

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 5, 2013
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Yantis, Commissioners Bruels, Beighle, McEachran, Perelman, Plaskon, Stout

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: Debbie Knowles, Janet Salm, King County; Meghan Altimore, Christie Becker, Hopelink; Jennifer Barron, KITH; Sarah Steininger, LifeWire; Terry Pottmeyer, Derek Wentorf, Friends of Youth; Julie McFarland, Catholic Community Services – Family Housing Connection; Emily Harris-Shears, Family Homelessness Initiative; Gina Yarwood, YWCA

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Yantis who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:40 p.m., and Commissioner Plaskon, who arrived at 6:45 p.m.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 1, 2013

Commissioner Stout called attention to the second paragraph on page 8 and pointed out that something is missing from the first sentence. Commissioner Stout commented that during the limited discussion by the Downtown Livability Initiative

CAC on September 17 regarding affordable housing it was noted that in fact ARCH does not as an organization build housing.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Beighle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stout and it carried unanimously.

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Katherine Jordan spoke as the executive director of The Sophia Way, a position she said she has only been in for one week. She noted, however, that already she has learned the agency has an extreme financial need. The need is such that if not addressed the agency may need to close its doors. The Sophia Way is the only organization on the Eastside that is meeting the needs of homeless single women. The organization has seen great growth over the last year, but has also experienced transitions in leadership. Since the opening of the winter shelter in 2012 at St. Luke's, the agency's traditional funders that kept operations and programming running have begun giving to the capital campaign instead. Two months after the shelter opened, the thrift shop was opened; unfortunately that operation has increased the bleeding to a rate of almost \$10,000 per month. The shop was intended to provide income for the agency and an opportunity to implement the jobs program for clients. In hindsight it is clear the agency has not had a stability program in place. There has never been a fund development program put in place. She said she has a committed board and a strong plan for 2014. The agency will never again be in the position it is in now. Only a quarter of the opportunities that are available relative to implementing a strong funding base have been utilized, so things will improve. However, meeting payroll and keeping the doors open are an immediate concern. The winter shelter is open again, and collectively over the winter months the agency is projected to serve 190 different women. The agency needs to secure \$100,000 to meet the shortfall over the next two months.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Stout called attention to a recent article in the *Bellevue Reporter* about Commissioner McEachran having been honored for his work with St. Andrews Housing Group over the last 30 years. She saluted Commissioner McEachran for his focus on community development and collaborative impact.

Commissioner Stout also reported that at the October 19 meeting of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC the issue of affordable housing in the downtown was discussed. She noted that some on the committee expressed confusion over why there should be any low-income housing in the downtown where the real estate is so expensive, and about the difference between low-income housing and affordable housing for the workforce. Planning Commissioner Hal Ferris did a superb job of summarizing the growth management targets and where there is space available in the city where the number of housing units could be increased, which for all practical

purposes comes down to the Bel-Red corridor and the downtown. So far, affordable housing remains on the amenity incentive list for the downtown.

Commissioner McEachran said he and Emily Leslie attended the Imagine Housing fundraising breakfast. Some 250 business and community leaders were in attendance and the amount raised was about \$59,000.

Commissioner McEachran voiced concern over the fact that recently there have been many human services organizations talk about having troubles with executive directors reaching the faith community. More attention needs to be given to the whole issue of collaborative impact.

Commissioner Beighle reported that the Hopelink luncheon was a huge success.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Family Homelessness Initiative and Family Housing Connection

Chair Yantis welcomed the Human Services Commission/Committee attending from the cities of Redmond and Kirkland.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said she felt the timing was right to bring the Commission up to date with regard to the Family Homelessness Initiative and other changes happening in King County. One piece of the initiative is the Family Housing Connection, the coordinated entry process for homeless families that has been operational for almost a year and a half, and a progress report is in order.

Debbie Knowles, Family Homelessness Initiative project manager, introduced her colleague Janet Salm. She said the initiative is an investment priority under the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and its five key areas are: 1) coordinate entry assessments, which was launched in 2012; 2) moving families quickly to stable housing; 3) focusing support services on housing stability; 4) increasing collaboration of mainstream systems; and 5) preventing homelessness for families.

Ms. Knowles said the strategic planning process began in 2009 and continued into 2010. It included an assessment of the current system that focused on what the family needs are and the outcomes resulting from the current system. The assessment resulted in the development of a strategic plan that laid out strategies, goals and outcomes for the five key areas and an implementation plan for their sequencing. In 2011 implementation began with the development and launching of a coordinated entry process. Beginning in 2012 the focus turned to the system realignment work, which has required engagement with funders and providers, and ongoing system analysis using new data from the coordinated entry system and feedback from providers. Professional development training has also been provided to engage providers and funders in learning about best practices. In coordination with the coordinated entry, fair housing training has been provided to agencies. On

November 12, a multi-funder rapid re-housing system addition will be launched that will provide short-term rental assistance with some employment support.

Ms. Knowles said a lot of planning goes into the work being done. King County has a history of trying to thoroughly engage all stakeholders in planning processes and to that end there have been a myriad of meetings conducted. Various workgroups have been formed to help develop the work and move it forward: the funders workgroup meets with suburban cities, Seattle, King County, the King County Housing Authority, United Way and others to talk about contract monitoring, the opportunities and barriers; the provider agencies workgroup has been assisting in the development of specific tools; the assistance transformation workgroup has both providers and funders working together; and the coordinated entry workgroup provides with ongoing guidance and policy and programmatic issues.

The coordinated entry and assessment approach touches on a lot of existing systems and programs around shelter and transitional housing. It was specifically chosen to be the initial focus of the initiative because it is a critical piece that will help to streamline services, improve the opportunity for clients to access the services, and brings with it the opportunity to better target resources to those who need them. The goals of coordinated entry are to increase fairness, simplify the process for families, improve efficiency and consistency in placing families, capture data, and identify housing needs. The approach is already providing a lot of data that will be useful in informing the work going forward, particularly around who is being served and who is requesting services. The focus initially was on families but during the summer months youth coordinated entry was launched as an add-on. In the future other focus areas will be addressed, including single adults.

Ms. Knowles acknowledged that the system is built on current capacity. The coordinated entry system does not add any capacity to the system, it only streamlines the system to aid families in getting into the current resources. The system was built on an existing database of homeless housing programs. The previous entry system was difficult to navigate, and the coordinated entry system seeks to solve that problem. Since launching the new approach it has become evident that the most vulnerable families likely were not previously served as well because of the difficulties in navigating the system; there also was a lot of duplication of services with multiple agencies doing initial screenings for the same clients, and targeting resources was far more difficult.

Coordinated entry is a required by federal legislation for all communities and all populations. The state of Washington requires coordinated entry as well. It allows families to know how and where to access services; serves as a single point of access; helps match families with appropriate services; and generated unduplicated data. Catholic Community Services was selected through a competitive process to manage the system.

In April 2012 the Family Housing Connection was launched. More than 80 publicly funded shelter and homeless housing programs in King County area required to participate through their public funding contracts. Included are shelter programs, rental assistance programs, transitional housing programs, service-enriched housing programs, and permanent supportive housing programs. Not included are normal prevention and low-income housing services that are not connected to homeless housing services, or domestic violence shelters.

Julie McFarland with Catholic Community Services explained how the system works. She said when a family, defined as a pregnant person or at least one adult with at least one child, is experiencing homelessness, they can call 2-1-1 and are talked through the regular process. If the family indicates that they are literally homeless or within 14 days of becoming homeless, 2-1-1 will schedule a connection with a Family Housing Connection where specific housing barriers and preferences are identified. Questions about eviction history, criminal history and debt to landlords are asked. The majority of families begin the waiting process at that point; there is no standard wait time, it all depends on what becomes available and what the family is experiencing relative to barriers and preferences.

Families staying in a place not meant for human habitation are prioritized for emergency shelter units. As soon as an emergency shelter unit is available, the next eligible family on the list is contacted for a secondary screening during which specific questions centered on the open unit are asked. If the family is interested in and eligible for the unit, they are referred to the program and the program takes it from there. Families not interested or eligible are kept on the waiting list and contacted when the next available unit opens. To date the program has met with over 5000 families, and since the program launched just over 400 have reported they are staying in a place not meant for human habitation.

Janet Salm said she works for King County and with Ms. Knowles on the Family Homelessness Initiative. She said she has been very deeply involved in the design and implementation of the Family Housing Connection program. Coordinated entry has simplified access for families. Before the program was launched families had to make multiple calls to multiple agencies; on average the number of calls made was 45. Families were required to check in multiple times per week and in some cases every day, and they often had to tell their stories multiple times. Under the coordinated entry system, they make a single call, tell their story once, and providers receive eligible referrals based on their resources. The system resources get allocated based on family need and the date they called 2-1-1 for assistance.

Ms. Salm said the data indicates that some 4000 families fall into a housing crisis in a year, 400 of which may be on the street homeless as a result. Seventy percent of those seeking help report they are homeless for the first time; only six percent indicate they have been homeless more than three times. About a third of the families are headed by a young parent and about half of the children are not yet school-aged, a fact that has implications for child care and the parent getting a job.

Persons of color are over represented in the population relative to both the general population and to those in poverty. Family size ranges from two to eleven, though about a third of the families are small with a single adult and one child. Around 70 percent have at least a high school diploma, though some have even more education.

Most families, about 85 percent, want education and employment services. Families in need of mental health and chemical dependency services can indicate their need of such services; the intake system does no diagnosing or prescribing. About 30 percent do indicate a need for mental health services, and ten percent noted a need for chemical dependency services. About a third of the families ask for services for survivors of domestic violence. About 14 percent are immigrants and refugees and some of them indicate a desire for culturally tailored services.

Ms. Salm said the data indicate families have relatively low barriers to housing. About five percent have debt to housing authorities. Twenty-three percent report having no rental history. Twenty-eight percent report having some debt to landlords, and 32 percent have evictions or have been asked to leave. Eight-five percent have low or no criminal histories. Seventy-seven percent report having owned or leased a home in the past. Seventy-two percent have a high school education or higher. Seventy percent are reporting as homeless for the first time. Sixty-seven percent indicate they have had no prior evictions, and 56 percent have recent positive work histories.

Most families are doubled up with others when they call the Family Housing Connection program. About 58 percent are staying or living with a friend or family member. Some 15 percent are in emergency shelter at the time they apply to the program. Ten percent are in rentals without housing subsidies. Seven percent are in a place not meant for human habitation. Three percent are in transitional housing, and four percent are in a hotel or motel paid for without a voucher. One percent are in a substance abuse or detox center, and one percent fall into the "other" category.

Each month program staff meet with between four and 25 families who are staying in their cars or some other place not meant for human habitation. Those families are referred to as either being literally homeless or on the street homeless.

Ms. Salm said a big study was conducted looking at the data comparing doubled-up families to families that are on the streets. The intent was to determine how prioritizing families on the streets would impact providers. The study turned up shockingly few differences between the two types of families, and the actual differences are minor. The most consistent area of difference concerns debt; families on the street are more likely to have a high level of debt to a housing authority, a utility company, a credit card company, or for medical expenses. Additionally, families on the street are more willing to ask for mental health or chemical dependency services, and services targeted to those with disabilities even though there is no difference between doubled up families and families on the streets in

terms of their need for such services. According to the data, families on the street are more likely to have mild differences relative to debt, criminal histories, and a willingness to accept services.

There is a large housing stock for families in King County. There are 23 emergency shelter units, most of which are individual units with doors that can be locked, though there are a few that involve congregate living arrangements. There are 1200 transitional housing units; 257 permanent supportive housing units; and a number of units for people with long-term needs. King County's housing stock is the third largest in the country after Washington, D.C. and New York. The length of stay in transitional housing for families with children averages about 19 months. Emergency shelter stays average about four months. Even though the housing stock is large, the Family Housing Connection is seeing very low monthly throughput. For emergency shelter, the average number of openings per month is only about 20.

The low throughput can be attributed to long lengths of stay and barriers to accessing the system. Over time programs have established eligibility criteria based on funder requirements and property management requirements. One of the pieces used to address the barriers is the fair housing training. Additionally, the precise characteristics that adhere to homeless families, such as loss of identification, evictions, criminal histories, and being very low income often are the very things that serve as barriers to keep people out of the very higher needs housing they so desperately need. Through the fair housing training it has been possible to chip away at those barriers. Other barriers to housing include high deposits required up front and requirements relative to debt that landlords impose. The need for identification documents is also a significant barrier; absent identification documents for everyone in a family, the family may not be eligible for a large portion of system resources.

Ms. Salm informed the Commissioners that over the last year the Family Housing Connection has had over 6400 appointments, about 583 per month. Some of the appointments have lasted longer than two hours in order to accommodate language barriers. The original goal was to make sure clients could have an appointment within two weeks; the goal was achievable in the beginning but stretched out as the year went on for various reasons, but by May appointments were once again available within two weeks and they continue to be. There are in-person assessments available at nine locations across King County. Family Housing Connection staff speak seven different languages in addition to English and appointments are made keeping in mind which language the assessment will need to occur.

About 4000 households were assessed in the first year of operation. Some households were found to be ineligible for various reasons. There were 435 households placed and exited, which means they were placed in longer-term housing and removed from the roster of those waiting for placement. In addition, 247 households were placed in emergency shelter but remain active on the roster waiting for Family Housing Connection to place them. Because of low throughput, it has

been taking a long time to get qualified households placed in permanent housing. The shelter openings that occurred in July were filled by households that had been on the wait list since the period between May and October of 2012. The factors that come into play include the size of the unit, the specific eligibility, and the size of the family. On average, two referrals are needed for each opening; it has taken up to 11 referrals to fill an opening.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Perelman regarding the persons on the waiting roster, Ms. McFarland said Catholic Community Services is gearing up to call all 3452 persons on the list to get a housing update, something which has not previously been done. However, people have been contacted through the referral process to get updates, which are then entered in the database. Where appropriate, people are exited from the roster. Families on the list are encouraged to call in if their circumstances or contact information changes, and a large number of families do call in every day. There are many, however, with whom there has been no contact since the first assessment and the callback process is aimed at making sure the roster is accurate.

Ms. Salm said the program quickly learned that the need is huge. Given the large number of families in need and the relatively few number of units available, the decision was made to prioritize families living on the streets or in their cars. Barriers were addressed as they were identified, but smoothing out the input process has been intense.

Meghan Altimore with Hopelink said her agency's experiences align closely with the data presented by Ms. Salm and Ms. McFarland. She said Hopelink has made changes in-house in response to system changes, including a significant reduction in entry criteria to match funder requirements and safety issues. The agency has also changed its emphasis relative to how it communicates with its families, especially in the shelter. Where previously families were advised to get onto every possible subsidized housing list, the focus now is on moving the emphasis onto the family as much as possible. The change has not been implemented systemwide and thus has been a hard sell. Hopelink is looking forward to the system realignment to make the change effective. Hopelink has also hired a housing locator to augment the work the liaison program is doing. There still are issues and barriers, however. For instance, while the King County Housing Authority has moved mountains to make the program happen, they will not come off the point of a thousand dollars maximum rental debt.

Ms. Altimore said fewer families are being seen from north and east King County. Part of the Hopelink model is to help people create personal safety nets, especially families who are literally homeless and in most cases have exhausted every resource. Serving families from Federal Way or Kent and who want to return to those areas is difficult; Hopelink hopes to be able to again have a geographic emphasis. Hopelink is also seeing a higher incidence of safety issues that are leading to termination of tenancy. The agency is doing all it can to address that problem. On the positive side, families that need help are being helped.

Derek Wentorf with Friends of Youth said his agency offers family programs for parents ages 18 to 21, though in conjunction with Hopelink those up to age 24 are served. Overall there is a real lack of programs targeted at young adults. The fact is young parents have different levels of skill development they need to go through in order to achieve independence. Friends of Youth is also dealing with changes in where the young people are coming from and changes in the number of exits in housing due to negative interactions. When the Family Housing Connection program began there was a very real problem with referrals that required Friends of Youth staff to struggle in getting people into the program. Some good strides have been made to the point where the system is working efficiently and effectively. However, the agency is having to serve highly vulnerable and needy families with no additional resources. The real work of the agencies is to figure out how to get needy families through the barriers and placed, and then to figure out how to help them succeed. There will be no successful outcomes without supportive services.

Commissioner Bruels asked if Medicaid expansion will assist in accessing such as mental health and chemical dependence. Mr. Wentorf said hopefully it will. Friends of Youth does have a mental health clinician to work with clients. Often young families do have some kind of coverage which helps them obtain services from other places. Commissioner Bruels allowed that one of the barriers to mental health and chemical dependence services is eligibility, and knocking down the financial piece with Medicaid expansion certainly would help.

Ms. Leslie said one of the issues Bellevue staff have been hearing about is that the families can express a preference for a geographic area. In theory one would think they would stay in the geographic area where they have the most support, but some agencies are reporting they are getting people from outside the Bellevue and Eastside geographic area. One thing that will come out in the applications is that the agencies being funded are not necessarily serving Bellevue residents. That issue will need to be addressed.

Ms. McFarland said many clients are indicating they are open to any area. Where there are openings, the next eligible family is referred, unless the local agency requires someone from their zip code because of their funding source.

Commissioner Stout suggested the time is right to look at the system as regional and to pool resources to address it, much as is done through ARCH.

Sarah Steininger with LifeWire said the domestic violence world has always taken that approach because of safety issues and the need for emergent housing. Funders have always been very understanding. Contract goals have a way of evening out over the years of providing services. Commissioner Stout said the domestic violence agencies have made a very good case for that approach which has been supported by police departments, social service agencies and others. Local councils, however,

are often more interested in seeing their funding allocated locally without understanding that there are no walls between cities.

Ms. Knowles agreed. She pointed out that the federal government requires efforts to end homelessness to be regional in their scope for that very reason. Families, particularly low-income families, are very mobile. Ms. Salm added that data is readily available that shows the originating cities of the families coming in and where they got served.

Commissioner McEachran asked who funds resident services when they are offered. Mr. Wentorf said in most cases there is a fee for the service that is billed to insurance companies. Commissioner McEachran said he has experience working with non-profits that have significant collaborative impact around the issue of resident services. He said there are those in the community who might resonate around the idea of funding resident services in a partnership where it can be shown that such services contribute to sustainability. He said Imagine Housing provides educational legacy scholarships based on some evaluation and needs, and it is remarkable how it is the narrative that draws out support from other funders.

Gina Yarwood with the YWCA Redmond transitional housing program said her agency has made many of the changes outlined by Ms. Altimore relative to criteria. The 2014 budget will include an increase in case manager hours. She said the program is seeing young families, families with significant mental health and substance abuse issues, and those who have never previously been heads of households. The program has a high success rate, but it takes a lot to make it happen. Program-to-program and city-to-city collaboration is the way to go to get people housed. The budget for interpreters has had to be increased, the result of which has been improvements in working through barriers.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Perelman, Ms. Yarwood said families can stay in the Redmond transitional housing for up to 24 months. Most stay between 18 and 20 months. There is childcare on site, but the two-income families often do not qualify for a subsidy, even if each is only receiving minimum wage. In those cases one parent most often must stay home, which perpetuates the overall problem.

Ms. Steininger said LifeWire focuses on domestic violence issues and thus operates under a different system, one that has been very successful in maximizing the use of domestic violence space throughout the county. LifeWire does, however, participate in the permanent supportive housing program and the transitional housing program. The latter is unique in that it serves survivors of domestic violence who are also dealing with substance abuse issues. All of the current shelter residents are also on the Family Housing Connection rolls. One trend observed has been that emergency shelter stays have grown significantly longer because of the bottleneck between leaving shelter and moving on to supportive housing. Very few LifeWire clients have the personal means to move into market-rate apartments; some do not even have the

means to move into affordable housing. About 30 families are being turned away for every family provided with shelter.

Continuing, Ms. Steininger said LifeWire is finding that regular homelessness solutions do not always work for survivors of domestic violence. Homelessness prevention and diversion has been shown to be a far more effective solution, and it costs less as well. LifeWire's housing stability program assists people in changing their home locks, changing their car tires, and paying back money owed to child care, all things that might otherwise prevent clients from going to work. The domestic violence subcommittee has worked extensively with the city and Family Housing Connection on solving small problems in the way the needs of survivors of domestic violence are addressed.

Ms. McFarland reminded the group that Catholic Community Services is also a housing provider. She said the shelter in Seattle operated by the agency serves people who are suffering from domestic violence but it does not specialize in doing so. Prior to the launching of coordinated entry, the shelter had a maximum length of stay as required by the funders, so at the six-month mark clients had to be exited, so there was a lot of shelter swapping carried out. When coordinated entry launched the funders recognized that the length of stay was terrible for the stability of families, so it was removed. At Sacred Heart the average stay has since increased from about five months to eight months. To date shelter to greater housing stability has been the outcome, but a change is coming in which permanent housing will be the outcome.

Jennifer Barron with KITH said the one thing her agency is finding different under the new system is that someone else is conducting the interviews and gathering all of the information. However, the agency also does not have the ability to pick families that are ready to work. Some families are being placed that do not really want to move toward making a plan for their future. KITH has often found itself chasing the families down in order to make them aware of various resources.

Chair Yantis asked what needs to change to make a difference. Ms. Barron said KITH believes those being placed are in fact those who are most in need because they are in fact homeless. Hopefully in time that will level out and the next tier of families who need a place to live and who are willing to do what they need to do for themselves to move toward self sufficiency.

Ms. Yarwood said the YWCA has had some units open for a long time because as an agency the tenants being sought are those wanting to become self sufficient. Adults need to be in a situation where they are working or going to school, and they need to be willing to gain new skills that will help them move on. Before coordinated entry, the YWCA had relationships with different agencies and counselors in the community who made referrals to the program, and getting people housed took only a few days. Now those in need must call 2-1-1, go through the intake process, and then they might become number 3000 on the waiting list. She agreed that the families that

meet the criteria under the new system and get housed first are not necessarily those who are willing to do the work it will take to move them on to self sufficiency.

Ms. Knowles agreed that with the changing system the focus is on homeless families and the homeless systems. She said it is recognized that there needs to be auxiliary support and mainstream systems aimed at serving those families. The coordinated entry approach was a first step toward retooling the system into a crisis response system that can provide a better balance of homeless interventions. The new focus represents a significant shift for both funders and providers and the clients themselves. Collectively, the area has 200 shelter units and 1200 transitional housing units, but even with such a large stock there are some 400 families living on the streets. In 1990s the area was very successful in receiving funding from various sources and using it to construct and subsidize housing, in particular transitional housing. The opportunity now on the table is to create a better system approach that focuses on moving families from homelessness back into housing. The order of magnitude the work will entail is significant and will require considerable work on the part of all system partners, particularly in light of the fact that resources are limited. The intention is not to add new programs but rather to test new interventions in an attempt to yield better outcomes for the families. There is no intent to defund projects and start with a clean slate. The conversion work will focus on everything from minor adjustments to expectations and service packages to more substantial changes moving toward a rapid re-housing model. Studies show that family success rates are much greater when they have their own permanent housing in conjunction with support services.

Ms. Knowles said the initiative has two goals for the conversion, namely to support families and maintaining and/or more quickly attaining permanent housing while connecting them to resources. Services and resources are always going to be important, but they may not always be provided by the agency in a facility; they may involve connections to mainstream services. The majority, if not all, of homeless families are poor, but the majority of poor families are not homeless. Less than five percent of families on TANF and those living under the federal poverty line ever become homeless. There are poor families in every community, but the resources do not exist to elevate all homeless families to self sustaining status in the initial steps of getting them housed. The shift will need to involve thinking about ways to support agencies to serve the families as the needs change.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that many of the system changes are being driven by a national initiative.

Ms. Knowles said the federal HEARTH Act is a huge source of federal funding for the homeless housing system. The program sets a target stay of under 20 days for high-performing communities. Currently, the average length of stay when adding in shelter and transitional housing is closer to 600 days. There are communities shooting for that goal, and certainly every community can make improvements.

For the local program, the goals are to reduce the number of times families move within the system before they attain permanent housing; to reduce the length of times families spend homeless; and increasing housing stability. The goals all are aligned with the HEARTH measures. Achieving the goals, however, will involve a complicated process involving providers, funders at all levels, levies and tax credits. The realignment framework involves a system analysis based on need, family characteristics, existing system performance relative to outcomes and throughput, and housing unit stock. It also involves a funding analysis that will be thorough and will cover everything from the system level to the agency level. The analyses will identify gaps to be filled and ultimately will result in an implementation plan for how to move forward, including a blueprint for aligning funding and contracting.

Ms. Knowles briefly reviewed the training and support that is being provided to agencies for free, both in classroom settings and online. She also highlighted change management training and the regular peer learning sessions where agencies get together to share what is working and what is not working, and to brainstorm possible solutions.

The Commissioners were informed that a new rapid re-housing and employment navigation pilot will be launched on November 12. Six funders are contributing to the project and six agencies will participate. The hope is that up to 400 families will be served over a period of 15 months. Rapid re-housing is the practice of focusing resources on helping families to quickly move out of homelessness and into permanent housing, usually in the private market. The providers will focus on reducing housing barriers, housing placement, short-term rental assistance, and support services. There will also be employment navigators from three different agencies working cooperatively with the rapid re-housing case managers. It has been demonstrated in some communities that 90 percent of the families that exit rapid re-housing programs do not reenter homelessness.

Ms. Knowles said the goal is to have the system analysis completed by the end of the year. The hope is that the agency analysis piece is completed by the end of the second quarter of 2014. Some agencies could start converting as soon as the end of 2014; other agencies may take longer depending on their funding and the amount of change they anticipate.

Commissioner Beighle asked if there is any housing set aside specifically for the placement of domestic violence survivors. Ms. Steininger said the domestic violence housing that is not specifically for emergency shelter is included in the overall stock numbers. Ms. Knowles added that of the 220 shelter beds, 64 are for domestic violence. A portion of the transitional, service-enriched, and permanent supported housing will also will be for domestic violence use. Domestic violence clients will be put on the same wait list, but those requesting domestic violence services will get sorted and prioritized accordingly.

Ms. Leslie said the upshot is that big changes are on the way and all of the agencies are involved. The funders understand that during the transition there will be a need for flexibility.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie said there is a very high likelihood that a winter shelter for homeless men will be opened on the Eastside on November 15 in Bellevue. Staff are in the final stages of negotiating the building lease.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Stout asked what needs to be done about The Sophia Way. Ms. Leslie said the agency has opened its winter shelter for homeless women in a church in Redmond. The major funders of The Sophia Way have met to brainstorm ideas. The pressing issue appears to be a short-term cash flow problem.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jeff Bradt, Executive Director of Elder and Adult Day Services, said the organization serves adults with disabilities, primarily seniors with age-related disabilities but also younger adults with a variety of developmental disabilities. Occupational therapy, licensed nursing, and social therapies are offered. The programs are funded in part by the city. The Developmental Disabilities Administration measures on a scale from 0 to 6. Typically those at Levels 0 and 1 do not typically need employment services. Those measured at two receive about 20 percent of the services; they are typically able to find employment and then not need additional services. Levels 3 and 4 have more need of services, and Levels 5 and 6 typically do not benefit from employment services. Elder and Adult Day Services works with Level 5 and 6 clients and offers programs specific to the population. The Young Adult Achievement program was rolled out in 2012; it is focused on those just coming out of high school but who are not able to find significant employment. The goal of the organization is also to help family caregivers. A discussion has been started with several local non-profits that serve people with developmental disabilities with an eye on creating a non-profit cooperative to share administrative services and positions.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yantis adjourned the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date