

CITY OF BELLEVUE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 20, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Alex O'Reilly, Joseph Adriano, Cynthia Sessoms, Terry Smith, Patrick Foran, Doug Sanner, Department of Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by 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 arrived at 6:32 p.m.

3. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. STAFF AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Councilmember Chelminiak reported that Commissioners Stout and Yantis has been appointed to second terms on the Commission and he congratulated them both.

Councilmember Chelminiak said the Council has been talking about the budget and has a four-hour work session on the topic planned for April 26. Council appears to be in favor of continuing to allocate the human services dollars as they have been in the past. At some point in time, however, the process will need to be melded into the new budgeting approach; that may result in the finding of some very good synergies that will better the delivery of services.

Councilmember Chelminiak said he attended the Eastside Human Services Forum Board of Directors and will be attending the next meeting of the Committee to End Homelessness Governing Board.

Commissioner Hoople reported that on April 12 he provided the City Council with a report on the Veterans and Human Services Levy.

Commissioner Bruels said earlier in the day he had attended the King County Alliance of Human Services meeting. King County Councilmember Julia Patterson attended and provided the group with a dismal overview of the budget situation. She said the county was confronted with a \$150 million shortfall over the last two budget cycles and expects a \$60 million shortfall for the next budget cycle. In order to balance the budget, all human services funding may need to be cut. Negotiations to find new revenues at the State level have fallen apart. The King County Council is considering proposing a criminal justice sales tax increase of three-tenths of one percent on the fall ballot, an amount that would only maintain the status quo. Members of the Alliance were asked to not oppose and to support if possible the sales tax increase. There would, of course, be no guarantees that any of those funds would go for human services.

Commissioner Stout said she had an opportunity recently to hear Dr. Doreen Cato, Director of the First Place school, speak on the impact of trauma on young children and the associated implications as they grow up. Dr. Cato offered a number of tips on how to work with students who have been traumatized. Dr. Cato also noted that First Place has begun to reach out to other communities where they have homeless populations that include children. If invited, First Place will work with the community by providing assistance in setting up programs especially designed for children who have been homeless. The organization is working in the south county area and in Grays Harbor county.

Commissioner Stout said earlier in the day she sponsored a table at the Healthy Start luncheon where a superb presentation was made on early brain development.

Commissioner Beighle said she attended the Parks & Community Services Board meeting on April 13. They took action to pass the Meydenbauer Bay park plan. The matter will be forwarded to the City Council which hopefully will be just as receptive.

Assistant Director Terry Smith thanked the Commission for taking up the issue of developmental disabilities on April 6. He noted that cultural competency is a very big issue for the disabled community. Too often it is easy to forget that generations still do not know how to interact and relate to people with disabilities. There is still a lot of area for growth; while the community has come a long way, there are still very profoundly isolated individuals who are not being well served.

Chair Huenefeld Gese suggested that as too many groups get lumped together, many of the important elements get lost. The Commission should be forthright in

interacting with all agencies to bring out the needs of the disabled in the community and how they can be better integrated.

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly reminded the Commission that the Eastside Human Services Forum has identified older adults as one of its legislative priorities for the year. The group is working with the Bellevue Network on Aging outreach and advocacy team on the topic. Plans have been made to have a meeting on June 16 to host staff persons from Mercer Island and Redmond to share some of the accomplishments made by the Network on Aging; the focus will be on mentoring those jurisdictions in developing senior-focused groups of their own similar to the Network on Aging and the Kirkland Senior Council.

Ms. O'Reilly noted that a meet and greet with Eastside legislators is planned for November.

5. DISCUSSION

A. Briefing on City's 2011-2012 Budget Process

Doug Sanner, Parks Fiscal and Quality Control Manager, suggested that regardless of the process undertaken, developing a budget for the next biennium will be difficult. The Budget One process came about as a recommendation from the City Manager; it is fundamentally different from the approach taken in the past in which most of the debate has been focused on the incremental funds available for new programs. Budget One turns the attention to determining the highest priorities and making sure everything the city spends money on is related to citizen outcomes.

Mr. Sanner said the city Finance Department is projecting a \$10 million General Fund operating shortfall. The General Fund is the primary tool for receiving most of the tax revenues and funding tax-supported activities, including human services. The projected shortfall represents approximately seven percent of the General Fund. The recession has significantly impacted the city's economically sensitive revenue streams, including sales tax. While some recovery in the revenue streams is being seen, it will be many years before the city regains the tax position it achieved in the peak year of 2007. Conway Peterson, a well-known local forecaster, has suggested that the city should not expect to receive the same sales tax revenue it received in 2007 until approximately 2017.

The Capital Investment Program is the source of funds for roads, fire stations and parks. The funding stream for the capital program is also tied to economically sensitive revenues, primarily the real estate excise tax, which has been impacted at an even greater level than the sales tax revenue stream.

The Budget One process is also known as budgeting for outcomes. In short, the process is aligned around identified citizen needs. The highest performing programs are funded within the available revenues. To the extent possible, data is used in

making the revenue decisions. The Human Services Commission takes a similar approach in making its funding recommendations; it goes out into the community and asks questions about the needs, then it evaluates the information and uses it to develop a portfolio of programs that will best meet those needs.

There are several critical steps, the first of which is defining the outcomes the citizens are interested in achieving. Staff members were selected to serve on various results teams that focused first on developing the outcomes. That step has already been completed and the City Council has approved seven specific outcomes.

The second step is the development of proposals. Each of the departments is in the process of describing all of their operating and capital programs in ways that are responsive to the requests for buying that the results teams have developed. The proposals must all be completed by May 28 and the results teams will spend the summer months focused on the proposals, reviewing and evaluating them, and asking questions about them leading up to ranking the proposals. Their recommendations will be fed to the City Manager who will be tasked with determining which should be accepted and which should be amended. The City Manager will then develop a balanced preliminary budget that will be delivered to the City Council in October. In the last months of the year the Council will hold regular budget meetings focused on deliberating on what the city's budget should be.

Mr. Sanner said the Innovative, Vibrant and Caring Community Outcome it will serve as home base for most human services and many of the Parks Department proposals. The other outcomes are Safe Community, Quality Neighborhoods, Improved Mobility, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, Economic Growth and Competitiveness, and a Responsive Government.

The results team focused on the Innovative, Vibrant and Caring Community Outcome identified human services as a significant and primary factor. The team has recognized that the availability of a range of support services for individuals and families is a foundational element of the outcome, and that basic needs such as food, water and shelter must be met before anyone can be a part of and contribute to the greater community. That conclusion was reached after conducting interviews with Human Services Manager Emily Leslie and Parks & Community Services Director Patrick Foran, and after reviewing the Human Services Needs Update.

The role of the city's boards and commissions was discussed at the April 5 Council meeting, and was also addressed on April 12. The Council concluded that to the extent possible, the historic roles of the groups should continue and be melded into the Budget One process. The Parks & Community Services Board and the Transportation Commission will be focused mostly on capital projects; the Environmental Services Commission will look primarily at the city's utility programs and rates; and the Arts Commission and Human Services Commission will continue their respective roles of making recommendations for allocating the funding streams established for those purposes.

As a starting point, it will be assumed that the historical funding levels for human services will remain intact. Currently the city allocates \$2.4 million in general tax money for human services; that amount does not include Community Development Block Grant funding. The funding formula for the human services dollars is updated annually to reflect inflation and population growth.

Under the new Budget One process, funding contingencies will be developed for all programs that exceed \$1 million per year in operating expenses. The contingency plans will be predicated on the notion of a ten percent reduction in funding from historical levels.

The Commission's allocations recommendations will need to be completed by the end of July so they can be considered by the results teams. The Commission will communicate its findings to the Council in the fall and will be able to review the City Manager's proposed budget and comment on how the Commission's recommendations were incorporated.

The Council will hold public hearings on the budget on May 17, July 19 and November 15.

Mr. Foran said the Department of Parks and Community Services offers a broad array of services. It is no secret that the budget for the next biennium will be severely constrained. The department intends to focus its proposals on intervention, prevention and enhancement, though attention will be given primarily to intervention and prevention. Wraparound services has shown itself to be a successful model for how to integrate human services, recreation, education and neighborhood building. Where resources are constrained, an attempt will be made to repurpose programs that have been carried out for other reasons and move them closer to the intervention and prevention side. Joint proposals are being developed with the Probation and Police Departments relative to domestic violence resources. A joint proposal is also being considered with the Police Department relative to child safety. The Commission will be kept up to date as the process moves along.

Continuing, Mr. Foran said the Budget One process has raised the general understanding of the city organization relative to how everything connects, especially in law and justice, probation, and health and human services. The joint proposals that will come forward reflect that understanding and there is the belief that they will be well received.

Councilmember Chelminiak said the Council is reviewing the city's financial policies. The outcome of those discussions will impact the projected budget shortfalls. Among other things, the Council is looking at the city's reserve policy with an eye on determining the balance point between having a rainy day fund and meeting the current needs of the citizens; the policy of using CIP dollars to maintain projects constructed with CIP dollars, which makes less money available over time for new

things; the policy of always providing a cost of living adjustment to human services; and a number of other policies.

6. DISCUSSION

A. Orientation to the 2011-2012 Funding Process

Grant Coordinator Joseph Adriano said the funding process the Commission has traditionally followed would not substantially change for the 2011-2012 cycle. He said the exception is that the deadline has been moved up by six weeks. In order to address the compressed timeline, the Commission will need to meet more often between May and July.

Mr. Adriano said the deadline for submitting applications is April 29. HSConnect.net is the venue for all applications. To date 120 agencies have registered with HSConnect from among the 17 cities participating in the joint application process; that figure is lower than expected.

The applications for Bellevue funding will be printed and will be distributed to the Commissioners on May 5 and May 6. Staff anticipates that there will be applications from agencies for programs that have not previously received funding from the city.

Mr. Adriano said the Commissioners will have time to review the applications from each goal area prior to conducting a study session. During the study sessions, staff will attempt to answer questions raised by the Commissioners; where necessary, the agencies will be asked to provide the answers. It was stressed that it will be most constructive for the Commissioners to focus on issues related to program design.

The goal areas will be the subject of discussion on the following dates: Goal 1 (food and shelter), May 11; Goal 2 (supportive relationships), May 18; Goal 3 (safe haven from violence and abuse), Goal 4 (health care) May 25 and Goal 5 (education and support services), June 8.

Following the preliminary review, the Commission will focus on the full review of each application. Applicants may be asked to attend during the full review phase to answer questions in person. Full review will commence on June 15 with Goal 1 and Goal 2, continue on June 22 with Goal 3, Goal 4 and Goal 5.

The Commission's full review of the CDBG applications is scheduled to occur on July 8. The applications will not come through HSConnect and will not include any new programs. The Commission will begin deliberating recommendations for the General Fund allocations at that same meeting and determine the preliminary recommendations on July 13. The preliminary recommendation will then be published. A public hearing will be held on July 27.

Mr. Adriano said the Budget One process will continue through the summer months. The recommendation of the Commission will be forwarded to the City Council in late October.

Mr. Adriano said the notion of dividing the Commission up into teams to review the applications will not run afoul of the open meetings rules, provided no decisions are made by the groups. He suggested that if the Commission decides to review the applications by teams, Team 1 should be comprised of Commissioners Beighle, Hoople and Plaskon, Team 2 should be made up of Chair Huenefeld Gese and Commissioner Bruels, and Team 3 should have as its members Commissioners Stout and Yantis. He said he estimated that the number of applications to be reviewed by each team would be roughly equivalent.

Commissioner Beighle noted that she would be out of town between May 20 and May 25, and Commissioner Hoople said he would be away from the middle of May to the second week of June. There was agreement that the two of them should not be on the same team.

Commissioner Stout questioned whether the Commission should form teams to review the applications. In years past each Commissioner read all of the applications and came to the table well prepared. The previous funding cycle was the first time the team approach was undertaken, and she said she came to the table not really knowing what was going on with some of the applications.

Commissioner Hoople suggested that while the team approach is the best way to save time while still ferreting out the necessary issues, every Commissioner should quickly read every application just to be better informed.

Commissioner Yantis said he favored the team approach as the best way to delve deeply into each application, especially the ones for new programs or agencies. It takes less time to review the applications for programs that have traditionally been funded.

There was agreement to divide the Commission into teams to review the applications. There was also agreement to use the rating sheet as an informative tool.

Commissioner Yantis asked how the Commission would be able to respect the budget initiative the city has undertaken by taking a fresh look at each application, whether it has traditionally been funded or not. Mr. Smith said the process of determining needs, reviewing applications and formulating recommendations for funding is exactly like the Budget One process. During the application process everything is on the table and every program will be viewed on its merits. In the end, the limited funds available for allocation will be distributed according to the highest needs. The Commission is not tasked with keeping the status quo; if a new application is submitted that the Commission determines will better serve the

community and respond to a particular outcome, it should be given serious consideration.

Commissioner Hoople reminded the group that the city is not supposed to be the primary funder for any agency. The Commission has historically kept that in mind and thus has looked carefully to make sure each agency has a balanced funding flow. He said it will be particularly necessary to keep that in mind in reviewing the applications and making decisions.

Commissioner Stout suggested that aligning the recommendations with the Needs Update will be vital. The document accurately reflects the changing needs of the community. She said one thing that has caused her concern over the past few years is seeing agencies providing the same services to the same populations without adapting to a changing set of needs. There have been big changes to the populations in the community, and that should be reflected in the way dollars are allocated to the various agencies serving the community.

Mr. Foran stressed the need to think in terms of relevancy when reviewing the applications and making funding recommendations. All of the programs for which applications will be submitted address priorities, but judgments will need to be made with regard to what must be accomplished.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Yantis, Mr. Adriano said the agencies he has talked to are fully under the impression that the Commission will have some very difficult decisions to make. He said his impression has been that most will not be asking for more than what they have asked for in the past, though some agencies likely will put forward the needs as they see them regardless of the funding limitations.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Presentation on Outcomes Measurement Alternatives

Intern Cynthia Sessoms said her study of outcomes included a review of Bellevue's outcomes and those of King County, Seattle, Redmond, and United Way. She said she also reviewed the available literature to determine the status of outcomes generally as they relate to human services. She said traditionally, enablement has had the most focus as opposed to empowerment, but suggested the latter should have the most attention.

Outcomes are the method by which to measure how effective services can be when used for empowerment work, as well as for accomplishing human service delivery goals. The Commission may consider outcomes to be a concept of effectiveness, but that view is not opposed to the notion of empowerment; both goals can be accomplished simultaneously.

An outcome is a measure of change. It starts with some stated point and compares that point to the end goal after an intervention has been introduced. With regard to human service, outcomes measure changes in clients as the result of an intervention activity. Outputs are what are typically measured, though they are often referred to as outcomes. The data contained in applications with regard to everything from bednights to counseling hours relate to the money that goes in, which is the input, and the what the client gets as a result, which is the output.

Ms. Sessoms said there is less literature than one would expect on the topic of how to craft and use outcomes in the human services arena. The relative literature is primarily focused on managerial program evaluations. There is a plethora of literature in the medical field, however, much of which can be related to human services.

There are no across-the-board current best practices for how to develop and implement outcomes. That is surprising considering the volumes of applications, the amount of money involved, and the years that different entities have spent doing the work. In Seattle, a request for investment for the delivery of meals to seniors and the disabled states its outcome as "To reduce hunger by providing access to food and connections to other community resources that will help people to address economic and other issues." Ms. Sessoms suggested that while the statement is laudable, it sounds more like a mission statement than an outcome. It does not leave room for showing a change between Point A and Point B, what the inputs and outputs are, and what end result is expected.

Ms. Sessoms said efficiency is what funding organizations like to consider. They want to know how much money is going in, what it costs per unit of service delivery, and what the results will be. Effectiveness is a measure of the client's outcome, the change the client experiences as a result of having received the service.

The philosophies of large funding entities, like King County, United Way, Seattle and Bellevue, carry a great deal of clout in terms of influencing what services are offered and what the outcomes at the client end are when all is said and done. The philosophies the Commission brings to the table are far more than academic: they actually have some application on the ground. The stated United Way philosophy is to fund responsibly managed human service organizations that demonstrate the greatest capacity to provide effective, culturally appropriate services, maintain maximum access for target populations, and consistently achieves direct or community level impacts. King County holds many of the same thought processes and philosophies but is much more vulnerable to political expediency; sadly, that results in some very worthy things being pushed to the side. Seattle's philosophy is to move programs ahead or sustain them as they are.

The outcomes of United Way are very formulaic. They have taken their impact areas and defined the outcomes accordingly. The approach is different in Bellevue in that the agencies are allowed to determine the outcomes; the Commission determines

whether or not the stated outcomes meet the guidelines or focus areas. United Way, for its Out of the Rain impact area, defines two outcomes: people at risk of becoming homeless retain stable housing, and people transitioning out of the homelessness secure permanent housing. Neither of those outcomes demonstrate quantifiable change; while the information may be implied, it must be explicit in order to be a true outcome. The City of Redmond has no policy for how to handle outcomes.

Ms. Sessoms stated that not all of her recommendations will require a monetary investment; there is much that can be done without an outlay of additional funds.

Ms. Sessoms suggested the city should focus on outcomes rather than outputs and units of change rather than on what is received in exchange for what is put in. She also recommended maintaining autonomy; along with the focus on collaboration and doing things that streamline the process, it would be a disservice to move toward a United Way-type model. There are best practices models extant, though for a variety of reasons they do not necessarily get implemented; the reality on the ground is that agencies are overworked and underfunded, which leaves them unable to implement identified best practices. Supporting independent research will continue to be a very important way of keeping the Commission informed with regard to the best way to approach issues.

Ms. Sessoms recommended the Commission should appoint a dedicated agency liaison. The only time the Commission really hears from the agencies is during the funding cycle. If there were a liaison appointed, it would be easier to keep tabs on things and know where the problem areas are. Fostering collaborations and partnerships is something the Commission already does and should continue to do.

The Commission should work to involve consumers and the community, especially on a deeper level. To some degree that is done with the Needs Update, but more can be done. Many agencies fail to take the consumer viewpoint into consideration. Participant surveys can fill the need.

Frequent monitoring would yield good results. Under the current approach, some agencies go a long time without being monitored, and that can result in an information gap for the Commission.

Innovation and creativity should be rewarded. Current best practices were someone's fledgling idea at some point in the past. If the Commission does not encourage new ideas, the status quo will always be the norm.

The creation of destigmatizing frameworks should be supported. In order to do that, it will be necessary to think about who receives the services and the stigmas involved. Because of the work that human service professionals do with certain populations, some of the stigma transfers to the agencies themselves. That is often one reason why it is so difficult to get funding for human services; people look at the work being done and who is being served, and they ask why the work is important,

why they should care, and why the work should be funded. With the current economic downturn, many who would otherwise be philanthropic forces are lining up to be the benefactors of human services, and that turn of events can bring about changes in the way people look at the factors.

Sustainable activities should be supported as well. That includes things like the work of the Taproot Foundation and the concept of time banking.

Commissioner Bruels commented that the Committee to End Homelessness recently heard from a Portland community event that was focused on how to break down the stigmatizing barriers between those who are homeless and the community in general who fund homelessness programs. They brought in the Portland Trailblazers and invited the public, homeless service providers, and the homeless. Everyone shared the same space for a time and many barriers were broken down.

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESSES

Mr. Adriano announced that the Alliance of Eastside Agencies has scheduled a workshop for May 7 on the topic of social media and human services. The event will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Crossroads Community Center.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Huenefeld Gese adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Secretary of the Human Services Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Human Services Commission

Date