

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 6, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Plaskon

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

GUEST SPEAKERS: Dan Lassiter, Highland Community Center; Michelle Bauchman, Washington State Department of Developmental Disabilities; Ray Jensen, King County Developmental Disabilities Division; Chris Brandt, AtWork!; Kim Gerdes, Kindering Center

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chair Huenefeld Gese who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 2, 1010

Commissioner Stout referred to the penultimate paragraph on page 10 and noted that the first sentence should be revised to read "Answering a question, Mr. Smith said the issue of politics has received a great deal of discussion from the start of the Wraparound Program.

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

4. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Polly Nelson, Mobility Program Manager for Hopelink, told the Commission about a new program called Easy Rider Connector. She said the free service operates in east Bellevue for seniors, the disabled, Access riders, and low-income persons who have jobs, are looking for work or are participating in a job training program. The coverage area is from the Overlake park and ride to the Eastgate park and ride, and from 140th Avenue NE to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. Rides are by reservation only. Once picked up, riders can be taken to any one of 16 different locations where they can connect to transit services. The project is one arm of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative.

Commissioner Bruels noted that Overlake Hospital has seen transportation issues act as a barrier to discharge for many older or disabled persons patients. He said the connector would be a great resource for them. Ms. Nelson said some 53 locations in the east Bellevue area, including the hospitals, have been informed about the new service. Some 5000 brochures have been printed and are being circulated in the service area.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly added that the vans are lift-equipped and are fully accessible. The project is being funded with Federal Transit Administration dollars.

Commissioner Stout asked how many riders are going to be needed in order to be real placed when it comes time for the funding to be replaced. Ms. Nelson said the service needs to average about three rides per hour. The service operates weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and reservations can be made between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The brochure is going to be translated into Russian and Spanish, and the Language Line will be used as needed.

5. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Beighle reported that she attended the Youth Eastside Services, Friends of Youth and the AtWork! fundraisers. She said she walked away with a better understanding of the diversities and personal challenges each of the speakers had faced and how that has impacted the community. The unmet needs of youth in the community have been talked about for years but they continue to be unmet. Many of those who have been or who are now clients of services offered in the community will undoubtedly become the leaders of tomorrow.

Commissioner Hoople said he attended the April 5 groundbreaking ceremony for Andrews Glen, a new ARCH-sponsored housing project near St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Factoria. He said the city was represented by Councilmembers Lee and Robertson. Part of the funding for the project is coming from the Veterans and Human Services Levy, and 20 of the 60 units will be dedicated to veterans.

Commissioner Bruels said he attended the most recent Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Action Plan Oversight Committee meeting. He said Councilmember Chelminiak and Ms. O'Reilly represented the city. He said his main interest remains in the crisis diversion facility for which the bidding process is under way. A decision should be made by the end of April. The Suburban Cities Association intends to form a subcommittee to work with stakeholders of the different municipalities that are being considered for the facility. Additionally, a subcommittee of the oversight committee will be formed to study implementation of the actual contract.

Commissioner Bruels said he also attended the recent Housing 101 presentation put on by ARCH. He said his experience with low-income housing in communities across the country has always been government heavy in terms of building large highrise units and concentrating poverty and in terms of rent control regulations. Those approaches have always created more problems than they have solved. The ARCH approach is far superior and both interesting and creative.

Human Services Manager Emily Leslie said staff have been receiving a lot of calls and requests for meetings from agencies who are considering making application for funding. She said the anticipation is that there will be a large number of applications to work through. She said Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano has been staffing the help desk for the HSConnect process and dealing with technical issues as they arise.

Ms. O'Reilly reported that United Way of King County is looking at significantly redefining its grant process. She said she has been participating with them for the past month and a half in making recommendations. They may possibly move to a three-year funding process, and they may change their timeline.

Ms. O'Reilly said she attended a veterans forum sponsored by King County that brought out some very good information. There were a number of speakers addressing different topics; several of them, including the one from the Veterans Administration, indicated a willingness to come and talk with Eastside providers, so an information session is being planned.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Panel Presentation on Developmental Disabilities Services

Assistant Director Terry Smith said the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act is coming up. The intent of the legislation was to help ensure that people with disabilities can more successfully integrate into society in general and into the specific communities in which they live, especially with regard to employment, transportation and public accommodation.

Ms. O'Reilly introduced the panelists.

Dan Lassiter, program coordinator for Highland Community Center, said Bellevue is fortunate to have leaders who see the wisdom in putting funding toward disability programs, including recreation. He said his job is to keep Highland Community Center operating and to offer inclusion programs citywide. Highland serves those with developmental as well as physical disabilities.

Mr. Lassiter said some of the programs are inclusionary, which means those with disabilities are allowed to participate in regular recreational programs. It is estimated that there are some 7000 persons in the city who are dealing with intellectual disabilities, which is the new term for developmental disabilities. Highland sees about 150 visits per day and offers about a hundred programs annually. There are disability-related support groups that use the space as their meeting place, including the ALS Association, a Downs Syndrome Group, and the Head Injury Program.

Over the last five years there has been an increase in the number of youth coming to Highland for the after-school programs, and a decrease in the number of youth coming to the summer camps. Several years ago it was decided that if any city program were to offer toileting, then every program in the city would have to do the same. Highland had been offering toileting for clients up to age 21, but when the decision was made to stop there was a decrease in the number of clients coming in. An attempt was made to obtain funding for pay for the care for kids coming to the camps; used in conjunction with funds contributed by parents, it was possible to hire the needed workers. That worked for two or three years, but the extra burden on the parents contributed to it all falling apart. Funding has been found to take care of the need for the coming summer camp season; the money will be allocated to a certified care agency who will supply the staff for the camps.

Mr. Lassiter said Highland has also seen a very large increase in the number of autistic clients. Fully half of the kids coming into the center are living with autism, and most of them are males. In fact, 90 percent of the kids in the after-school program are male. Another trend is that kids from diverse cultures are not signing up for programs at Highland even though attempts have been made to increase their numbers.

Attendance at the programs for adults with intellectual disabilities have been very constant. Highland has, however, been seeing an increase in the number of requests for daytime activities. A partnership has been formed with Bridge Academy; they come in two days per week and provide both the staff and the programming for the ten clients who are attending.

Mr. Lassiter said most of Highland's programs have a fee, and the center seeks about a 50 percent return on direct costs. Staff costs have increased, but there has been no significant increase in budget from the city. That has resulted in the loss of some power to purchase and provide services. A number of solid volunteers have stepped in to help fill the gaps. Partnerships with Public Health, the Alliance of People with Disabilities, Toastmasters, Bridge Academy and the Overlake Special

School have all bolstered the programs offered at Highland. Highland also rents out space that is not otherwise used, and in 2009 nearly \$80,000 was brought in. There are also two cities that pay Bellevue to offer programming for their citizens.

Mr. Lassiter said the Choices Plan is focused on the inclusion model. While Highland continues to offer specialized programs, staff work with other camps and work sites in the city to help bring about opportunities for clients to participate in the mainstream.

Commissioner Hoople asked if there are any services or programs offered for disabled veterans. Mr. Lassiter said Highland offers wheelchair basketball and quad rugby, but few veterans participate. Attempts to find out why have determined that people are adapting and simply going on with their recreational lives. Others face personal barriers to getting back into being fully active in their communities. He agreed it would be a good idea to incorporate them into the model.

Commissioner Bruels asked why the response from people of different cultures has been and continues to be low. Mr. Lassiter said it could be the culture itself; some may be embarrassed to have a child with a disability, or they may not trust government programs. It could also be that the programs offered are simply not attractive or welcoming to people of other cultures.

Commissioner Stout said one of the basic principles in family support work is to be sure when families come in they see something that reflects them, like artwork or a staff person from the same culture. Cultural competence is a major factor.

Michelle Bauchman, regional administrator for the state Department of Developmental Disabilities, said her organization falls under the Department of Social and Health Services and the Aging and Disability Service Administration. She said there are six regions in the state and King County is Region 4. In addition to determining eligibility for services, the case managers provide care assessments which in turn drive the service models. The individual and family services program offers families money to pay for recreational and respite care, as well as durable goods.

Ms. Bauchman said the department funds the crisis stabilization team with Sound Mental Health. Professional services are offered which enable getting people into occupational and physical therapy. In addition, clients are facilitated in obtaining dental services. A medically intensive children's program is offered; with really good healthcare in King County people that were not supposed to live long have prospered, though they require hours of dedicated nursing care. The department partners with Children's Services on some issues where it is necessary to remove children with disabilities from their homes. The department funds supported living, adult family homes, boarding homes, and Fircrest, a large residential rehabilitation center in Shoreline.

With regard to case management, Ms. Bauchman said the department has 75 case managers who each have between 75 and 100 cases; for the case managers for clients who do not have services, the client load is as high as 800.

The program is not an entitlement program for clients older than three years old. The legislature decides each year the level at which the program should be funded. There are a set number of waiver slots available to the entire state and must be divided by area. In King County alone there are 10,800 eligible clients; statewide the number is 38,000, of which the state only serves 63 percent due to funding limitations. Statewide, 18,000 are under the age of 18; in King County those under 18 make up closer to 60 percent of the total.

Autism rates have climbed to one in 150; a decade ago it was one in 1500. In order to address the increased numbers, the department a year and a half ago started an application for a different waiver service called Children Intensive Behavior. In 2007 a large children's program closed, and as an interim step to addressing the problem Fir Crest was used for temporary housing. Requests to be admitted to the state system soared led to the development of a self-directed model based on the approach in Oregon that offers intensive in-home support for families. To kick it off, the legislature funded 100 slots, about 45 of which have been filled.

Another emerging trend is the need for interpretation services. The department is working toward diversifying its workforce to help in that area.

There are about 1200 clients with parents over the age of 60. In many of the cases, the children do not transition out of their homes because they are reliant on the funding received by their aging parents to help pay the rent and make ends meet. Many who would actually do better living in an adult family home cannot be persuaded to make the move.

Ms. Bauchman said budgeting remains a prime concern for the department. With the Recovery Act it was possible to change the match between federal and state dollars from the historic 50-50 to 67-27. During the last legislative session the department did not take as big a hit as other service delivery models did, though all of the supportive living agencies experienced cuts which resulted in layoffs for many professional staffers. The level of federal dollars is expected to be reduced next year and by 2012 be back to 50-50. Creative approaches will be the norm.

Ray Jensen, division director for the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities, said the state is the entry point for eligibility for the services the division delivers. He said for the past few years he has been advocating for bringing providers together to identify common goals and discuss the pooling of resources to meet the needs of the people. Those with visual and hearing impairments are doing fairly well under the ADA and rising from poverty, primarily because their disabilities are more accepted by society. Those with cognitive disabilities and chronic mental illnesses are not doing as well; their employment rate is around 18 percent.

Poverty is the top entitlement program in the United States. Medicaid is designed to address the categorically needy who are in poverty and cannot work. A definable disability is what designates a person who cannot work. To end the poverty cycle, it will be necessary for society to invest in people working. The Division of Developmental Disabilities funds services for children aged zero to three as the lead agency under the federal Part C program. Any child with a developmental delay of 25 percent or more is eligible for services; the severity of the disability is not a factor. Early intervention is a good investment; too often there is no assumption that children born with disabilities will meet with any degree of success in being able to earn their own way. Intervention services are aimed at supporting families, in part by helping to give them a vision for their children that is more typical than less typical. As children enter school, the Division of Developmental Disabilities no longer has any programmatic responsibilities, though it does invest in advocacy services. The Division invests in low-income housing and preventing homelessness for families with disabled children. Investments are also made in recreational programs for the disabled.

Mr. Jensen suggested that when governments invest in taking care of people without encouraging them to find ways to participate fully in society, they will find that their costs will continue far into the future. Programs such as Medicaid do not encourage independence and do not help people pull out of poverty.

Collaborative efforts can save money and result in better services to those being served. A few years ago low-income families were being subsidized to live in market-rate housing at a cost of about \$750,000 annually. Those subsidy dollars were effectively not available to provide needed services. The Division of Developmental Disabilities went and talked to the King County Housing Authority about leveraging housing opportunities. The Division of Developmental Disabilities put money into housing developments in exchange for guaranteed housing unit set-asides; within a short period of time everyone benefited.

Mr. Jensen said the Division of Developmental Disabilities would be posting its new plan to its website by the end of the week and will be seeking public comment.

Answering a question asked by Chair Huenefeld Gese, Ms. Bauchman said group homes are not funded through public/private arrangements; they are typically owner/operated. The same is true for adult family homes. In supported living arrangements, the client rents the home, or the state will work with a partnership in terms of finding affordable housing. The supportive living model typically involves four people or less. There are some 3000 adult family home providers in King County, and about 35 supportive living agencies. There is a push on to start operating on the Eastside.

Chris Brandt, executive director of AtWork!, said the organization will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2012. The organization was formed by the merger of Custom

Industries and Community Enterprises of Issaquah that occurred in 1998. Some 240 persons with disabilities are served annually with employment programs. The niche of AtWork! has always been on focusing on people with significant and multiple disabilities. Sadly, the ADA has not made a significant impact in employment for people with intellectual disabilities; that is particularly the case for people who also have a physical disability. To a large degree that is because most people think those with multiple disabilities cannot work; they fail to see the opportunities for productive activity. The biggest challenge lies in educating the community, overcoming the stigmas, and opening doors to employment.

Ms. Brandt said the City of Bellevue has supported AtWork! for many years, and the organization has taken those funds and leveraged them. The community liaison used to focus on the transition from school to work but now primarily helps in opening doors for employment opportunities outside of sheltered workshops. Where 140 used to be employed in sheltered workshops, there are only 50 currently. Of the 50, the majority are doing things in the community, discovering new talents, volunteering, or working part-time.

The number of clients with autism has increased. People with autism are often highly talented and productive, though they have behavioral issues. What they need is specialized training. The organization received grants from United Way and Puget Sound Energy to hire a consultant to work with the employment consultant team to identify the kinds of issues that are keeping the organization from getting clients placed, and the resources that can be brought to bear to address those barriers.

The majority of the funding for AtWork! comes from the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities, and their funding has been fairly stable. King County is supportive of innovative strategies and has been a key partner in the transitions program. The organization is poised on the cutting edge of customized employment. AtWork! believes everyone can work and aims to leave no one behind.

Only a third of the disabled kids coming out of high school are on the federal waiver, and the state is not going to provide any transition funding for those not on the waiver. Most of those not on the waiver are those with physical and intellectual disabilities who did not get placed by the transition program after graduation. AtWork! will be meeting with the King County Division of Developmental Disabilities to talk about leveraging funds they have with money individual families may be able to pay. AtWork! is currently working with about six families who are able to provide financial support to help their family member get a job.

AtWork! no longer has the operations that were not making money, so the janitorial service and precision metal shop are gone. The organization will continue to operate social services that do make money, the profits of which are put back into services. The program in Issaquah is still transitioning away from being a sheltered workshop. The organization is working with the federal government to develop an apprenticeship in the document management business in partnership with US Archives.

Ms. Brandt said Washington state ranks 38th in the country in terms of what it spends on its citizens with disabilities, even though the state is a leader in supportive employment. Nationwide, the disabled have an unemployment rate of close to 75 percent, while in Washington state it is only 55 percent.

Commissioner Stout asked what impact the focus of the Bellevue School District on getting students ready for college has meant for the disabled students. Ms. Brandt said most of the disabled students will not be going on to college, though some will be going to the Venture Program at Bellevue College. The educational system overall has not kept up with improvements in how people with disabilities are served as adults.

Commissioner Hoople asked if AtWork! could be involved in helping to retrain veterans with traumatic brain injuries who may not be able to go back to their original jobs after being discharged. Ms. Brandt said that is a possibility. At its spring retreat, the board will be talking about how to scale the capacity for customized employment for people with multiple disabilities, including the visual and hearing impaired and veterans.

Kim Gerdes, Director of Community Programming for Kindering Center, is a neural developmental center housed in the Crossroads area. She said the agency provides early intervention and early learning services for children ages zero to six. In 2009 services were provided for more than 3000 children and families from the area. The flagship program is the birth to three early intervention program that serves just over 400 children per month. There are specific eligibility guidelines established by the state that enable children to receive early intervention services. For those who are eligible, the agency provides early childhood special education, speech and language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social work services, feeding therapy, and nutrition.

Family counseling is offered as well on the understanding that it is impossible to separate the needs of the children from the needs of the family. Healthy families are better able to raise and support healthy children. Families who have children with significant disabilities face some daunting challenges, and supporting them is very important.

The early learning services provided by Kindering Center include childcare complication services, parent education, and infant mental health services to children in foster care. An Inclusion Toddler Preschool program is also offered to children with special needs, children who are at risk, and community preschoolers. Kindering also offers developmental screenings and outreach to the community at large.

Ms. Gerdes stated that Kindering Center has over the last five years seen a significant increase in the number of children with autism. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of premature infants surviving, but many of them have

significant medical needs and have developmental disabilities. There has also been a significant increase in the diversity of the children; about half of the families speak a language other than English in the home. The number of families in financial crisis has increased as well over the past 18 months.

Kinderling Center recently started an outreach into transitional housing. Partnerships have been formed with Harrington House, Avondale Housing, Hopelink and others in which they identify families with young children who are offered free on-site thorough assessments. During the last half of 2009, 24 children were screened, six of whom were qualified for early intervention, and another five of which received some follow-up service.

Ms. Gerdes said Kinderling's Childcare program has been faithfully funded by the city since 1990. One trend the education consultants have seen in working with children in childcare is the increasing number of households in which both parents are working. Those families in particular have a need for childcare, and if they have a child with a disability, with behavioral or medical issues, it can be very difficult to find a childcare provider who can offer the necessary support.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie asked the Commissioners to remember that beginning in May it will be necessary for the Commission to add extra meetings to its schedule; she provided them with a handout showing the additional dates.

Ms. Leslie reported that the city kicked off the Budget One process earlier in the day by releasing the internal requests for proposals. The various departments will spend the next six weeks developing proposals.

At the April 5 Council meeting the Commission's liaison Councilmember Chelminiak raised the question of how the city's boards and commissions are to be involved in the budget process. He used the Human Services Commission as a prime example of a group that has a vested interest in the budget. It was noted that unless the Council decides to go in another direction, the human services funding formula will still be in play.

The Commission will be getting an update regarding the budget on April 20.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Leslie announced that Commissioners Stout and Yantis are set to be reappointed to the Commission at the April 12 Council meeting.

9. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Secretary to the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date