

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

December 2, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioners Beighle, Hoople, Huenefeld-Gese, Seltzer, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Warren Leyh, 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 Commissioner Stout who presided until the arrival of Chair Yantis.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Yantis and Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese, both of whom arrived at 6:33 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 16, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Seltzer. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

B. October 7, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Beighle and the motion carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brent Christy with the Jubilee Reach Center thanked the Commission for

recommending funding for the community building programs, ESL and storytime for parents and youth.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople reported that he attended the annual military family conference held in Tacoma. He said he also attended the King County reception for its boards, commissions and committees at McCaw Hall.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the youth court open house event and attended one of the court sessions. She said she was very impressed with how seriously the teens take their responsibilities. The program, which is in the first year of a three-year pilot project, appears to be very successful.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie reported that on December 1 the City Council approved the budget for 2009-2010, including all of the recommendations made by the Human Services Commission. Mayor Degginger offered some very nice comments about the Commission and the hard work done in developing the recommendations. The approved budget included increasing the staff position for the Home Repair Program to full time status.

Ms. Leslie announced that the annual meeting of the Eastside Human Services Forum will be at Crossroads Community Center on December 10 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. She noted that anyone wanting to attend must RSVP.

The Commissioners were also reminded that the Season of Sharing tree was up in the lobby of City Hall. The four agencies that will be the recipients of the giving program are the Children's Response Center, the Eastside Domestic Violence Program, Friends of Youth, and the Eastside Women's Center.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said earlier in the year she was busy giving presentations on the Needs Update. Recently there has been a lull, but there are two additional sessions coming up, one at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina on December 7, and one for the Planning Commission on December 10.

Ms. O'Reilly also reported that Communities Count, the social and health indicators report in King County, is about to be released. A new report is developed every three years. She said she will schedule someone to come and provide details about the report to the Commission at a future meeting.

Commissioner Stout asked if data reflecting the economic downturn will be incorporated into the report, or if it was written before the news worsened. Ms. O'Reilly said the most recent data will be put into the report. A summary version of the report will be included in the delivered versions of the *Seattle Times* and the *Post-Intelligencer* on December 11.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Reserve Fund Request

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said an application for reserve funding submitted by the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council has been received by staff. He said the subject of homeless single women has been an increasingly present topic, which makes the application timely. He introduced Mr. Steve Roberts and Ms. Helen Leuzzi from the agency to explain the request.

Ms. Leuzzi said two years ago the Bellevue First Congregational Church, in partnership with the YWCA, opened the Eastside Women's Center. She said the program has proven to be very successful; to date over 225 women have been served in more than 2000 different visits. The center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. From the start the staff found it difficult to close the doors in the early afternoon and leave women outside until the next day. The church got together with other faith organizations, formed a board, and the program was taken in by the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council as the parent organization.

Ms. Leuzzi said the Sofia Way Program came out of the reorganization. The program offers a pathway from life on the street to life in a home. There is a specific program the women must go through while still able to participate in the YWCA daytime program. Those who are interested in the overnight case management program need only contact a case manager, go through an intake process, and show an eagerness to make changes in their lives. The program is set up to give each woman duties and chores to address, and when ready each participant can move on to subsidized housing.

A local church benefactor provided the program with a sizeable donation to help with housing startup costs. The request for reserve funds is to help fund the overnight educational piece of the program.

Commissioner Stout asked for help in reconciling the budget figures with the last paragraph of the application. Ms. Leuzzi explained that she has \$145,000 set aside specifically for subsidized housing in addition to about \$45,000 in startup costs.

Mr. Roberts said the needs of single homeless women were identified as much as four years ago as a gap in the spectrum. He agreed that from the start of the drop-in center everyone realized that something more would need to be done. Bellevue Rotary funded the facility at the church, though it is small and before long the program will need more space. The infrastructure developed for Congregations for the Homeless will be used for the new women's shelter program.

Commissioner Seltzer noted that when the drop-in program first began, a large percentage of the women were from Seattle and asked if that is still the case. Ms. Leuzzi said over the last nine months the demographics have changed to where

nearly all of the women in the center are from the Eastside.

Commissioner Hoople asked if any of the women served are veterans. Ms. Leuzzi said there have been a few, though there are none currently. Mr. Roberts allowed that the options available to veterans are excellent. When veterans are identified, they are encouraged to access those services.

Commissioner Hoople observed that the net loss to the program of \$32,000 matches exactly the amount requested from the reserve fund. Ms. Leuzzi said she rounded a number of dollar figures in developing the request. She added that she will be seeking funds from United Way as well, and is working on a fundraising plan to stem any possible budget deficits.

Ms. Leuzzi said the program has not been guaranteed future money by the local benefactor. If the program moves in the right direction, it is entirely possible there will be additional donations. The benefactor does want to see the program proved, and wants to see both community and municipality participation.

Answering a question asked by Chair Yantis, Ms. Leuzzi said the Sofia Way Program will offer life skill classes in the evening for a small group of women. The classes will cover things like keeping a budget and shopping at the grocery store wisely. The program seeks to effect life changes for the women so they can move to self-sufficiency, and to create a community in which they will not be isolated once they are on their own. Currently the day program closes at 3:00 p.m., leaving many participants living in their cars or riding city buses; some stay at camps in the woods. The rule will be that those participating in the evening program must participate in the classes; they will need to present at 7:00 p.m. and helping to serve meals and doing chores. The person hired to conduct the life skills classes has a master's degree in education and psychology.

Noting that some homeless persons have jobs, Commissioner Beighle asked if clients of that sort would still be required to take the life skills classes. Ms. Leuzzi said everyone associated with the evening program will have to participate in all of the classes and duties. There is not, however, a set length of time the women will have to be part of the evening program. Some may only need to stay a few weeks to prove themselves ready to move on to a permanent housing situation.

Ms. Leslie said the reserve fund totals \$25,000, none of which has been used in 2008. Technically, the funds can be used only for one-time purposes.

Motion to approve a grant of \$10,000 to the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council for the Sofia Way Program was made by Commissioner Hoople. Second was by Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese and the motion carried unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Debrief 2009-2010 Human Services Funding Process

Grant Coordinator Joe Adriano said summer intern Torrey Morgan conducted a survey on the funding process and what people involved with it thought about it. For the most part, the feedback was very positive. Most held the view that the online application process was very friendly.

Having focus areas was a new approach. Also new was the notion of conducting the review process in teams. Commissioners and staff alike had the ability to access the applications online.

Mr. Adriano noted that in reviewing the application process in 2006, one of the suggestions made was spending less time reviewing the applications that are more likely than not to receive funding. That approach was taken to some degree, though each application was reviewed.

Commissioner Beighle said one option in reviewing the applications likely to be funded would be to zero in on just the number changes for the year. Chair Yantis concurred, adding that the review of applications likely to be funded could be delayed until after the release of the staff report, which could highlight areas of ongoing programs that might need some discussion.

Chair Yantis said the Commission always has an obligation to make sure the applications funded are consistent with the Needs Update. An initial review with that in mind could eliminate a few applications.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese suggested that agencies seeking funding from Bellevue for the first time should be asked to show how their program is serving or will serve Bellevue residents. To some extent it would be good if the focus were on a pilot project as a way to show how successful the program can be. Ms. Leslie explained that the application instructs anyone applying to Bellevue for the first time to talk first with staff; she allowed that not all of the new applicants did that.

Commissioner Beighle pointed out that in some cases the Commission wanted to give applicants more than they had asked for based on the Needs Update. Commissioner Hoople suggested at the very least agencies should be encouraged to ask for a cost-of-living adjustment.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that the issue of collaboration proved to be problematic. She suggested that there might be some way to let agencies, particularly new agencies, know that those who have not even spoken to other Eastside agencies or the school districts may not be viewed favorably. Another issue was the need for a diversity of funding. While hard and fast rules cannot be made concerning either of those issues, in general the agencies that received a funded recommendation from the Commission showed both collaborations and funding from other sources.

Commissioner Stout suggested highlighting the areas of ((inaudible, referring to third sub bullet of second bullet of 2006 recommendations)) on a program by program basis. She said the Commission could certainly make use of that tool.

Commissioner Hoople thought it would be helpful to take a meeting after the release of the Needs Update to look at what new agencies are operating in the area that could address emerging needs.

Commissioner Hoople pointed out that even though the applications were reviewed by teams, he felt the responsibility to review each application individually. He said the team approach, which is a good one, does not shorten the overall process.

Commissioner Beighle said she did not use the rating sheet in her reviews of the applications. She said filling out that form just added time to the process and was not very helpful. Commissioner Hoople said the questions on the rating sheet were helpful in seeing the big picture; he agreed that the actual ratings were not helpful.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly reported that the East King County Coalition on Aging, a new group that is in the formative stages, includes those who are providing services to older adults on the Eastside as well as the Network on Aging and the Council on Aging. She provided the Commissioners with a handout concerning a pending issue having to do with paying for adult day services and a Medicaid reimbursement rate change. After June 30, 2009, the state will no longer be reimbursed by the federal government for certain adult day services.

Ms. O'Reilly also informed the Commissioners that staff are working to include at least one question about the Cultural Diversity Program in the next Needs Update telephone survey.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners about the joint holiday gathering on December 16, which will be hosted by the Human Services Commission. She said the event will take place at the new Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center. Anyone wanting to attend must RSVP to staff.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Carol Bostick spoke representing the Sofia Way Program and said she is hoping to be one of the first clients for the new overnight program. She noted that she has been at the Women's Center from its beginning. She said she remains on the King County Housing Authority waiting list, but may be removed from it because she is not disabled and the county is seeking to trim the number of people on the list. With the state of the economy, the number of persons in need of housing will rise, not

decrease.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yantis adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Secretary of the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date