

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 7, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Habib, Plaskon

STAFF PRESENT: Emily Leslie, Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Department of Parks & Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Bruels who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Perelman, who arrived at 6:35 p.m., and Commissioners Habib and Plaskon, both of whom were excused.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Stout took a moment to thank Commissioner Beighle for the hours, commitment and quality of service she put into serving as chair of the Commission.

Ms. Betty Takahashi, homeless liaison and family connection centers coordinator for the Bellevue School District thanked the Commission for the grant. She said all students in the district are able to benefit from the connection centers. Some of the programs are school based. With regard to the Nourishing Network program, she said the aim is to meet the needs of the hungry in the community by pooling resources and using them more efficiently. Two meetings have been held to date and three areas of interest have been identified: advocacy, community gardening and donations by local gardeners, and weekend food packs for middle and high school students. The Lake Washington and Northshore school districts both have the weekend food pack program and the packs are distributed to families. However, there are a lot of homeless teens who do not have enough food. To begin with, the

program in the Bellevue School District will be limited to students at Highland Middle School and Sammamish High School. The target start date is March 1 and the hope is that the program will eventually be expanded to other schools and to families. People in the community are stepping up. One woman who is Hawaiian and who operates a dance studio in Bellevue is offering free hula and Hawaiian culture lessons to any girl who wants to participate on Saturday mornings, provided they first spend 45 minutes doing school work; a certificated teacher will be on site to supervise the school work. Recently two homeless girls, one 18 and one 17, moved to the area. The older sister the legal guardian of her younger sister and there are no parents in the picture. They could not be placed in the same shelter because of their respective ages, but a family volunteered to take them in.

Commissioner Yantis commented that when the program was started at Lake Hills the intent was to couple the schools to the community in a more effective way, thereby improving both the schools and the community. He asked how that philosophy has been working in the programs that have been brought online since. Ms. Takahashi said she had no concrete data but could say positively that it makes a big difference to have students involved both before and after school. It certainly is effective to serve the whole child and the family with wraparound services.

Commissioner Stout asked to what extent the program is working with other agencies providing similar services in an attempt to avoid duplicating services. Ms. Takahashi said the programs are coordinated with other agencies, including the Assistance League of the Eastside, which has a clothing voucher program. The names of students cannot, however, be given directly to other agencies for confidentiality reasons, so the outside agencies work through the school district to provide what is needed. Commissioner Stout stressed the need to avoid duplicating services that already exist and are being delivered. Ms. Takahashi agreed. Nourishing Networks has made an attempt to identify all of the resources so that everyone in need can be served.

Ms. MaryEllen Zemlin, a VIBES program coordinator for the Bellevue School District, offered her appreciation for the funding given the program by the city. She noted that in the past there have been three coordinators for the 27 schools in the district, but owing to cutbacks there are currently only two. Two half-time administrative persons have been hired to help take over the parent piece. Where the average number of volunteers has been close to 425, there are close to 500 currently, including high school students who are helping out with the elementary after-school programs. For the AVID program, there is a whole cadre of Northwest University teacher candidates coming in and working in the classrooms. Support of the VIBES program continues to be important and appreciated for the good it is doing in the community.

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Beighle reported that the countywide tally for the One Night Count was 2594, 73 of which were on the Eastside. She reminded the Commissioners that the

count is made of unsheltered homeless persons and is separate from the counts made at the various shelters. On the night of the count, the Eastside winter shelter was full to capacity.

Commissioner Beighle also reported that she attended Community Building in a Diverse Community Forum at Crossroads Community Center. She said it was stated at the event that Bellevue has seen very few hate crime incidents in the past few years, a fact which surprised everyone. Some contributed the low number of incidents to a lack of awareness that complaints can be filed without having to show a green card. The audience concluded that diversity events are still needed in the community. The city has an investigator who handles tagging, which can also be connected to racial tensions.

Chair Bruels reported that he presented the Needs Update to the City Council on February 6. He said the presentation went very well. The entire Council expressed their appreciation and thanks for the work done by the Commission and the staff in producing the document.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly said there were some questions asked, most of which were rhetorical. Mayor Lee did ask questions about the faith communities, the types of work they are doing, and how the city is interacting with them.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said one rhetorical question asked by Councilmember Davidson focused on how to fund and who should fund the vast array of human services needs. Councilmember Balducci highlighted the need for more prevention programs and mental health services. Councilmember Stokes positively highlighted the references to Eastside Pathways and wraparound services. Ms. Leslie said Councilmember Wallace, who did not attend the Council meeting, had previously sent her an email saying how impressed he was with the document.

Chair Bruels said Councilmember Chelminiak offered some excellent comments relative to the economic impact and the need for preventive services. He also commented on the degree to which commerce in the city is tied to human services.

Commissioner Stout reported that she was tapped to make a presentation at the Crib to Classroom Conference at Shoreline on February 4. She said more than 200 people attended the conference, the majority of whom were childcare providers.

Commissioner Perelman asked about the federal funding received by the state for childcare. Ms. O'Reilly said the funds will be used primarily for the Quality Rating Improvement System.

Ms. Leslie reminded the Commissioners about Gumbo Night, the annual Youth Link gathering. She said all the Commissioners were invited to attend the February 8 event. She also noted that on February 16 at Grace Lutheran Church there will be a

conversation about the needs of homeless youth and young adults. The conversation will be moderated by Arthur Sullivan with ARCH.

Commissioner Stout said the event in part is a response to attempts to oppose siting a shelter at Grace Lutheran Church by Friends of Youth. Ms. Leslie said Friends of Youth did explore the idea of relocating The Landing to Grace Lutheran, but the decision has been made not to.

Ms. Leslie reported that on February 29 there would be another neighborhood forum at City Hall at which Bill Grace will talk about sharing responsibility for the common good.

5. DISCUSSION

A. 2013 - 2014 Funding Focus Areas

Ms. Leslie presented the Commissioners with a draft prepared by staff aimed at giving the Commission something to react to. She said the document was predicated on the Commission's previous focus areas as well as the comments from the discussion at the meeting where the Commission first discussed the topic. She said the format mirrored the instructions that will go to agencies applying to Bellevue for funding.

Commissioner Beighle said she recently heard from childcare providers that the demand for care is down given that many people are out of work. People are using neighbors and family members. She said she would not argue in favor of including childcare as a focus area.

Ms. O'Reilly said she spoke recently with the director of the childcare and after-school programs for the Bellevue School District and learned that within the last week 15 parents were dropped from Working Connections childcare due to the eligibility guidelines.

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said the question was raised during the mid-biennium review. The response from Child Care Resources was that while they were serving more people through a different service that was not part of their contract.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that Child Care Resources gives scholarships to Bellevue residents to be used at various places, including the Bellevue School District. She added that every service provider experiences a lag from time to time, but it is important to keep the infrastructure in place to address the needs.

Chair Bruels pointed out that in the current down economy, someone may have lost their job and therefore not be in need of childcare. However, having that childcare immediately available should they find another job is vitally important; it could be the thing that makes it possible for them to take a job when offered.

Commissioner Stout noted that Working Connections is under attack in the state budget. They have lost enormous amounts of money over the last two years. Families cannot work if they do not have child care.

Commissioner Beighle stressed the need to educate the City Council with regard to prioritizing the increased diverse population and veterans. With regard to the latter she asked what is known about the number of veterans in need of services currently, and what the estimated number is for the next two years. Ms. O'Reilly said there is census data that indicates the number of veterans living in Bellevue, and there are projections from the King County Veterans Program. Even so, it is very difficult to project what the need will be.

Commissioner Perelman suggested the veterans numbers are not high enough to justify making it a high priority category. Ms. O'Reilly allowed that there remain many unknowns, particularly given the plans to bring the troops home from Afghanistan in the next two years. One thing that is not known is whether or not veterans will return to Bellevue even if they are stationed locally.

Commissioner Perelman highlighted the need for services for residents for whom English is not their primary language. Agencies offering those services have experienced budget reductions.

Commissioner Stout pointed out that it is not always the veterans themselves but their families who are impacted. She said a comment made recently on National Public Radio suggested that if the full definition of PTSD were to be recognized, the Veterans Administration could be bankrupted. There is no doubt that the needs of veterans will tax the human services system in the coming years. She added that politically it is currently valuable to add veterans to anything for which funding is being sought.

Chair Bruels suggested that instead of focusing on veterans as a population in need of services, the focus should be on all programs that might catch veterans and their families.

Commissioner Beighle said she had no doubt that agencies will submit requests for funding for veterans, and if veterans are listed as a priority they are going to expect the Commission to fund their programs. The Commission should be very careful about creating specific bulleted lists indicating what issues will get the most focus.

Commissioner Stout proposed listing the specific service needs and gaps identified in the Needs Update, such as medical and mental health. By doing so the focus would be drawn away from specific populations to the human services infrastructure.

Commissioner Yantis asked if something should be drawn out of the continuum of human services and emphasized more than the other things. Ms. Leslie said that

was the general direction given by the Commission at its last meeting where the gaps analysis was reviewed.

Chair Bruels said he would like to see a focus on services that directly affect employment, including mentor programs for youth, training and employment support, and transportation.

Commissioner Yantis cautioned against being too specific in identifying specific employment areas. He noted that because the dollars available to allocate are limited, the focus should be on the basics, such as food and shelter.

Chair Bruels pointed out that the providers are going to be looking to the Commission for direction on what they should be focusing on. The more specific the Commission is, the easier it will be for them to draft their applications.

There was agreement to have the first primary focus area bullet read "Prevention and intervention programs serving residents most affected by the continuing impacts of the economic recession, including but not limited to basic needs and services that directly affect employment." There was also agreement to have the second primary focus area bullet read "Services that are threatened by significant funding reductions from other sources."

Commissioner Perelman raised the question of whether or not to address safety in the focus area statements. Ms. Leslie pointed out that one of the goal areas is safe haven, which includes a domestic violence and sexual assault component. It was pointed out that domestic violence and sexual assault would fall under services that are threatened by significant funding reductions from other sources.

Chair Bruels commented that during the last funding cycle providers did not reference the Needs Update; they did not make the case between their services and what the city was telling them the needs were. He said he would like to see the link made. Mr. Adriano pointed out that the instructions as drafted say applicants are advised to cite the Needs Update. As such, the point does not need to be made in identifying the focus areas. Ms. O'Reilly observed that additional data not in the Needs Update may be helpful as well; in any event, applicants should not be penalized for not using the Needs Update, but they should have some data to make the case for the need they are seeking to address.

Commissioner Stout commented that there are often historical factors associated with funding some agencies. She questioned whether such factors should be considered in making funding decisions.

Commissioner Stout said she would like to see the document include a statement to the effect that the Commission will accept new applications for things being offered by existing programs. Commissioner Yantis argued that an application could be brought forward for a service already provided by another agency but which would be

less expensive and more effective at reaching the target audience. Commissioner Stout said a less expensive approach resulting from a heavy reliance on volunteers would raise a red flag for her relative to the ability of the agency to sustain the service.

There was agreement to include following the primary focus area bullets “Please note that applications will be accepted for all types of programs; however, in view of limited funds, the Commission will prioritize funding to the focus areas noted above. These will be used by the Commission to review previously funded programs as well as new applications. Previous funding from the City of Bellevue does not ensure continued funding.” There was further agreement to show the last sentence in bold print.

Ms. Leslie said the other funding considerations section included a laundry list of items, some of which were previously included. She said contract performance and cost-effectiveness are obvious items. The issue of leveraged funds came up in the Council meeting on February 6. Alignment with regional initiatives needs to stay in; unfortunately, the regional initiatives do not have their recommendations done in time for Bellevue to align with them, so something has to be kept in that says the alignments will ultimately be made.

Commissioner Beighle said she would like to see the cultural competence section beefed up. Chair Bruels agreed and pointed out that cultural competence goes well beyond just not discriminating.

Ms. Leslie pointed out that there are questions in the application that address cultural competence and partnerships. The language in the other funding considerations section regarding cultural competence could be more specific; the partnerships language does provide for more specificity. Mr. Adriano added that calling them out in the application would suggest to applicants the need for them to pay particular attention to them.

Commissioner Stout said she wanted to see the last sentence of the contract performance section read “Bellevue funds high-performing agencies and programs and, where there are low-performing or non-compliant agencies, funding may be reduced or eliminated.”

Commissioner Perelman pointed out the need to include the statement that Bellevue funds are intended to serve Bellevue residents. Ms. Leslie said the instructions provided to applicants make that point clear. She stressed that Bellevue funds are not restricted just to Bellevue residents because the city is part of a regional system, but the majority of funds need to be earmarked for Bellevue residents. The funding workshops will emphasize all of the particulars, and all new applicants must schedule a meeting with staff to talk about their proposals.

Commissioner Yantis asked what is meant by the role of Bellevue’s funds in the larger regional funding system. Ms. Leslie said the phrase is in recognition of the fact

that Bellevue is generally a small piece of the regional funding puzzle. Homelessness is a good example, the largest funders for which are United Way, King County, Seattle and the federal government. Although Bellevue devotes a significant amount of its funding for homelessness, in the grand scheme of homeless funding, Bellevue's funds are only a small fraction.

Commissioner Beighle commented that the phrase brings to mind the fact that Bellevue does look at and consider what other Eastside cities are funding. If they decide to fund a certain program about which Bellevue is on the bubble, it is helpful to know the program is viewed as important by other funders.

Commissioner Yantis suggested, and the other Commissioners agreed, that the leveraged fund paragraph should simply read "Programs where Bellevue funds are used to leverage dollars from other sources will be given higher priority."

With regard to the second bullet in the cultural competency section, Commissioner Beighle voiced concern over including the word "significant" in the first sentence, noting that showing significant outreach efforts would be difficult for smaller agencies. Ms. O'Reilly said there has been an ongoing effort on the part of agencies that are doing well to mentor and encourage other agencies to do better in the area of outreach. Some agencies who are doing well in terms of hiring and training staff from diverse cultures are pretty good at reporting when they send clients to other agencies. She suggested the examples included in the paragraph, such as hiring staff with the needed language skills to engage the diverse communities, helps to explain what is meant by the language of the first sentence.

Commissioner Stout suggested that if the word "significant" were to be removed, agencies could simply report on their outreach efforts even if they were minimal.

Chair Bruels said for many there is an ongoing misunderstanding about what cultural competence is. He suggested it is not necessarily the role of the Commission to define what cultural competence is; it should be the responsibility of each agency to make the case with regard to the level of cultural competence they are achieving. Adding language to indicate that cultural competence is not limited to non-discrimination would be helpful.

There was agreement to title the section: "Recognizing the increasing diversity of Bellevue's population, cultural competence will be strongly considered," and to include two bullets, "The applicant program will show evidence of efforts to embed cultural competence within the organization (e.g. enacting policies and practices demonstrating that it values cultural competence)," and "The applicant program will show evidence of significant effort to outreach to the growing diverse population in Bellevue (e.g. hiring staff with the needed language skills to engage the diverse communities), and to provide services that are linguistically appropriate and sensitive to various cultures (e.g. use of curricula and evidence based methods known to be

effective with particular diverse populations),” followed by “Note: The practice of cultural competence is not limited to a non-discrimination policy.”

Referring back to the funding criteria section, there was agreement to word the first paragraph to read “The Human Services Commission recognizes that economic conditions continue to affect the City of Bellevue’s financial resources and funding recommendations for 2013-2014 will be very difficult. In addition, the Commission is concerned that the effects of the recession and significant funding reductions by other jurisdictions may continue to weaken the network of human services. While the Commission is hopeful this will improve during the economic recovery, they believe it is critical to preserve the human services infrastructure to ensure that Bellevue remains a vibrant and caring community for all of its diverse residents.” There was agreement to have that paragraph followed by a paragraph titled “2011-2012 Human Services Needs Update” reading “The City of Bellevue recently completed its *2011-2012 Human Services Needs Update*. The update was prepared to assist the Bellevue City Council, Human Services Commission, service providers and residents to: 1) understand the overall human services needs in the City; 2) identify regional and local trends and issues that impact Bellevue residents; 3) identify available resources and gaps within the community; 4) provide a framework for the allocation of resources to a continuum of human services; and 5) identify opportunities for collaboration and advocacy in human services areas that will enhance the quality of life for all Bellevue residents. The Human Services Commission used the information in this report as the primary basis for developing its funding focus areas for 2013-2014. You may also download the report from the City’s website at www.bellevuewa.gov/humanservices_needs_update.htm. Citing this source is strongly advised.”

Motion to accept the funding criteria as drafted, with the understanding that the staff could at their discretion correct any errors overlooked by the Commission, was made by Commissioner Stout. Second was by Commissioner Perelman and the motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS – None

7. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie briefly outlined for the Commission the topics to be discussed at upcoming meetings.

Ms. O’Reilly reported that she was working with the city’s webmaster to post a pdf of the Needs Update on the website. She said she would let the Commission know when that has been accomplished. A limited number of hard copies are set to be printed and distributed as well.

Ms. O’Reilly also reported that the Communities Count report data will be released in segments. The first segment on food and security was just recently released. She

said she would be sending a link to the electronic-only report to the Commissioners.

8. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bruels adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date