner Kline noted that funding shifts occur all the time, then asked how significant the Foundation shift is from a historical standpoint. Ms. O'Reilly said the shift away from funding homeless childcare is certainly significant, and measures are being taken to shore up the gap. With regard to older adults and people with disabilities, if some tracking were to be done it likely would be seen that there has been an erosion of funding given to some

programs.

Commissioner Mercer asked what is driving the significant changes. Ms. Leslie said donors are the driving force. Even in the case of United Way, their donors are directing where the funding goes because they want to have a specific impact. The same thing is happening all over the country.

Commissioner Kline added that organizations like United Way want to bring in as many dollars as they can. If they can collect funds from groups of people who want to fund a specific topic, they will cater to them. She asked how large a piece of the human services dollars pie is represented by United Way. Ms. Leslie said their allocations total more than \$30 million, not including pass-through funds.

Chair McEachran said it is likely agencies will come to the Commission to say their donor bases are deteriorating. He said he has already heard that story from three organizations funded by his faith community. Ms. Leslie commented that in the past the funding cuts that have come down the line have been more at the county and state levels. The current situation represents the first time private funding is having such a big impact.

Commissioner Kline pointed out that as United Way shifts its funding to different areas, some programs funded by Bellevue will see increases. The applications include a section on projecting financial income and expenses for the coming allocation period and she asked if the impact of the changes is well enough known to the agencies that the projected figures will be fairly accurate. Ms. O'Reilly said United Way's allocation process differs by goal area. For instance, applications for early learning programs will not be reviewed until December 2016. The impact councils have been informed as to what the outcomes will be. Some agencies experienced funding reductions as of July 2015, and some agencies will not see cuts for another six months. Those agencies that are likely to receive increased funding will not know what they will receive from United Way by the application deadline for Bellevue. One new focus area for United Way is disconnected youth.

Ms. O'Reilly asked the Commissioners to list off overarching factors that will affect the coming funding cycle. Commissioner Villar highlighted services that allow older adults to remain independent in the community. Commissioner Mercer put issues around refugees and immigrants on the list. Chair McEachran mentioned affordable childcare. Commissioner Mercer added housing and homelessness; Commissioner Bruels suggested the category should be broad enough to include helping people maintain stable housing in line with the county's homelessness state of emergency. Commissioner Oxrieder called out mental health, including substance abuse, and transportation. Gaps in healthcare coverage was mentioned by Commissioner Mercer.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Villar regarding the winter shelter, Ms. Leslie said she was aware that the shelter agencies would be coming forward with

applications for expanded day center services, homeless outreach services, and case management services for all of the shelters. It has been shown that having case managers is very beneficial in moving people out of shelters into stable housing. The capital costs associated with siting a shelter will not come out of the human services budget, though the operating costs will. If a single site that can accommodate 100 cannot be found, it may be necessary to find two smaller sites that can accommodate 50 each, something that would result in higher staffing and other costs. In general, the Commission should expect to see increased requests in the homelessness arena.

Commissioner Bruels commented on the need to establish a longer-term solution to the shelter issue because of the explosion in numbers and the declared state of emergency. The current approach is not sustainable. Ms. Leslie said finding a permanent shelter site is of critical importance. Kirkland is working toward having a permanent shelter for women and families, and Redmond already has one for young adults. Reaching the goal, however, could still take a few years.

Commissioner Kline said it should be called out for further consideration that there will be money coming from other buckets within the city to address some of the issues. Ms. O'Reilly agreed and said one example is that there will be funding to provide a counselor at Ground Zero that comes through funds for the recreation program. She said staff will call out where agencies are asking for funds in one application but are getting funds from another application.

Chair McEachran suggested reworking the paragraphs about formal partnerships to better tell the story. Commissioner Bruels said the same should be done relative to cultural competence. Commissioner Mercer added that she would like to see agencies show they are involving diversity in their leadership and on their boards. Commissioner Villar agreed and suggested asking the agencies how their boards mirror the populations being served.

Commissioner Mercer said she would like the applications to include a paragraph about how clients access and use the services offered.

Ms. O'Reilly said much has been said about the fact that being employed does not necessarily equate with having sufficient income to pay for basic needs. She suggested that should be kept in mind as an overarching factor.

Chair McEachran pointed out that the topic of downtown livability is currently preoccupying the Planning Commission and others. Part of the focus is on creating neighborhoods within the downtown and that ties into the notion of co-locating uses. Ms. Leslie said downtown livability could easily be tied to local and regional initiatives as a further consideration. Eastside Pathways could also be added to that list.

With regard to diversity, Ms. O'Reilly noted that under the city's definition diversity refers to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation and other diversity related

factors.

Commissioner Bruels said he would like to hear from agencies how they specifically address cultural competence, not necessarily through bullet points but through actual stories.

Ms. O'Reilly pointed out that on February 10, two epidemiologists from Seattle/King County Public Health, both leads for Communities Count, will provide a training session for agencies on using data to tell their stories. The session will take place at Redmond City Hall and it will be as interactive as possible.

Ms. O'Reilly said she would take the suggestions and draft something to be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.

7. OLD BUSINESS – None

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners that the meeting on February 2 will be a joint meeting with the human services commissions and advisory committees from the Eastside cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland and Redmond.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bruels. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Villar and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair McEachran adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

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Secretary to the Human Services Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

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Date