

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 22, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Stout, Commissioners Beighle, Hoople,  
Huenefeld-Gese

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Seltzer, Yantis

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Terry Smith, 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 6:30 p.m. by Chair Stout who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Seltzer and Yantis, both of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 18, 2008

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

B. December 2, 2008

Chair Stout referred to the first paragraph on page 6 and suggested the first sentence should read "Chair Stout suggested highlighting the areas of best practices on a program-by-program basis."

Chair Stout also referred to the paragraph under Petitions and Communications on the same page and said the first sentence should be revised to read "Ms. Carol Bostick spoke about the Sofia Way project...."

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese. Second was by Commissioner Hoople and the motion carried unanimously.

C. December 29, 2008

Chair Stout referred to the third paragraph of page 3 and noted that the first sentence should be revised to read "Answering a question asked by Commissioner Seltzer, Ms. O'Reilly explained that the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council is currently the fiscal sponsor for Sophia Way."

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Hoople said he is continuing to attend the Levy Oversight Board meetings. He said the reports offered at each group lately has been a status report. Most procurement plans have been reviewed and approved, though the veterans group is seeking to establish an 800 number for vets to call to get connected with programs in King County.

Commissioner Beighle reported that she attended the One Night Count meeting. She said things are progressing well. Feedback on the new encampments should be in hand soon. She said she will be going out on her scouting trip of the Factoria area on January 26. The actual count is slated to occur on January 29.

Assistant Director Terry Smith said staff are waiting for revenue forecasts to determine the state of the city's budget relative to revenue projections. On the program side, indicators are being developed to help track the impact of the economy on services and the ability of the city to respond to the needs of children, families and older adults.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said the severe weather shelter has not been reactivated since closing shortly after Christmas. Staff review the forecast daily, however, and if the weather gets cold enough it will be opened again. Catholic Community Services is the lead agency contracted to provide the service; they provide services to women, and Congregations for the Homeless provide services to men.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that usage of the Home Repair Program continues to increase. The increase can be tied to the fact that Sam Ezadean is on full-time status, and the fact that there are more people who qualify as the economy worsens. Typically the program carries over funds from one year to the next, often as much as \$60,000 in CDBG funds. However, the program saw such success in 2008 that only about

\$20,000 are being carried over into 2009, representing the only dollars available for the program until the new CDBG allocation is in hand. That has created a waiting list of clients.

Ms. O'Reilly invited the Commissioners to attend an ARCH meeting on January 28 focused on the housing being developed by the St. Andrews Housing Group at the St. Margaret's site in Factoria. The meeting will be at City Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will be centered around the types of services St. Andrews staff will be providing with the housing.

Commissioner Hoople pointed out that there will be some veterans levy money included in the St. Margaret's project.

Intern Warren Leyh said an email was sent out to all contracted agencies seeking to better understand what the agencies are seeing in terms of client changes and funding changes. He said he has collected six responses to date. When all of the information is in, a report will be produced and distributed. The Jubilee Reach center reported a steady increase in need for financial assistance to pay utility bills, rent and relocation expenses for families forced to move because of escalating rents. Many more are seeking help in the form of food and public transportation. The Crisis Clinic reported that the number of calls they are fielding has skyrocketed; they took 10,000 calls in 2006 and 160,000 calls in 2008. They note that the costs of services is also increasing.

Ms. O'Reilly said she recently had a conversation with Jan Nestler about funding reductions owing to rule changes in the use of Medicaid for adult day health services. Ms. Nestler said the change could trigger closure of the Issaquah operation, which serves about 40 people, and consolidate the services at the Bellevue facility, which currently serves about 100 people per day. Of those 100 clients, about 60 are on Medicaid. The agency does not have reserves, and the funds that come from cities are used like scholarships. The impact will be significant; up to half the staff could be laid off.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### A. Overview of the 2009-2010 Human Services Needs Update

Ms. O'Reilly reviewed with the Commissioners the different ways information is generated for the Needs Update. She noted the contract for the phone survey is being routed internally and should be completed by March. The survey is typically conducted the same time of year every two years.

Ms. O'Reilly said she is working with the contractor to add a question to help inform the Cultural Diversity Plan that is being developed by Community Services staff. A question about veteran status will also be added.

Commissioner Hoople said a better response will be generated if the question about veteran status is worded "Did you serve in the United States military?" Many who served do not consider themselves veterans if they never served in a combat zone.

Mr. Leyh will have the lead role in the online provider survey. That survey will be posted by April.

With regard to the community conversations, Ms. O'Reilly said certain groups from which it would be good to have information may not necessarily have an organized structure. Absent being able to pull a group together, having a community conversation is not possible. In those instances, information will be gathered by conducting key informant interviews; sometimes those interviews lead to groups.

An online survey of the faith community will be part of the data gathering mix. Notice is sent widely to the names on the Interfaith Social Concerns Council list.

The consumer surveys are conducted at grocery stores and the like. Those will also be done for the update. Working with IT staff, an employee survey will be conducted as well. There will also be a business survey.

Commissioner Hoople urged staff to include the Eastside Women's Center and Sophia Way in the key informant interviews. He noted that the facility was not operational the last time the Needs Update was worked on.

Ms. O'Reilly said the schedule calls for having the first draft of the Needs Update in hand by September 1. The Commission will be asked to review it and approve the Needs Update on November 17 so it can be carried to the City Council very early in 2010.

The Commissioners were informed that on January 8 the Bellevue Network on Aging held its annual retreat. At that meeting, it was agreed that a subcommittee of that organization should take the lead in collecting the qualitative information for the older adults chapter of the Needs Update. Ms. O'Reilly said she will be meeting soon with members of the subcommittee to talk logistics.

Ms. O'Reilly said she attended the last Youth Link Board meeting and queried that group about their level of interest in taking the lead in getting information about youth for the update. They concluded that they would not be able to play a lead role but expressed an interest in assisting in some way.

Chair Stout asked if there will be community conversations or key informant surveys conducted with the Jubilee Reach parent groups and staff, and with the Wrap Around Project staff. Ms. O'Reilly agreed those could be added to the list.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese said she would like to see in-between groups added to the list, such as Bellevue Square Mall staff and the laundry and cleaning staff at major hotels, most of whom probably earn close to minimum wage.

Commissioner Hoople proposed adding interviews focused on domestic violence victims, and staff from Eastside Legal Assistance.

Commissioner Beighle said she would like to see data generated regarding the emergency feeding programs funded by the city. She also suggested adding interviews with school counselors to the interviews done of school nurses.

Commissioner Hoople said he would be interested in conducting interviews at The Landing.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked to what degree the interviews will include Russian and East European groups. Ms. O'Reilly said for the update four years ago there were interviews with the clients of an ESL class comprised primarily of Russian immigrants. The teacher asked the questions as part of the class. For the most recent update there were interviews with the Cultural Navigator staff; the plan calls for contacting that group again. Two years ago there was a key informant interview with East Indians as well. Ms. O'Reilly said she also would like to hear from Middle East immigrants.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked if there is any way to specifically target African-American groups. Ms. O'Reilly said four years ago there was a group of African-American women called Sisters on the Eastside that was interviewed. She said she will check on that group again as well as others.

Commissioner Hoople thought it would be helpful to gather information about how well the city is doing at getting more affordable housing in place. Ms. O'Reilly agreed, saying she would also contact the King County Housing Authority.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese asked if the Needs Update has a focus on integrated services. Ms. O'Reilly said that has not been included as a focus but it could be something to pursue.

Commissioner Huenefeld-Gese added that in the current economy there should also be a focus on just basic needs. Chair Stout concurred, noting that as the unemployment figures rise there will need to be attention paid to what needs are the most critical. It may become necessary to prioritize every dollar spent.

Chair Stout thanked Commissioner Hoople for diligently raising the needs of veterans in the community. She allowed that the family issues for returning veterans are enormous and ripples through all sectors of human services.

Commissioner Hoople proposed contacting Sadikifu Akina-James for key informant interview.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Summary of Governor's Budget Cuts Regarding Human Services

Ms. O'Reilly reminded the Commissioners that at the Eastside Human Services Forum annual meeting there was a presentation that included the annual legislative agenda. The three basic areas of focus were sustainable infrastructure for human services, homelessness prevention, and early learning. When the governor's budget was released in November, many were shocked to see the proposed cuts.

Ms. O'Reilly said since the legislature began its 2009 session there has been a lot of activity. She said at a meeting earlier in the day she learned that many are looking at cutting the General Assistance Unemployable. People in that category are already on the brink of homelessness, and many of them have significant mental illness issues. If the proposed cuts are made, many of the agencies funded by the Commission will be impacted.

The Housing Trust Fund was in the United Way second tier but was moved into the first tier during the meeting. It is instrumental to the success of the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Ms. O'Reilly said there is a quality improvement rating system for early learning that has been talked about frequently. The United Way understands the system will require an allocation of a significant amount of money but intends to continue its support for it. Home visiting is another issue that United Way will be keeping on their agenda. The WIN 2-1-1 system is also on the priority list for United Way.

Ms. O'Reilly said at the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Oversight Board meeting, which also occurred earlier in the day, representatives were present from the King County budget office. They indicated that King County is projecting a \$39 million deficit for 2010 as tax revenues continue to fall off. The mental illness funds will certainly be affected, so the Oversight Board is going to start looking at ways to modify its strategies. The director of the mental health substance abuse division talked about substantial cuts in general to mental health services. Starting in February, there will be about \$1.2 million cut from the budget.

Ms. O'Reilly said the state budget deficit, which currently stands at \$6 billion, is projected to increase to \$8 billion by the March forecast.

The new one tenth of one percent tax increase for mental health can only be used for new or expanded mental health or substance abuse programs as the law is written. There is an effort under way, however, to get the law changed to allow for

supplementation as well to bolster the core services that are keeping mentally ill people out of the jail system.

Ms. O'Reilly said there have also been efforts to give counties additional tools for creating new funding streams. The issue is controversial and will receive a great deal of debate. One possible outcome would be to allow King County to impose a utility tax on unincorporated areas.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with written information regarding older adult issues.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Tammy Foss, 15326 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Place, said she was surprised during the meeting to not hear the Commission mention the needs of foster kids. She encouraged the Commission to consider the needs of foster kids, particularly those who are graduating from high school and those who have quit high school without graduating. They are liable to end up in the ranks of the unemployed and the homeless.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stout adjourned the meeting at 8:01 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date